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Education

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Emancipation



Freedom in

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Democracy

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EDITORIALS

SOCIO-BIOLOGIC

EXPLANATION OF THE AGITATOR.

(By an analogy—i. e. the relationship of the agitator to a definite cell type in the physical organism.)

I am aware that analogical reasoning is criticised by some. I feel, however, that the later day universality of the application of biological attributes to society justifies me in the use of the analogy which I shall apply in the text of the following argument:

I have found most agitators sufficiently voluble to explain everything but themselves. It is for this reason that I write about the agitator, since, in a really accurate sense, he is not, to my mind, understood, be it within the pale or radical circles or without. I do not mean by this that radicals do not grasp the psychologic or historic import of the type, but rather, that his social place, in a scientific sense, is not clearly appreciated. Certain it is that in non-radical circles he is much misunderstood and mis-interpreted in every sense. He is a "menace to society," a "chronic kicker," etc. A catch phrase will always satisfy the conservative and thoughtless mass.

The bulk of our radicals, too, translate him into phrases; phrases however, of a much different meaning. He is "one of the intelligent minority;" he is a "hero of the dawn," or he is one of the "vanguard of human progress." The maximum of his sentimental apotheosis is reached in the more or less hysterical tenor of the anarchists, according to many of whom he is nothing else than a secondary Jesus, "born under a different star," who has come to judge of the quick and the dead of capitalist society. So it is, that in his exoteric and intense dissection of the colossal social drama now unfolding itself, the radical has neglected to apply, esoterically, the same process to himself. This is the more noteworthy, too, when it is considered that the agitator is an essential and integral part of the drama.

A mere historical explanation of the agitator will not do. History can but indicate to us the active relation in which he has stood to man in the past. It cannot give us his fundamental causation. It can answer the question, "What has he done?" It cannot answer the immensely more involved question, "What is the scientific significance of his being here?"

By the agitator per se, I understand what may be called the temperamental radical, this term being preferable to "agitator" in that it is more indicative of the real character of this most interesting type of homo. The mere "agitator" may be as conservative as progressive. He is one whose business it is to create a commotion only—be it in the interest of whatever cause. To put it into concrete form; it would be manifestly erroneous to assert that those agitating for the re-establishment of the Manchu dynasty in China were progressive in tendency. The temperamental radical, on the other hand, is the true progressive. He is so simply because it is in his nature to be so; a nature the result of the sum of the effects of the economic and social conditions to which his progenitors were subjected. The genius of democracy permeates his spirit and saturates his fibre. Being always in possession of ideas more advanced than those of his fellows, he is the natural teacher of mankind.

The result of his teaching is the production of those ideological changes in the mental attitude of men, in accord with evolutionary dictum, as established, in a social sense, by prevailing production and distribution. This is essential to revolution, and indicates a reactive self defense of the social organism against the destructive tendencies which have developed within it. Thus, the essential function of the agitator is one of resistance to social parasitism in its class and institutional manifestations. It is he who offers the first and most determined resistance to the inroads of ruling class brigandage and legalized pillage. Alert, and farther seeing than his fellows, he reacts most sensitively toward all irritating stimuli which are the product of forces inimical to the welfare of the masses. He opposes the army and other destructive military organizations, he endeavors to counteract the socially toxic influences secreted by reactionary literature, and everywhere attacks

the position of his natural enemy, endeavoring to drive him from society, in the performance of his sociobiologic and history long task. In the words of one of our most advanced temperamental radicals, Whitman, "We take up the task eternal, Pioneers, O! Pioneers!" All this, however, not because he is the transcendent martyr of man, but solely because it gratifies his natural instincts to do it.

Having now arrived at the necessary distinctions, let us apply the thesis indicated by the caption of the article. In the zoological research of modern histologists and physiologists, it has become clearly established that certain cell types or forms are chiefly concerned, in the performance of their especial function, with the repulsion of pathogenic organism and the protection of the organism of which they are normally an integral part, from the inroads of such invaders. It being granted that society is really an organism, having a controlling center functioning as a brain, institutions as organs, etc., the close and peculiar parallelism of the above case to society is at once apparent.

This particular cell of which I speak is commonly known to microscopists as the leucocyte or white blood cell. A number of different varieties exist in the tissues of man, the number varying according to the mode of classification, (whether chemical, morphological, etc.) The cells are found, in their developed form chiefly in the blood stream, but occur as well in most of the other tissues of the body. Their function being primarily a destructive one, that of the destruction and elimination of bacteria and other foreign substances inimical to the welfare of the animal economy, they are urged on by a ceaseless restlessness in the performance of their phagocytic mission. When an infection with its concomitant inflammation occurs at any point, the leucocytes muster their battalions of diminutive soldiers, and at once proceed to besiege the position of the enemy. By the use of their peculiar power of locomotion, that of amoeboid movement (a process by which the amoeba moves by means of projections of its protoplasmic mass called pseudopodia, or false feet,) these militant cells soon establish an investment of their foes position. The conflict which follows is one of myriads involving a list of casualties unknown upon the Gettysburgs or Waterloos of human history.

In these conflicts it is the mission of the white cells to check the progress of the adverse condition (they being alert, and first upon the scene), until the organism can rally its forces to their assistance. They are the advance guard.

For the purpose of a limited writing such as this, it would be impractical to carry the analogy to a more advanced point. To the student of sociology, however, it will be at once apparent that the analogy possesses a peculiar significance. It serves to indicate the true sociobiologic status of the agitator, i. e., that of a definite cell type in the social organism, with a specific function to perform. Viewed in this light, his place in the social category becomes more apparent.

PHILIP S. HALEY,

"HIGH COST OF LIVING."

By JAY SMITH.

The question that has been and is yet the paramount issue in all newspapers and magazines is the "High Cost of Living." This question has never been explained by any investigating committee or any of the writers to the satisfaction of all the people. It seems that no writer who has attempted to deal with this question has ever explained the real cause so that it could be understood by the working class, and for that reason I want to give the readers of working class papers a few points to think about. In the first place, the workers must know something about Value, Price and Profit. Value is one thing. Price is another, and profit is still another. It cannot be said that the high cost of living is caused by the increased cost of production, for in all industries we find that improved methods of production have decreased the cost of production; that is, the same amount of labor power expended has increased production and without any increase in wages to the labor that is employed. Now, as the cost of production is always determined by the amount of labor power employed to produce a thing, we see that even the value of the gold dollar is reckoned by the amount of labor power embodied in it, the length of time that social labor is employed to produce a gold dollar is the basis from which to reckon the value of labor power in the production of clothing, lumber, shoes, hats and all other necessities of life. Hence, if by improved methods of producing gold, we find that the same number of hours social labor has produced a double quantity of gold, then we find that the gold has only cost half as much to produce it; therefore, we find that gold has decreased in value. Why? Because it only requires half the labor power to produce gold under the improved methods of production, and for that very reason we see all other commodities advance in price, or we find that the gold dollar has decreased in value, that is, the gold dollar will not buy as much as it would twenty years ago, and it is all because gold is produced with less labor power than it was twenty years ago.

It cannot be said that the scarcity of the products of labor is the cause of the high cost of living, for we find that all the warehouses of the capitalists are brim-full and the market dull, and why? It is because the wage workers are working for less value than ever before. Why? Because the wage workers are producing twice as much as they did twenty years ago, and for the same wages, or even less. This increased production by improved methods has not been met with an increase in wage to the workers, hence, the surplus increase has accrued to the employer and not the worker. A few years ago, the lumber companies paid \$2.00 per day for feeding machines that would surface 60 feet of lumber per minute. To-day the same lumber companies pay the same wages (\$2.00) for feeding the same machines that will and do surface 120 feet per minute. So you see the wage worker has doubled his production with the same amount (seemingly to the worker) of labor power, the same number of hours, but while the worker has doubled the production of lumber he has received no increase in wages, so you can see that this question of "High Cost of Living" begins right on the job where labor is exploited by increased production without a corresponding increase in wages. Now, Mr. Workingman, common laborer and skilled mechanic, this question of living "high" is going to cause you to lose more sleep in the very near future than it has ever done in the past. More new improved machines are being invented every day, and for what purpose? To increase production with less labor power; that is, the employers will only need half the number of wage workers in the future to carry on the system of production they have needed in the past. This question will never be solved and settled by a political Congress, or any other body of parasites who do no useful work, it must be settled by the workers on the job where they are robbed of their labor power through improved methods of production. For every improvement in machine of production, there must be a corre-

ponding increase in wage or a decrease in the hours of social labor. This is the only thing that will ever keep pace with the capitalists method of robbing the workers on every job. When the working class begin to read and understand the purpose of the I. W. W. they can easily understand why the capitalists fight that organization so hard. The Industrial Workers of the World is the only clear-cut labor organization in existence to-day that aims to raise wages and cut down the hours of hard labor to where the workers themselves will control all the jobs in all industries, making their own labor laws in their Halls and then enforce those laws on the job. If the working class want industrial freedom they can get it by all joining the I. W. W. If they want slavery to be their portion for all time to come they will have it by remaining unorganized.

HOW TO MAKE A JOB PAY.

By E. F. DOREE.

The history of the United States affords to the world a great lesson, especially from the economic viewpoint.

We have watched the great progress and marveled, we have seen a nation in a single century, yes, in less time, advance from the ox-team to its express trains, from the horse and rider to wireless telegraphy, from the scythe and flail to the combine harvester; we have seen the power of water, steam, electricity and gas harnessed to do the work of man.

But for what good? Philosophers of old dreamed of the day of perfected tools, and to them that day meant the days of ease for the laborer. But this was not to be. As the machine became more proficient instead of making the lot of the laborer easier it made him look for a job. Instead of shorter hours it meant unemployment; instead of a slower pace it meant speeding up and competition for jobs has been made the slogan of the day.

And how the workers go for these jobs. The job, job, job. What is it? That thing millions of men seek to attain? How they strive for it. They go rushing from place to place, they beg, they humble themselves, they beseech, they scramble, they bribe foremen, they pay agents, they prove their efficiency, they carry recommendations—just to get a job.

And then—they work hard, they work long, they cut wages, they betray their fellow-worker, they spy on him, even going so far as to kill him—and again they bribe foremen and just to keep the job—sacred job.

They storm the bitter winters of the Yukon, the torrid sun of Panama, the fever swamps of Dixie, the blizzards of Alberta, all this and more for the sake of a job.

When development in the industries first created unemployed in the United States, the cry of Horace Greeley went up "Go West, young man go West and grow up with the country." And West they went and stretched a railroad with them. As they reached the Pacific from the shores across the sea came the cry; "Go East, young man, go East and grow up with the country," and they (Chinese and Japanese) went East and the races met—the last meeting place on earth.

No more do we seek new lands; there are none. Now we must solve the great problem, of poverty, crime, enforced prostitution, woman and child slavery—and the many varieties of hell handed the workers in this day and age under the light of capitalism.

When the forces met on the Pacific and gobbled the last of the United States, then came the new cry, "Gold—blessed gold found in Alaska!" No one but a pioneer of Alaska, the early birds of '96 and '98 know or will ever know the struggle of that day.

Men from all over, men of courage, men of brawn, men who were made of metal, buckled on their pack and "mushed" over the Chilcot and White Pass into the frozen region of the Yukon, while others battled the wind storms of Nome, for what? For gold, gold—they could not eat it, nor was it good for shelter; nay, one could not even amuse himself playing with it.

They left a land of food, clothing and shelter in abundance, a land where amusement was. Why? Because a master had said to them, "This is mine, for it I must have gold." So they faced the Hell of the North—to get gold—so that they might come back to the States and buy that which they had previously produced—food, clothing, shelter and amusement.

This I know, for I have seen it, lived it.

But Alaska, too, has developed. Now they have found wealth in her fish, her forests, her coal (which Alaska people can't use, as it is held for embryo capitalists) and her oil and her copper.

This has been found, but where are the pioneers, the men who went to seek and explore? We don't know, but when we look at the graveyards and stray crosses on the bleak hill sides, I think we have spoken for many of them.

Who own the mines, the railroads, the fisheries, well, in fact, Alaska! Moral: "Ask the Guggenhiems." We are sure the workers do not.

To-day, though, Alaska and its gold rushes of a few years ago are past. To-day it is in Alaska as elsewhere. Look for a job—work and work like hell.

In the mines—and we might say here—the poorest mines to work in in the world. Slaughter houses and rheumatism breeders. The canneries—fish canneries, the writer doesn't know much about them—except that they can be located with the nasal organs eighteen miles against the wind.

Wages? Same damn thing as any where else. Same as nothing. All you get for work is work, work, work, more work until you get old enough to starve to death. No more Alaska stake blowing into Seattle as of yore.

What then you ask is there left to be done. ORGANIZE. Get together and force good wages and fewer hours of labor. ORGANIZE into ONE BIG UNION.

Workers of the world, wherever found, awaken to your material interests! Do you enjoy catching fish, mining gold and silver, and copper and coal, building railroads across snow cap mountains and rain swept coasts? Do you like it? If not, what are you intending to do? Nothing? There is no place left to go. Unemployment is general, jobs unsteady, work hard and you are getting older. ACT NOW! Don't be a slave forever! Make the bosses come through with some of that gold if you must have it to get the good things of life.

Get into the ONE BIG UNION. If there is a local in your locality, get in at once, if there is none get 20 men to sign a charter application and send \$10 to Vincent St. John, 164-166 W. Washington street, Chicago, Ill., and receive supplies and have a local in your community. DO IT NOW.

The I. W. W. is the cry of the day. Come, act now; join and be a pioneer in the movement that is to abolish capitalism. You won't regret it.

Come, you workers! Be a man, a union man, a free man, an I. W. W.