

Every class struggle is a political struggle. * * * The proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation.—Communist Manifesto.

The Commonwealth

A SOCIALIST WEEKLY

WE CANNOT TRAFFIC IN OUR PRINCIPLES. WE CAN MAKE NO COMPROMISE, NO AGREEMENT WITH THE RULING SYSTEM. WE MUST BREAK WITH THE RULING SYSTEM AND FIGHT IT TO A FINISH.—LEIBKNECHT, "NO COMPROMISE."

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EDITORIAL SERMONS FROM TEXTS ALWAYS AT HAND

AVOID FALSE ISSUES.

"Today an ever increasing percentage of voters are firmly convinced that our present system is a tax on thrift and industry and that such a tax is tyranny," says the Everett Labor Journal in discussing the single tax amendment recently adopted by Everett. The adoption of the single tax is not an injury to the working class. Dissipation of working-class political energy upon such an issue as single tax is an injury to the working class. The single taxer accepts as the main political issue the manner in which public revenues are raised. He seeks for a new distribution of the burdens of taxation. The problem which he propounds is necessarily the problem of the property owner. The socialist, on the other hand, lays main stress upon the manner in which all values are produced. He seeks for a new distribution of the products of labor. The problem which he propounds is the problem of the laborer who produces all values, public revenues included. Year after year the socialist makes his campaign, never changing the issue. So soon as the socialist forgets that his party is the party of the propertyless worker, so soon as he diverts his discussion from the terms upon which the laborer is forced to coin his energy into wealth, just so soon will his party cease to have a reason for being. There are parties galore organized to settle upon a proper division of the spoils among the spoilers. The laborer is the victim—rent, interest, profit, taxes—all are produced by his effort. No possible combination of the factors of production can produce wealth, in the economic sense, without the hand of labor. The earth is of first-rate importance in any discussion of wealth production. Ranking in importance with the earth itself is the labor by which the earth is made fruitful. Henry George is agreeing with this when he says, "Now for the production of wealth, two things are required—labor and land." Labor systems have always determined the condition of the laborer. Chattel, serf and wage system have been characterized by the looting of the laborer by the owners of the necessary factors in production. The most startling and glaring wrong of every labor system that has disgraced human association, has been the enjoyment of the products of toil by those who performed no toil. The power of masters has always resided in their private ownership of the vital factors in production. Land and machinery are both necessary factors in production today. It is useless to discuss which is more important—the absolute admits of no comparison. As well discuss the relative importance of the heart and the stomach to the human body as to discuss the relative importance of land and machinery in modern production. The worker is robbed through private ownership of the means of life—land and machinery. In the train of false prophets—tariff tinkers, prohibitionists, trust busters, comes the single taxer, with his "Lo, you are robbed by a wrong system of taxation." Systems of taxation have given advantage to one group of owners as against another group. The worker has been reserved to produce the funds out of which taxes were paid—he has never controlled the funds. Mr. Kauffman, an ardent tax reformer of Bellingham, said in a letter to the press about a year ago, that the taxing of milling machinery tended to discourage mill owners from establishing themselves and founding a pay roll. We workers live by the wage roll but we refuse to be blinded to the fact that under the single tax or any other tax, the wage roll is a robber's device and we are its victims. The wage roll means the sale of the wage worker's energy on the open market, on a par with calico, pig iron and other commodities. It means that his pulsing life is forever on the public auction block—subject to the law of supply and demand—moving briskly (yes, indeed!) during times of prosperity, stagnant during time of crisis. The crisis and the wage system are twin brothers. Wages to the man mean profits to the masters. Profits represent what the worker produces over and above his wages. No boss is ambitious to create a pay roll that will bring no profits. Accumulated profits which cannot find profitable reinvestment, mean over-production. Over-production means crisis—stagnation in the labor market and starvation for the laborer. As Dooley would say, "There ye a-are." If the machine owner is relieved of tax burdens, his profits increase. If wages went up with profits, the wage worker would be justified in fighting for single tax or any other measure that would increase the profits of the boss. The boss does not voluntarily pay more for shingle nails with every increase in his profits. Nor does he voluntarily pay more for labor-power. The market status of shingle nails and labor-power is the same. If profits determined wages, the section hand on the great railroad would not be asked to work for a dollar and thirty-five cents a day. Marx's words on free trade are applicable here: "Grant for an instant that there are no more grain laws, no more custom houses, no more city tolls—in short, that all the accidental circumstances on which the worker can still put the blame as being the cause of his miserable existence, have entirely disappeared—and you have torn aside so many veils which conceal from his eyes his true enemy. "He will see that capital become free does not render him less a slave than capital harassed by custom houses."

JUSTICE IN CALIFORNIA (?)

Judge Gray of Oroville, Cal., has sentenced to life imprisonment a man convicted of the theft of eighty dollars and some jewelry from a salesman. Yesterday's papers recorded a two months' jail sentence meted out to a man convicted of white slavery. The wage labor system puts human energy—which is human life—on the market. Let us not complain, therefore, if our courts condone trafficking in the sexual life of the woman. The law permits the flagrant robbery of labor through the wage system. Query: How old would the world be at the termination of John D.'s sentence if he were to serve a lifetime for each eighty dollars he has unlawfully appropriated?

SOCIALIST FLURY



"This is the state of man: today he puts forth The tender leaves of hopes; tomorrow blossoms And bears his blushing honors thick upon him: The third day comes a frost, a killing frost, And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root, AND THEN HE FALLS."

HURRY THE ELECTION RETURNS IN TO THE COMMONWEALTH.

Sedro-Woolley Campaign

Things Doing in Sedro-Woolley, Wash. Sedro-Woolley is witnessing one of the liveliest campaigns in her history this fall. The people's party, representing the special interests, grafters and capitalism, and the socialist party, representing the workers and true democracy and social revolution, are at it nail and tooth. The socialists have reaffirmed their allegiance to the principles of international socialism and as local relief measures, have submitted the following declaration of municipal policies to the voters. 1st. The socialist party of Sedro-Woolley solicit your support on matters of principle only. We have plenty of mud, but will not sling it unless we are compelled to do so in self defense. 2nd. We will wherever practicable do all city work on a day labor basis, and thus do away with the enormous profits paid to contractors, and we will if elected insist on the employment of resident workers, and a minimum wage of \$2.50 per day of eight hours. 3rd. We will submit all proposed franchises to the voters for their approval or disapproval, and will rigidly abide by the expressed will of the people. 4th. We favor the erection of public comfort stations, and will if elected, at once take steps to this end. 5th. We favor the opening of public building for the purpose of holding town meetings, and the discussion of public questions. 6th. We will if elected rigidly and impartially enforce the laws of the city with reference to saloons, etc., whatever those laws be. At the last local option election held in this city, a majority of voters voted to license saloons, and the socialist party cannot and will not transgress the expressed will of a majority because it is undemocratic for a minority to rule a majority. Had the result of the election been the opposite to what it is the socialist party, if in power, would enforce the law. Can any policy be fairer than this?

Win Ten Dollars

Wanted, three hustlers each to win ten dollars. Comrade A. B. Melville of Concrete has contributed thirty dollars to The Commonwealth to be distributed equally among the three hustlers who shall send most money to the paper for subscriptions during the months of December and January. It is stipulated that twenty-five dollars in subscriptions is the least amount for which one of these ten dollar prizes will be paid. Do not include names and addresses of those subscribing in a letter. Write them on a separate sheet. Mark the sheet "Contest" and let your own full name and address appear thereon. Money to cover subscriptions must accompany list of names. This office will at once forward receipt for money received. Hustlers on the socialist lyceum course may participate in this contest. It may seem to others that they would have an advantage but a yearly lyceum subscription can be credited to the hustler at only 50 cents, as that is the amount which we receive from Chicago on each subscription. Those taking subscriptions for The Commonwealth through the lyceum bureau must send us a list of the names. They will be unable to send the money, as that must come from Chicago, but we must have a list of the names here that we may check them up. This contest is open to workers everywhere. Get busy. Win ten dollars and swell the subscription list of The Commonwealth. December and January are the months.

Gentlemen of The School Board

It is an axiom—an evident truth—that self praise is no praise. Following the universal custom of the capitalist class of which you are all representatives, you have chosen a lawyer your president to disguise the truth and obscure the issue in the coming school election. You are trying once more to befog the mind of the worker. You do not disprove one of the facts or deductions of the circular you denounce. You say it requires no answer and then disprove your own statement by attempting to answer. Your own class has furnished us with the statistics used. Can you deny their truth? We do not disapprove the good moves you have made. They were demanded and forced upon your class by the evolution of the worker. But, gentlemen, you do not tell the whole story. You allow Senator Gore to make a democratic campaign speech and charge admission in our high school auditorium. You deny the use of the same room for free socialist lectures. You favor night schools and with them the system which grinds out ten hours of exhausting toil and then drives the tired brain to night education at the cost of needed sleep. You say "the school board is not chosen BY any one class." Why, then, should you attempt to deny us representation and to demand a school board chosen FROM only one class? In your evasive lawyer-like way you recognize a few truths. We thank you when you say we will consider no compromise; when you say that our board members Cort and Solie will represent those who elect them; when you recognize that we are united; when you acknowledge that we submerge the individual in the cause. May we ever remain true to the principles with which you credit us. Gentlemen of the board, stick to facts. Where will you get 5,000 strong in Everett? If you are a majority why not capture our locals and direct our boards you so much fear. The real truth is that you are a dominant minority, a selfish few. You call yourselves the "average American citizen." You are not—you are behind in the evolution of the human family. We, the working class, have long furnished the brain and muscle of industry—you the greed and power. We are now waking up. That we are going to run our own affairs. That we who work will soon rule, and that wisely, is as inevitable as is the upward tendency of the human race. In our circular "Socialism and Schools," we state that we demand practical education for all children; schools managed for the greatest good to the greatest number. What more need we say? Gentlemen of the board, do you not suspect that we the workers of the human race, are really the ones who represent the "independence and intelligence of the average American citizen?" —City Central Committee.

The McNamara Trial

Los Angeles, Cal., Nov. 30.—With eleven peremptory challenges he will clear the jury box down to seven jurors. During the past week the character of the talesmen and the attitude of Judge Bordwell has been most discouraging. The decisions have been of such a nature that the judge and chief counsel for the defense have on several occasions come into sharp conflict. Darrow sprung a sensation when he declared that he did not want jurors who were inclined to any half-way measures. "We want this defendant to be given his liberty or to be hanged," was the astounding declaration of the attorney when the judge hesitated concerning challenge of a juror who was not certain as to what he would do regarding circumstantial evidence. Darrow expected the prosecutor to challenge the man for cause and upon his failure to do so Darrow challenged. The judge kept his ruling in abeyance two days waiting to decide whether to permit the defense to challenge under the circumstances. Loran W. Travers stated that he could not convict entirely on circumstantial evidence where the death penalty was involved. Here is where Bordwell hesitated. (Continued on Page Two.)

EDITORIAL SERMONS

CONTINUED

A SIX-DOLLAR WAGE.

How do girls live who support themselves on six dollars a week? There are thousands of such girls in our large cities. Listen to Mrs. Craig's story—it is interesting because she speaks for so many. Mrs. Craig was forty-five years of age. She had found herself a penniless widow at forty. She found employment with one of the large department stores on Sixth avenue, New York, at a wage of six dollars a week. For her room she paid one dollar and seventy-five cents a week. It was on the third floor of a second-rate rooming house—an inside room opening on a small air shaft. A loose board partition separated her from the bath and toilet room. Six days of the week she paid fifteen cents for her principal meal—dinner. On Sunday she enjoyed a treat—a twenty-five cent meal. Breakfast and supper she prepared and ate in her stuffy room. In warm weather she could keep no butter. Five cents' worth of rolls served her for two meals. She cooked cocoa in a tin cup held over the gas. If she cooked coffee, her landlady would smell an infringement of the house rules in the use of gas for another purpose than lighting. Sometimes she bought a pot of jam which lasted for several days. A five-cent fish ball was often a supper delicacy. She kept the cost of supper and breakfast within fifteen cents. The store in which she worked required the girls to wear white waists and collars. Mrs. Craig might have washed waists in the bathroom, but that was against the rules also; and besides she had no means of ironing. Strive as she might she could not keep her laundry bill below fifty cents a week. Mrs. Craig was a church member and paid ten cents a week church dues. You see, she had been the wife of a minister. Now count, if you please, what was left for clothing and incidentals. Rather what should be left, but was not. For the store deducted from Mrs. Craig's envelope every week, at least fifty cents in fines. There was a fine for tardiness, which Mrs. Craig was careful not to incur. Miswritten checks carried a penalty. But the fine which no clerk seemed able to escape arose from goods returned by delivery wagons on account of wrong names and addresses. New York teems with foreigners who do not speak the language plainly. A package returned for better address cost the unhappy clerk twenty-five cents. Marx described the fine system of his day as follows: "Each manufacturer has for his own use a veritable code in which there are fines fixed for all faults voluntary and involuntary. The worker shall pay so much if he has the misfortune to sit down on a chair, if he whispers, talks, laughs, if he arrives a few minutes too late, if a part of the machine breaks, if he does not turn out objects of a desired quality, etc. "The fines are always greater than the real damage caused by the worker. And in order to give the worker every facility for incurring penalties, the factory clock is set ahead, bad raw materials are furnished, so that the worker shall make many breakages. "Dismissal awaits the overseer who is not sufficiently skillful to multiply the causes for fines." If the store in which Mrs. Craig worked remained open until ten o'clock, the clerk received thirty-five cents supper money. During rush season it was a common practice to remain open until nine-thirty—and pay no supper money. Mrs. Craig lived within walking distance of her work, and thus escaped a charge of twenty cents a day car fare which was paid by girls who lived beyond the Fiftieth street transfer. The transit company had shifted titles so as to be able to refuse transfers at Fiftieth street. You ask how she lived? Her beautiful white teeth were decaying and she could not pay for their repair. She worked in a damp basement and her feet were growing rheumatic. She often wept in the bitterness of despair for she saw only the poorhouse in prospect. "I have always tried to do right," she was wont to say, "but sometimes I am so hungry and my soul is so starved for just a little pleasure that I envy the pretty young women who are invited out to dinner, though I know their escorts are often scamps and rouses." The women of the restricted district are a part of a procession, we are told, but where does the procession begin? This procession will never cease until our pious politicians realize that their duty to the victims of a vicious industrial system does not begin and end with telling the unfortunate outcast to "move on."

WHO IS THE OWNER?

Henry George says: "That which a man makes or produces is his own as against all the world—to enjoy or to destroy, to use, to exchange or to give. No one else can rightfully claim it and his exclusive right to it involves no wrong to anyone else." The wage labor system of industry is ideally the institution through which the producer is robbed of his product. Why all this beating about the bush? Why not attack the robber outrightly when he is discovered, rather than to run backward through the centuries to take the grudge out on the bones of his great grandmother? If "that which a man produces is his own," how about society? Should not society control what it produces? And has not society produced or developed the great machinery of production and distribution? Do not the people collectively operate that machinery? Who, then, should own the machine and its product? Who, if not society? "Who is the owner?" asks Emerson. And he answers his own question: "The slave is the owner, and always was. Pay him!"

ON THE WAY TO LOS ANGELES.

Here in the Southern Pacific depot in San Francisco, we are asked to help the Salvation Army, which will give a dinner to poor children on Christmas day. "What would you do with the helpless under socialism?" Why, let charity give them a dinner once a year and let them go hungry the rest of the time, to be sure! That method has two virtues—it makes the poor appreciate the dinner when it comes; that is, all those who escape jail for stealing snacks in the long interim "between drinks." And it gives the charitably disposed a field in which to exercise their benevolence.