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FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 1919.

THE IRON HEEL.

Seemingly unable to realize that the new age is already here, that no longer will labor be denied a voice in government and that no longer will labor tamely submit to repressive measures, certain members of Montana's legislature calmly continue on the road that leads straight to destruction.

With apparently no knowledge of the fact that this war was supported by the American people because they believed that it was to abolish militarism in all its horrid forms, three bills creating military establishments of various degrees of viciousness have been introduced.

Under the guise of a state-sheriff bill, it is intended to slip over that old love of his excellency the governor's, the state constabulary. The bill as drawn provides for a state sheriff, and each county is to have five deputies who are to work under the direction of the state-sheriff. By this simple process you have the constabulary so dear to the hearts of the corporations.

A similar bill, differing only in that it is more dangerous to the rights and liberties of the people of the state, provides for what is euphemistically termed the "Montana Reserve Guard." These guards are given extraordinary powers by the act; for instance, they are empowered to make arrests at any time, "with or without warrant"; to speak disrespectfully of or to them is a felony, and apparently the intention is to create a class of supermen whom it is sacrilege to disobey, or even criticize.

German militarism never went farther in the palmist days of its existence. The third bill creates the national guard or state militia; it contains a clause making it a felony to speak in a derogatory manner of the militia or its members, to urge anyone not to enlist in the militia or to refuse any person or persons membership in any society or union because of their affiliation with this organization of privileged individuals.

If there was previously any evidence lacking to convince the people of this state that there is no intention on the part of the corporate interests to make any concessions that would tend to lighten the lot of the wage earner, or that would permit free discussion and disposition of certain pressing economic problems, these three bills should remove any doubt on that score.

Oppression is the watchword of the exploiting interests of this state as well as of those of the United States, and suppression by armed force of any attempt on the part of the workers to rectify existing evils is being openly discussed and advocated.

Under the guise of patriotism, crimes against the people are being planned and consummated that would shame the Prussian autocrats; a web of restrictive legislation is being woven that the profit-mad class believe will justify any means they see fit to use.

They are hysterical with fear and have communicated that fear to their representatives, who pose as representatives of the people.

The day of the iron heel, predicted by Jack London, is here, so let us not close our eyes to the danger, but prepare to meet it; forewarned is forearmed.

WAGES AND PRICES.

One of the many economic falsehoods that the capitalist class loves the working class to indulge in is, "A rise in wages will always cause a corresponding rise in prices, and therefore the workers are but wasting their energies when they strive to gain an increase in the pay checks. This erroneous theory has been exploded many a year ago, but like many other false notions, it is retained and nourished to delude the workers.

Considering the number of great strikes that are now raging throughout the country, especially the one on the coast, we believe that a little time spent on the question of wages, prices, etc., will be well spent.

We are living in an age of machine production. The magnitude of this production is not static, but variable. Increasing yearly, and consequently, daily, because of the greater labor-saving machines, greater organization, efficiency, etc. From this total production comes the wages of the working class and the profits of the capitalist. These profits are divided between the various sections of the capitalist class. The capitalist class are ever striving to reduce wages to the minimum and the hours to the maximum, the working class endeavoring to increase the wages and decrease the hours. The capitalist class are strengthened by the economic laws of the system, and therefore the workers, generally speaking, are placed in the position of "defenders of the wages they had," rather than "aggressors for more." Through the concentration of wealth the capitalist class get an ever increasing share of the total wealth produced, and by the competition for jobs, and the increased cost of living, the working class get an ever decreasing amount.

"But," say the falsifiers, "if a general increase of wages was gained by the workers there would be a general increased demand for the necessities of life, and these commodities would, through their greater demand, have a tendency to increase in price, and thereby offset the increased wages. And in this the propounders of the above mentioned false theory get in their work. But the explanation must not stop there, otherwise we shall fall into their trap.

There is a greater demand for these necessities all right, and an increase in price, but the decreased profits caused by the increase of wages soon effects the demand for luxuries, or the commodities classed in that category.

There is less demand for the luxuries, and more demand for the necessities; therefore there is a "tendency" for greater profits in the capital invested in the production of necessities and less in capital invested in the production and distribution

of luxuries, the RESULT being capital will flow into the manufacture of necessities, for therein are greater profit. More capital in the production of necessities and less in luxuries will result in greater competition in the sale of necessities, and therefore tend to the lowering of prices. Conclusion, the prices reach their normal level, but the wages have increased and profits decreased.

"If it is folly for the workers to strive to increase wages is it not also folly for the capitalists to be ever on the lookout to decrease them?"

As a matter of fact there are many instances where wages are higher, and yet the commodities produced under such wage conditions are lower in price than where the wages are lower.

Marx, in his "Value, Price and Profit" gives many facts to prove this statement. He speaks of the agricultural laborer of America getting twice the amount of wages as the English agricultural laborer, and yet the products of the American being less than that of the English. And let us quote him on the results of the 10-hour day victory in England. After he has gone into the lies that the liberal professors spread regarding the calamity that would come to British industry with the introduction of the 10-hour day, he writes:

Well, what was the result? A rise in the money wages of the factory operatives, despite the curtailing of the working day, a great increase in the number of factory hands employed, a continuous fall in the prices of their products, a marvelous development in the productive powers of their labor, an unheard of progressive expansion of the markets for their commodities.

Just as the raising or retaining of the wages of the workers does not rest upon their will, so it is with the capitalist, the raising and lowering of prices rests not on will, but POWER.

Now let us discuss this wage question from another angle. We will start with Marx's question on "WHAT ARE HIGH WAGES AND WHAT ARE LOW?" In order to have high and low we must have some line to judge from. What determines that time? It surely is not supply and demand, for we see that working in a thousand and one cases; the supply of automobiles in comparison with their demand is about the same as the supply of bread in comparison with its demand, but we might say that an automobile is cheap at \$1,000 and a loaf of bread dear at 10 cents. What makes the one cheap at \$1,000 and the other dear at 10 cents? You can easily see without the asking of the question of what determines supply and demand that supply and demand is not the determining factor, but simply the law that regulates the fluctuations.

You may say that the value of labor embodied in the article or commodity with the additional percentage for the landlord and the capitalist, determines the price. But, friend, what determines that percentage? It certainly does not rest upon the will of the capitalist, otherwise why should he not ask \$20 for the loaf and \$5,000 for the car? And then again, what determines the price of labor? Let us see.

In order for silk to exchange with iron, or wood with wheat, there must be a third quality common to them both; otherwise there is no medium by which they can measure their exchanging values. What is it? Social labor. And how do we measure this social labor? By time. An hour, a day, a week, a month, a year. The common denominator, then, to all commodities is social labor, and therefore the value of any given commodity is determined by the amount of the socially necessary labor time it takes to produce or better to reproduce its kind. The determining line around which price fluctuates is therefore "the value of the commodity." And thus it is with labor power. Wages is but the name given to the price of this particular commodity. And the wages will be therefore determined by the amount of socially necessary labor time necessary to provide the physical necessities of a given standard of livelihood, the state of the labor market, together with the power of aggression of the master class and the power of resistance of the working class.

It is now seen that the wages do not depend upon the amount of product the wage earner turns out, but which of course must be a certain average, otherwise he will get fired, but upon the physical, social and market conditions. If the employer could increase the price of his commodities arbitrarily, all that he need to do would be to grant any wage demand and increase the price accordingly, but these commodities have to go on a market where the value and its monetary expression, price, are determined by the socially necessary labor, time and the law of supply and demand. To sum up, When you sell your labor power you produce the equivalent to your wages in a given number of hours. After that time is when the capitalist makes his profit, for the value of the commodities you produce are determined by the full time you put in (not simply the time you spend in producing your wages) plus the raw material, wear and tear of machinery, etc. Therefore if the general market says that a commodity is valued at eight hours to that of one and a half, the capitalist loses profit to the extent of one-half hour's value.

Profit is made out of the surplus time you work over and above the amount necessary to produce your wage. Then it is up to the workers to continually struggle to retard the decrease of wages and, if possible, to increase them, and also to reduce the number of hours, to the uttermost of their strength.

But as Marx says, "We fail generally from limiting ourselves to guerilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of SIMULTANEOUSLY trying to change it, instead of using our organized forces as a lever for final emancipation of the working class; that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wage system.

J. Ogden Armour and his counsel are drafting legislation for the regulation of the meat packing industry. If Mr. Armour's bill becomes a law there is no doubt the meat packing industry will be well regulated.

And come to think about it, if the heads of all the industries were to frame the legislation regulating their particular industries would it be anything so very new after all?

Now if Mr. Pillsbury and HIS counsel could only frame the legislation regulating the grain grading and grinding industry, all would be lovely for the farmers.

The American and British forces for peace and self-determination, both in France and Russia, are reported to be getting along fine.

The kept press calls the North Dakota legislature a bunch of bolsheviks. Within two years the other states will be saying "if that is bolshevism pass it on."

SOMEBODY HAD TO DO IT

By ANISE, in Seattle Union Leader.

Down in Sacramento

Forty-nine wobblies

Are on TRIAL,

And they have REFUSED

LAWYERS

And REFUSED

To TESTIFY

And refused to recognize

The COURT

In ANY WAY.

Only one spokesman

Elected by the rest,

Will STAND FORTH

And read their statement.

"This is OUR PROTEST," he says,

"Against the COURTS

Of California.

We have seen what

They did to MOONEY;

We have seen the death

Of five fellow-workers

Confined in this jail;

We have seen how officers

Act towards us;

And so we ANNOUNCE

To the world

That a trial

Of WORKINGMEN

In California

Is only a LEGAL

LYNCHING."

Well, of course, we know

What those men will get

For being so NERVY

And slapping the LAW

In the face.

But I remember

The "passive resisters"

Of England,

And I remember how

Roger Baldwin

REFUSED to give BAIL

And buy a month's freedom,

Saying: "I do not believe

In the system of BAIL

Which allows a man

With MONEY

To be at large,

While the poor man

ROTS in jail."

And I thought: I wouldn't like

To be in their place,

But SOMEBODY has to do it,

While the rest of us

Are passing resolutions

And organizing

And voting

And all of it counts;

There comes at last a time

When SOMEBODY

Has to get up and say,

Looking the judge in the face:

"This is a crooked game,

And I WON'T PLAY IT

Until the RULES are changed.

And the cards UNSTACKED!"

A MODERN PARODY

Sing a song of hole cards

A table full of chips,

Six or seven players

With bottles on their hips,

And when the pot was swelling

And all the boys held "fulls"

Wasn't that a dainty dish

To set before the "bills?"

The "kings" was in the "city mill"

Awaitin' for the honey.

The "court" was in the court house

To hook the guilty money.

The "state" received a ten spot

And (smiling) turned his back.

"Law" and "order" cinched the pot

And players nipped the sack.

—D. N. R.

The kept press has much to say

These days about "bolshevik agitators"

and strikes. But think of how

the kept press must have spouted

when Moses called that general

strike in Egypt. This disreputable

enemy of law and order not only

stopped all essential industry, but

took the workmen, who otherwise

would have been content to go on

making bricks without straw, away

with him.

If peace is to be permanent; if

swords are to be broken into bow-

shares and spears into pruning hooks;

why not have universal training in

plowing and pruning?—Devils Lake

(N. D.) Journal.



Current Comment

By Walter Thomas Mills.
AUTHOR OF "DEMOCRACY OR DESPOTISM"

HOW STATE SUCCEEDS AS A GUARDIAN

New Zealand Maintains a Department of Public Trust for Handling Estates, Insurance Against Accident, Disease and Poverty.

The seventh of a series of 10 articles by Mr. Mills, well-known writer and lecturer, on "New Zealand before the War."

By WALTER THOMAS MILLS.

Whatever disputes there may have been concerning limitations on the functions of the state, it is true as a matter of fact that the state of New Zealand has assumed responsibility for the guardianship of the helpless members of the community. Private charitable institutions have become made finally responsible to the state for maintaining proper standards and for humane treatment for the young, the diseased, the mentally defective and the aged.

Under English law provisions for the poor were made under the Elizabethan statutes for the avowed purpose of protecting the well-to-do against the approachments of "sturdy beggars"—the able-bodied poor. But today throughout the English-speaking world the government assumes responsibility in the matter of protecting all the members of society from extreme suffering from whatever cause.

At no point did the labor party in New Zealand justify its existence more completely than in dealing with the state's responsibility for the helpless members of the community. Under its leadership there has been provided pensions for young children, together with mothers' pensions, the purpose of which is to preserve the family and to make the mother, even in the homes which have been broken, still the caretaker and guardian of her own children. It has further provided free hospital care and medical service in all cases of childbirth, and all the year around trained nurses in each community whose service are free in the instruction of mothers in the care and feeding of young children.

It provides free medical aid and hospital care in all cases of serious illness and accident for those whose income falls below a certain standard. It provides free medical aid and finally for old age pensions. Helping the Aged Helps Old and Young. It is quite likely that the old age pension, wherever it has been established, has had the effect of immediately raising the standard of living for most families to a more marked degree than any other piece of legislation ever enacted. In a long conference, with Mr. Woods, a member of parliament in Tasmania, and who had been one of the original promoters of the old age pension, I learned that this conclusion had not only been the result of my own limited observation, but also of those who had been most vitally concerned in the movement from its beginning. I asked him what he regarded as the strongest argument to be used in securing the adoption of old age pensions. He replied, "That as the result of living under the law he would not think it well to make very much out of any of the arguments which he and others had used when fighting for its adoption. He said that the old age pension had ordinarily been supported for the sake of the old people as a matter of merciful consideration for the outworn, and that consideration had been sufficient to secure its enactment. In actual operation, however, it had done more for the children and for whole families than it had accomplished even for the aged.

In most families there is but one alternative for the aged poor; it is either the workhouse or a home with some of the children. Where the children also are poor, the average family income makes provision only for the average family, and in determining wages the income for the average family is taken into consideration being given only to the parents and their children. There is no general average of consideration for the needs of grandparents, and whatever is appropriated from the poor man's income for the grandparents is done at the expense of the children.

Every mother in such a home is constantly in the position of determining whether the old folks and children shall have the benefit of an income possibly sufficient for a low standard of comfort for one or the other, but rarely sufficient for both. The old age pension not only provides an income for the aged, but the income provided, small as it is, added to the receipts of the average poor man's family, not only provides for the necessary cash outlay for the aged, but has been found to be so distinct an advantage to the poor man's family that the grown children compete with each other to determine in which home there shall be found a corner warmed and waiting for the aged and penniless. Again, he said, in his own case (he was a linotype operator by trade) that as he had been having annual vacations for many years, he had always wanted to go across to the mainland of the Australian continent, but had never felt that he could afford it and each year the money he would have spent for his journey was added to his savings account in anticipation of the rainy day which must come when overtaken by old age.

The very first year after the old age pension went into operation he took the journey, but he said it had been some years after he did it before it occurred to him why he had done so. The old age pension had taken the sting out of the fear of old age, and immediately raised the standard

of living for the able-bodied and the well employed. In every country there are the estates of minors, of the deceased, of the insane, estates in process of liquidation under the orders of the courts, of the feeble-minded, and finally of the absent. Trustees appointed by the courts have frequently administered estates greatly to the advantage of the trustees and greatly to the injury of those dependent. It frequently happens that a poor man dies with \$50 in the bank and the court expenses are more than the \$50, and in this way the court fees and lawyer's charges take the man's money that should be available for the use of his own family.

When executors are named in wills it is frequently the case that they are named for family consideration because known and trusted, and it rarely happens that the neighbor who is best loved is at the same time most competent in managing the estates thus given to their care.

In New Zealand there is a public officer known as the public trustee. He is made by law the trustee under all appointments made by the court. He is authorized to act under the power of attorney for all absent persons and is further authorized to act as the executor of all the estates of the deceased, when named in the wills, and is made by law the executor of all who die intestate.

All sorts of properties are managed, all sorts of funds are administered and it rarely occurs any more that any other executor is ever named in a will. There are no charges for legal advising or for any of the ordinary legal proceedings, no charging for the drafting of wills, and in all services payment is finally made on the commission basis, which rarely exceeds 2 1/2 per cent of the sums finally paid to the beneficiaries.

My Own Experience. For instance, under the New Zealand laws, when I had signed an agreement to remain in New Zealand for two and one-half years, I discovered that it was cheaper to buy a home than to rent one even for so brief a period. When I came away I simply signed a power of attorney to the public trustee to dispose of the property for me. The property was sold and my equity in the cottage, amounting to \$1,000, has been collected in small installments and has now been fully paid and all costs to me for all services whatsoever amounted to the sum of \$25. It was a \$4,000 transaction and involved many settlements of old accounts standing against the property in the name of the person from whom I had made the purchase.

The nation guarantees all the transactions of this department. No one has ever lost a penny in any of its transactions. No one, helpless, absent or infirm, has ever been robbed or wronged, and it has never cost the government one penny to create, equip or manage this great social service.

The state is properly the guardian of our rights. The state can be the guardian of these rights most effectively by providing ways by which one may earn a living and so justify his right to life and by which he may pursue happiness protected against wrongs by those who prey upon the helpless with universal mutual insurance against accident and misfortune.

(The subject of the next article in this series will be "The Nation as a Pioneer.")

GETTING PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

There are two important ways of fighting public ownership of utilities such as railroads. The one is to prevent the utility from passing to public control; the other is to mismanage the utility after it is taken over. The real test of public ownership comes when it is in the hands of those favorable to it, a thing which is possible only in a few of our cities and in the farmer-controlled state of North Dakota. Public ownership is not so strong that it can withstand being handled by its enemies.

There has been much said, for instance, for and against the success of the present control of our railroads. The railroads are sure that it is a failure; the advocates of public ownership may feel that it has been a success. This much is certain, however, that even if it has failed, nothing has been proved against public ownership. It has not been in the hands of its friends. The measure was delayed until transportation had become unbearable, whereas the railroads ought to have been taken over as soon as we entered the war. The administration was not elected on a public ownership program, and what evidence of inclination there is shows that the administration is opposed to it. How, then, can the experiment prove anything? Moreover, how can we have any reasonable hope of efficient transportation under the existing conditions?

If we want efficient public ownership of any utility we must do more than put it across in law. We must elect to office men who are committed to it rather than to the private control which is to be displaced. Therein lies the logic of the league farmers of North Dakota in cleaning house politically at the same time they were putting over their public ownership measures.

Could the day completely lost if you have not laughed.