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Maynard Shipley Editor and Manager
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THE LESSON OF THE MINIMUM WAGE LAW FOR WOMEN.

That "immorality" is an inevitable consequence of inadequate wages; that crime and prostitution are the natural results of poverty and ignorance, are truisms. No one of any consequence would undertake to disprove such obvious facts. We assume that no one who is not a monster of selfishness would gladly see the womanhood and girlhood of this state slaving their lives away for the employing class at less than a living wage.

But the capitalist system is replete with contradictions. Business is not a religious service. Oh, no. "Business is business," and under this cruel and wholly unmoral phrase lurks a smiling devil, the embodiment of greed. Not that the individual business man is wholly bad, or even bad at all. The employers of women are often just as much victims of capitalist immorality as are their victims.

The capitalist is forced by the relentless competition incident to capitalism to buy his labor power as cheaply as his rival can in a distant locality. How can a Washington capitalist can fruit on a nine-dollar wage scale and sell it in the open market in competition with his rival in another state who pays five dollars for the same service?

The opponents of a legally enforced minimum wage scale are justified in their contention to this extent. "Business is business," and business is hell. So it can only breed hellish conditions. You can't gather grapes from the thistle of capitalism. You can't reform a system and make it good and beautiful when it is basically and inherently bad and ugly. If you patch it up here it breaks out there. Dam up the stream of its evil in one place and it bursts forth with redoubled destructiveness some where else.

So we are not surprised that Commissioner E. W. Olson, of the state bureau of labor, is alarmed at the very forces the would-be reformers have set loose. Says he:

Commissioner Olson's Remedy.
"If by establishing a minimum wage the working women and girls of the state receive more pay, as it is the popular desire they should, there will inevitably develop a tendency on the part of employers to replace the higher priced girl and her products by labor and products that can be secured more cheaply. This is the natural result of direct and keen competition with the great starvation wage sweatshops of the East, which are constantly placing their products on Washington markets."

"Therefore, something must be done to counteract this tendency, and thereby insure the working women their positions at the higher wages which it is desired to create through the establishment of minimum wages."

"This counteraction must come through the people themselves, and I am able to see only one method by which it can be brought about: The purchasers of products of the industries that are now employing women, and which it is desired shall continue to employ them at the higher wages, must deliberately elect to purchase the products of industries and the wares of establishments that pay the higher wages. If the working girls and women are to profit by the administration of the minimum wage law, somebody must contribute by some means that profit."

But Will It Work?
There you are. The average cost of labor power must inevitably determine the average price of labor's products, and these products will be bought where they can be obtained at the lowest price. The dear people will not voluntarily tax themselves directly on their supplies in order to raise artificially the cost of labor power in their beloved state. For they, too, are victims of the impracticable capitalist system, having themselves, most of them, labor power to sell. It is nip and tuck to "keep up appearances," whatever one's "station in life" happens to be. So it is evident that the reformer is moving in a vicious circle.

The women ought not to be asked to work for less than a decent living wage on the basis of an eight-hour work-day. And the thrifty citizen who must needs maintain himself as a profit-monger or join the growing

Talks of Work In City of Milwaukee

(Continued from Page One.)

source of soreness, he said. Others he summed up as follows:
The street car company was required to pave and keep in repair the streets between the tracks and a foot on each side. They had repaired this space, but the city had done the paving. The Socialists went to court and forced the company to obey its franchise requirements, costing the corporation thousands of dollars saved to taxpayers.

The same company was required by franchise to sprinkle its right-of-way. The city had done it. The Socialists, after a court fight, set the company right.

The administration appointed an assessor who began elevating assessments on corporations. The appointment was attacked in the courts, but the administration won. The Socialist idea, said the speaker, was that the corporations raised the problems and that the corporations should foot the bills.

The gas company was furnishing two kinds of gas (through the same pipe) at 80 cents and \$1. for cooking and lighting, respectively. Milwaukee legislators, declared the speaker, instituted a bill in the state assembly fixing 50 cents as the gas rate, leading to a compromise at 70 cents and a promise to further reduce rates when the corporation could afford it. Seidel asked what was the Everett gas rate, and when told it is \$1.35, remarked: "Well, go ahead and pay it; you are rich. You can afford it."

Corporations Were Brought to Time and Their Graft Eliminated.

The city owned its fire and police alarm systems—everything except the transmitters and receivers at either end. These were rented from the telephone company at \$3 annually for each instrument. It was learned the instruments could be bought outright for \$1.73. This was done and the telephone company notified to remove its boxes.

Investigations of street paving, declared Seidel, revealed that graft to the extent of \$1 a square yard had been paid by the taxpayers. Milwaukee had been paying \$1.35 to \$1.60 per square yard, to private contractors, who worked men 10 to 11 hours a day and paid \$1.90 daily wages. The city bought a plant and materials, employed men at \$3 a day for 8 hours, and proved that streets could be paved for less than \$1 a square yard. "Of course," he added, "the contractors were sore. I don't blame them."

The Socialists stopped the sale of liquor in the redlight district. This resulted in the elimination of rental incomes from property owned by people so respectable they wouldn't collect the rents themselves, and some of them prominent church members, and they didn't like it, said Seidel.

The Bosses Did Not Like the Socialist Officials.

Women were appointed factory inspectors. They made 51,000 inspections in one year. Factory owners were forced to install sanitary conditions, blowers, windows and doors, ventilators, suction fans, and other things benefiting the health of operatives and the factory owners didn't like it, said Seidel.

The gamblers were attacked and forced to quit; the advertising practices of Milwaukee newspapers were attacked and they were forced to purge their columns.

The result of it all was, declared Seidel, that in the election of 1912 the Socialists found arrayed against them the "pie-hunters," the street paving contractors, the loan sharks, the brewery interests, the women of the redlight district and their hangers-on, the respectable and church-member owners of the redlight district property, the factory proprietors, the gamblers, and nine of the ten Milwaukee newspapers—the Socialists having established a daily paper, and all these forces lined up under the banner of the non-partisan party. The Socialists were beaten, he declared, in 1911 by a majority of 30,000; in 1912 by 20,000; in 1913 by 12,000, and just a few weeks ago by 8,000; and Seidel predicted that another year would see the Socialists restored to power in Milwaukee.

"The line-up in the campaign a few weeks ago was 'Americanism against Socialism,'" said Seidel. "We have them making the last fight, in the last ditch—under the flag."

Century Dictionary: "Socialism is any theory or system of social organization which would abolish entirely, or in great part, the individual effort and competition on which modern society rests, and substitute for it cooperative action; would introduce a more perfect and equal distribution of the products of labor, and would make land and capital, as the instruments and means of production, the joint possession of the members of the community."

COMRADE OF BIRMINGHAM WRITES ON ERRORS IN WORKING CLASS LOGIC.

The most of the old people of today think that the young must vote, think and act as they have always done. They do not stop to realize that our wants and theirs are not in most cases identical. There are so many people who read but one line of literature, making it hard to spring a new idea on them without getting an answer that "It's too anarchistic," "Won't work," "There's nothing wrong; the agitators cause all the trouble," etc. What kind of a chance has the rising generation of today? A man with a small capital has a poor show. Figures show that hundreds of these go bankrupt every month. The worker has to compete with his fellow worker. At the present rate of employment in a few years one-half of the workers will be out of work all the time. Women and children are displacing men from the factories. There is, according to the latest figures, about 2,000,000 tramps in this country. In 1860 there were none. The wealth of the nation has drifted into but a few hands. About 82 per cent of the people do not own homes. If men go on a strike for a little better living the militia is called out and the men are clubbed back to their job. The strikers lost in Michigan and at present are having a real war with gunmen, hired by capitalists, in Colorado.

But when the Socialists say it is the system that causes this, the "boneheads" say that the system is all right; and the government will handle things all right. They have a real bright future mapped out for us. Some say that the ones who can't vote yet will have to build their own future at the ballot box, yet they kick when you say you want to change the system by voting the Socialist ticket.

A possible war with Mexico tickles them. It's nice to stay at home and read the war news but to go there and be shot at is an entirely different thing.

After reading "War, What For?" I prefer staying home and reading the papers. There's a lot of difference between old muzzle-loading cannon and modern breech loading guns, not to mention airships and rapid-fire guns. Three of the most powerful weapons used by the capitalists to keep the workers in ignorance are the schools, pulpit and the press. The schools are of the most importance.

Yours for Socialism,
NORMAN BILES,
Birmingham, Wash.

DO YOU WANT AN ANTI-WAR CARTOON ON BOOK PAPER?

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In our issue of May 14 we published an anti-war cartoon which has proved to be most effective. Many comrades have pinned the picture up in conspicuous places, some in their locals, others in their homes. This will make excellent propaganda, and in order to further encourage our readers in making use of this cartoon, we hereby agree to send to any one a print of this picture on heavy white book paper, void of all printed matter, on the following terms: Send us a request for the cartoon and either one 25-cent (three months) subscription card, or three 10-cent trial subscription cards. The picture will thereupon be furnished free of charge, mailed to you in a pasteboard tube.

FOR YOUR OWN BENEFIT.

Comrades not receiving the paper regularly can do us no greater service than to report the matter to us. We trace up these cases until the difficulty is located. Remember, that a mailing list cannot be perfectly re-adjusted in a day, and not at all without the co-operation of our readers.

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A Plain Statement of The Facts

Why the Everett Piano House Quit, and Why the Bottom Has Dropped Out of Piano Prices

To you, good people of Everett and vicinity who do not already own a piano.

The Everett Piano House, which was composed of two well and favorably known young Everett business men, were unable to further finance their business—were not getting enough cash out of it to pay running expenses. They tried for several months to raise sufficient funds to carry on the business and finally, seeing that things were going from bad to worse, agreed to surrender—to quit the piano business entirely. The stock of talking machines and records were shipped back to the jobbers and the pianos and player pianos were turned over to the wholesalers and manufacturers from whom they were consigned. These pianos were not bought outright on open account, but were subject to settlement in cash or customers' contracts when they were sold. (Many piano houses get their pianos this way as it requires immense capital to buy for cash and sell on payments covering a period of two or three years or more.) Now then, it was up to the owners of these pianos to do something with them—either to sell them here and realize at least cost for them or ship them back, the latter only adding to the cost of each instrument and it would still have to be sold. That's where I come in. I'm here at the request of the owners of these pianos to sell them or ship them and close up this store. To you who are the least skeptical as to the genuineness of the bargains offered—bring in any or all ads. that have appeared, read carefully any offer I have made, then come in and see how cheerfully I'll live up to it.

J. C. Foley, agent for the wholesalers and manufacturers closing out Everett Piano House, 2820 Colby Ave., Everett, Wash.