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EDITORIAL

LA FOLLETTE'S LEAKY TUB.

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IN the November number of the *American Magazine* Senator La Follette states the economic philosophy of Insurgentism in these words:

“We ought to work toward a condition in which American enterprise, good management, clever and powerful machinery, intelligence and skill of the workers will enable us to have low cost of labor along with high wages to the laborer.”

If by “low cost of labor” is meant the price paid for labor in the labor market, then the second part of the sentence—“high wages to the laborer”—is at fisticuffs with the first part. Whatever else Senator La Follette may be on the field of economics, he is not an idiot. The wages paid to the laborer can not be “high” if the price for labor is “low.”

Evidently, Senator La Follette means by “low cost of labor” low prices, that is, inexpensive living.

Thus, interpreting the Senator's words his ideal for the working class is low prices of living and high prices for their commodity labor-power. Such a concept is a leaky tub, under capitalist conditions.

Given the capitalist system of society, the conditions for work are, on the one hand, a class holding in private ownership the things necessary for work, and on the other hand, a class stripped of such necessities.

Given the capitalist system of society, the stamp borne by production is “Merchandise.” Production is for sale, not for use.

Given the capitalist system of society, it follows from the above premises that labor-power is a merchandise, with the laborer as the seller of that commodity.

There is a fourth factor that goes into the problem. Whatever the system of society, labor is the sole source of wealth production. Neither “ownership” nor any

other man-made tenure can, or remotely does, affect the law of nature that wealth is the issue of Labor.

Combining the four principles the conclusions are:—

1. The price of living, speaking generally, represents the money value of that portion of the wealth produced by labor that is consumed;

2. Speaking specifically, the price of living for labor represents the money value of that portion of the wealth that labor produces and labor itself consumes;

3. Again speaking specifically and seeing that the capitalist class does not labor productively and yet lives, the price of living for the capitalist class represents the money value of that portion of the wealth that labor produces and is consumed by the capitalist class;

4. Seeing that nobody voluntarily allows others to appropriate what he produces, there must be some power that compels labor to part with that part of its product that is consumed by the capitalist class;

5. That power is the capitalist system which places in the hands of a small class the necessaries for production;

6. That same power enables the capitalist class, not only to consume a portion of the product of labor, but also to appropriate the bulk of labor's product;

7. Wages represent the money value of that portion of the product of labor that labor preserves to itself;

8. The higher the wages all the lower must that portion be which the capitalist class appropriates from the fruits of labor;

9. To raise wages (in such a way that the capitalist class can not recoup itself at the expense of labor through higher prices of living) is to go counter to the law of capitalist existence;

10. A proposition to lower the cost of living and at the same time raise wages moves revolutionward;

11. Propositions that move revolutionward need something more and other than laws enacted by, and the enforcement of which is left to the mercy of, the class for the extinction of which the revolution carries an extinguisher high in its hands;

12. A proposition that looks revolutionward, and does not bring along with it that which will "make good," is a leaky tub.

The tub of the Social Revolution does not leak. It is thoroughly caulked. That tub is not in the hands of the bungling Insurgent social coopers. It is the hands of the Socialist Labor Party.

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