

Department for Agitation and Education

Edited by
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Facts for Speakers

(Clip for your notebook)

Sources given upon request. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope to "Facts for Speakers", 37 Grove St.

FIRST FRUITS OF SOVIET RECOGNITION — JOBS FOR CALIFORNIA WORKERS. About 25,000 tons of hulk sea salt, bought by the Soviet Union were shipped from Oakland, Calif. in December, 1932. Five American bottoms carried this salt to Vladivostok for the Soviet fisheries. The season's catch of fish on the Siberian coast was exceptionally good. This type of salt is used only for salting fish.

About 175-200 workers were employed for a period of about six weeks in harvesting, freighting, loading and shipping the salt from this coast.

Due to the pressure of traffic on the Soviet railways it was found cheaper to ship the salt in from outside than to get it from European Soviet Union.

PROFITS UP — WAGES DOWN.

California grape growers made \$7,305,000 in profits from grape work in 1932. This is twice as much profit as in 1932. Profit in 1932 amounted to \$3,566,000.

Cotton growers in October, pleaded that increased wages for cotton pickers would "break" them. Yet they got \$7,310,000 more in 1933 than in 1932 for the crop.

Oranges, apples, pears, cherries, plums, almonds, peach ranchers—all got from 5% to 50% more for the crop in 1933 than 1932. And consequently, more profits.

40,000 tons of pears are rotting on the trees and ground in California and growers got 50% more for the marketed crop than in 1932.

In 1931, Glumett Lake factory workers got an average of 57.36 per hour. In 1932 came another wage drop to 46 an hour. A decrease of about 20%. The cost of food has gone up over 17% since April 1933.

TAXES UP.

42 State legislative acts in 1933. 32 passed new taxes onto the workers to the tune of over \$2,000,000 per year.

SOVIET SOCIAL INSURANCE INCREASES.

Soviet industries spent 10.3 rubles per insured person in 1928. In 1932 this increased to 141.7 rubles. For the 2nd Five Year Plan greater appropriations are made.

Due to no unemployment, the Social Insurance Department concentrates on improving health conditions of Soviet workers.

In 1932, 1,500,000 workers received free treatment in sanitariums and rest homes.

U. S. A. UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASES.

Despite Roosevelt's false bragging about revival of business, 580,000 were added to the ranks of the unemployed in November in the U. S. according to A. F. of L. estimates. The total figures are much greater because the A. F. of L. estimates are based largely on skilled workers and greater unemployment exist among the unskilled.

WAR

Henry Morgenthau, known cabinet member, made a first estimated cost of the World War. 7,000,000,000. This sum is equal to \$20,000 for each of the 350,000,000 families in the U. S. The capitalist class in their habit of hoarding markets and profits, caused this appalling expense.

The following table of World War casualties, published by the U. S. War Dept., shows conclusively that 32.6% of those mobilized are listed as casualties. One man out of every two who was in the War was either killed or wounded.

65,038,810—Mobilized forces, all belligerents.
8,538,315—Killed and died.
21,219,452—Wounded.

7,750,918—Prisoners and missing.
37,494,186—Total casualties.

It would take 45 days for the dead in the World War to pass a reviewing stand 10 in a row, second apart.

About a billion dollars was spent by the U. S. in 1933 in preparation for the next war.

CORRECTION

We regret very much that in the first article by Comrade Darcy addressed to Socialist Party members, a typographical error appeared in the first paragraph. "Uniting on the five point demands outlined does not obligate the Socialist Party to change its other principles, but does NOT obligate you to struggle." We are sure that most of our readers see that the second "not" should be out.

EDITORIAL

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Is the Western Worker in the Newspaper Division in your town Library? Hundreds of thousands of workers, poor farmers, and other sections of the population that we want to reach, visit libraries in all towns daily to read newspapers, periodicals and books. A little effort on your part will get the librarians to put this literature on their shelves. Organize several committees and individuals, and see the librarian, and in most cases a little friendly persuasion or if necessary, pressure, will make our literature available to the members of the library.

YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE

It is four weeks since the Y. C. L. Convention. At the convention, decisions were made to form uniformed drill squads. We have yet to hear from the first drill squad. This is not Young Communist tempo.

IN ANTI-FASCIST AGITATION

Some German comrades have called our attention to the fact that frequently comrades are careless in the way they speak against Hitlerite Fascism. Especially because of the persecution of innocent German people during the war in this country, they are very sensitive to any renewed attacks upon them. The working class and the revolutionary movement have nothing but the deepest friendship and comradeship towards the masses in Germany. While we fight against and hold in contempt the sadistic Hitler murderers, we should not forget that Germany has produced some of the finest leaders that the world's working class has enjoyed. Our struggle is not against the German people. On the contrary. It is against Hitlerite Fascist barbarism, and the foreign capitalists who have supported it. It's a demonstration of solidarity with the Revolutionary masses of Germany.

Fundamentals of a Communist Political Education

Lecture 2

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CAPITALIST ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

What is there that distinguishes the economic structure of capitalism from other systems of society? There are a number of such distinguishing characteristics.

1.—COMMODITY PRODUCTION.

If we examine closely the process of production under capitalism, we see that in that system, commodities are produced. What is there remarkable in that? The remarkable thing about it is that the article is not produced for the use of the producer, but is a product made for market.

An article is not a commodity when it is produced for the use of the maker. When a farmer sows corn, crops, threshes, and binds it, and then makes it into bread to be eaten by himself, that bread is not a commodity. It is simply bread.

An article becomes a commodity only when it is bought and sold; that is, when it is produced for the market. Every factory, every work-shop, usually produces only a limited variety of commodities, and one can easily see that in cases of this kind, the wares are not produced for personal use. For example, when a chemical manufacturer produces motor oil, it is evident that he is not producing it for himself and his immediate family alone, but for the market.

In the capitalist system of society, all articles are produced for the market; they are all commodities.

Commodity production presupposes private property. The manufacturer and, if he is a land owner, the factory and the production apparatus, with all the buildings, machinery and other property.

2.—MONOPOLY OF THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION BY THE CAPITALIST CLASS.

To realize the nature of capitalism, it is not sufficient merely to state one of its characteristics. It is only when all its distinguishing characteristics are taken together that we can understand the difference between capitalism and all preceding systems of society. If one considers the first characteristic of capitalism, commodity production, one will find that

there can be a system of commodity production that is not necessarily capitalism. For example, the handicraft system. The handicraftsmen worked for the market, and sold their products. Those products are therefore commodities, and the whole system is a commodity-producing system. In spite of this, however, the system is not a capitalist system, being a mere simple system of commodity production. Before this simple system can become capitalist, the means of production (tools, machines, buildings, land, etc.), must first pass into the possession of a small class of rich capitalists, and on the other hand, the largest part of the independent handicraftsmen and poor farmers must be degraded to the position of workers.

This monopoly possessed by the capitalist class of the means of production is the second characteristic of the capitalist system of society.

3.—WAGE LABOR.

The numerous class of people who are not left in possession of any property become wage workers under capitalism.

What is wage labor? Formerly in the period of slavery, the slave owner could buy and sell the slaves in all the ways that things or cattle are bought and sold.

Under wage labor the man himself is neither bought nor sold. What is bought and sold

is his power to labor, not himself. The wage laborer is free in person. He is merely hired. On the surface it would even appear as if capitalist and worker were equal. The employers' apologists frequently say "If you do not want to work, don't do it. You are free. No one will compel you." In reality, workers and capitalists live under different conditions. The workers are haunted by the fear of starvation. Hunger impels them to hire themselves to the employers; that is, to sell their labor power. There is no other way out. With bare hands alone, no production can be carried on under capitalism. Just try to forge steel or to weave, or to build without machinery and tools. Under capitalism the land is also in private hands. It is impossible to find a free spot on which to start independent production. The freedom of the worker to sell his labor power, the freedom of the capitalist to buy it; this "equality" of capitalists and workers simply means that the workers, in order to escape starvation, are COMPELLED to work for the capitalists.

They sell their labor power for a price called wages. Similar to the market where wool, cheese, or machines are sold, rises the labor market where the proletariat, i. e., the wage laborer, sells his labor power. Consequently the capitalist system is distinguished by the fact that wage labor itself is turned into a commodity.

Wage labor appears therefore, as the third characteristic of the capitalist system.

IN SUMMARY:

The distinguishing marks of the capitalist system are therefore:

- 1.—Production for the market (commodity production).
- 2.—Monopoly of the means of production by the capitalist class.
- 3.—Wage labor.

CONDITIONS OF CAPITALIST PRODUCTION.

All these characteristics are inter-related and form parts of the same pattern. They constitute the "conditions of capitalist production". As can already be seen, these conditions have no plan or organized character. For example, each individual capitalist with his factory and workers, etc., produces blindly. That is, in an anarchistic manner without a scientific and exact coordination between his manner and volume of production, the manner and volume of production of all other capitalists, and the needs of the market. In other words, while each individual factory may reach a high scientific and efficient state of organization, the competition for markets among capitalists in the same industries; the competition between all capitalists in one industry and another, to satisfy the same type of need (as for example, oil, coal, lumber, etc., for fuel); the competition between huge combines of finance capitalists who control various groups of industries; the attempt of each capitalist to destroy all others in his desire to acquire the greatest profit and the greatest expansion of business; all these make for a great wastefulness and anarchy of production.

Capitalism did not always exist. Other systems of society with different conditions of production preceded it, and will undoubtedly follow it. The system of capitalism is one stage in the development of social structure of human society.

(END LECTURE 2)

Literature and . . . Book Reviews

LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION

By V. I. Lenin

(From "A Letter to a Comrade on Our Problem of Organization" — September, 1902)

As regards the district groups, one of their most important functions is properly to organize literature distribution. As a rule, I think, the local units should act as the intermediaries between the district committees and the factories. Their chief duty should be the correct secret (because of terror in the factories) distribution of the literature received from the committee.

"This is an extremely important duty, for if we can secure contact between a special district group of distributors and all the factories in that district and of the largest number of workers' houses in that district, it will be of great value, both in cases of demonstrations and in the event of revolution. To train a network of agents for the rapid and correct distribution of leaflets, proclamations, etc., is to perform the greater half of the work of preparation for an eventual distribution at a moment of unrest, a strike, or ferment; it must be done gradually, distributions being made twice or even three times a month (every worker, farmer and family being covered). If there are no newspapers it must be done with leaflets, but the distributing machine must in no case be allowed to remain idle. We must try to bring the machine to such a pitch of perfection that the whole working class population can be advised, and, so to speak, mobilized overnight.

"WHY COMMUNISM" — By M. J. Olgin. We have long awaited a pamphlet which could be used in recruiting campaigns. Here at last is such a pamphlet, one particularly adaptable to the present recruiting campaign.

Why should workers be turned out of shops and factories which they have built? Why should workers and their families be evicted from homes which they have built and which for years they have been paying for? This country is suffering from a terrible disease, where millions of able-bodied workers, capable and willing to work, are being wasted by idleness and hunger, while excellent machines and mountains of raw material are lying around unused.

Why should 13 per cent of the population own 90 percent of the wealth and how does this affect the lives of the workers? These capitalists are only interested in profits and are continually introducing newer and faster machinery. The result is that ever greater numbers of workers are being displaced, while the production capacity of the plants is greatly increased. And this is the chief source of this capitalistic madness. These capitalists must have new markets for their ever-increasing surplus of products and this wild desire breeds wars.

How can workers solve all these problems? This huge waste of human energy and human resources, this great amount of human suffering, this humiliation of starving in the midst of plenty can be avoided. This can be avoided only by the working class arising to take over and organize society on a new basis. This basis is to be Communism.

How the workers can accomplish this, how they can overthrow the present capitalist state and set up a dictatorship of the proletariat and how this will be accomplished is well answered in this pamphlet. We should give this pamphlet the widest distribution for, in clear and simple language, it answers the many questions which arise in the minds of workers who are not fully class-conscious and whom we must draw into our ranks. Get a bundle for your fellow workers. Price 10c each.

JEFF COODMAN.

"THE GREAT TRADITION, An Interpretation of Literature in the United States Since the Civil War" — By Granville Hicks (\$2.50, Macmillan) — Through novels, short stories and poems have the epics of "The Great American Tradition" been propagandized. The literary efforts of our bourgeois writers have been subjective, concerned with their own personal, chiefly sexual problems. Very few have portrayed the real struggle that has existed in America: The Class Struggle.

Granville Hicks in his book tears down the bourgeois idealism in literature. He rips apart such pseudo-revolutionists as Jack London and Upton Sinclair. He clearly and emphatically destroys such petty-bourgeois idols as Hemingway, Hergesheimer and Cabell. In fact, any writer denying the industrial and agricultural dilemma of his period is, to Hicks, a writer denying truth and writing slop.

The "Great Tradition", in other words, has been for writers to evade any material dealing with the class struggle. American writers are primarily escapists from reality and their audience has been accustomed to accept blindly whatever is given it.

But there is slowly coming an end to this "Great Tradition" in American literature. Dos Passos, Mike Gold, Joseph Freeman, Theodore Dreiser, Langston Hughes and many others have turned to the teeming lives of workers for their material for novels, plays, poems and short stories.

—D. DAYTON CRAIG

ANY QUESTIONS?

In this section any questions or discussion comment you may have on the previous lessons will be answered.