Capitalist Exploitation in Russia

A Few Facts

(Translator's note: This is an abridged translation of part of Chapter V, of a book called "Monopolistic State Capitalism in Russia" by J. Roland. The book appeared in installments in the bulletin of a group of German exiles in France. The group calls itself "R.K.D." (Revolutionary Communists of Germany). The translation is from the "R.K.D. Bulletin", France, No. 5, October 1946. Due to lack of space we have been forced to leave out the second part of the chapter, dealing with prices, and to abridge the first part. Numbers in brackets indicate references which are given at the end of the article.)

What are the conditions of work in Russia? The wages system exists, this is generally admitted. But we know, since the time of Marx, that wage differentials are not determined by the market conditions of labor. Marx used the concept of "surplus value," which is the difference between the value of the product and the wage paid for it. This surplus value has been used to explain the capitalist system of exploitation. The wage is only a portion of the value of the product, and the remainder is the profit of the employer. The pressure of Capital on Labor in Russia is similar to the conditions in other capitalist countries. The workers are forced to work long hours for low wages, with little control over their work. The conditions of work are harsh, with little time for leisure or recreation. The workers are exploited and oppressed by the capitalist system.

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—Western Socialist, June, 1946.

Union Paper) demanded: "Every worker must reach his wage quota or be fired."

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All workers who did not fulfill the new quotas of their wage scale, were transferred to the next lower category of the wage scale. This trend continued, and by 1938, all workers were working overtime. The workers were forced to work more and more, with less and less time for leisure or recreation. The workers were exploited and oppressed by the capitalist system.

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average wage of the Russian worker was 240 rubles. In 1930, the average wage was 125 rubles. However, the prior year's data was not provided. The wages increased by a significant amount, reflecting the economic growth and industrial development in the country.
"IT'S ONLY NATURAL...

We should look more closely at the way in which people use the words natural and artificial. They are vague words, and often they use the word natural to mean just what they were accustomed to. They call things natural if their grandparents knew about them, or unnatural or artificial if they didn't. Unreal, then, merely means unusual, and the people who use this as a term of abuse rely on the underlying naturalism—worrying in our traditions in order to get the emotional approval for their cause.

If we leave aside this value-added way of doing the world natural, we find in the first place that everything that is done by plants or by what we call the lower animals is called natural, and artificial is applied only to what we humans do. Then it is narrowed still further to cut out barbers and babies, and some things that divided men do.

We find eventually that artificial is commonly applied to things that are done or made deliberately, after thought, discussion, and natural to things that are done by nature, habit, and without thought. For example, the great cycle of the world, both physical and biological, is natural, and any attempt at artificial control of it is artificial and therefore of course bad.

(From an article 'Nature-Worship' by Aeon, Professor G. W. Leeper in 'The Rationalist', December 1947.)

Prof. Leeper's observations are interesting. In his conclusion, that the intelligent control of business cycles is good, he dismisses it as an anti-Socialist. Any such attempt, whether 'good', 'bad', or merely futile, can only be judged from the Capitalistic standpoint. The essential condition of the working class is that they can only live by sale of their labour power to another, who will only buy if it is profitable, remains unchanged.

But let the Working Class once realize that the intelligent use of the vote, in their own interest, can abolish Capitalism, with its 'business cycles', wars, depressions, and class division and establish Socialism, and the way is clear to attack problems worth the attention of an intelligent classless community.

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OBJECT—The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments of production and distribution of wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

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The Socialist Parties of Australia and New Zealand hold:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living, i.e., land, industries, railways, etc., held in private ownership by the master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, whose labour is sold to the employer on the basis of value only, not for wages.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle among those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the control of the master class and the abolition of the slave system.

4. That, in order to achieve this emancipation, the working class must consider the working class as a democratic body, to be governed by itself, and to work for the emancipation of the working class as a democratic body, to be governed by itself, and to work for the emancipation of the working class.

5. That the machinery of government, including the army, the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly of the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers. This machinery must be organized consistently and politically for the conquest of the powers of government.

6. That in order to achieve this emancipation of the working class, the party must organize consistently and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, and then establish Socialism.

7. That in all political parties are the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of the master class, the party should be organized so that the working class will be able to place the government through the people.

8. THE SOCIALIST PARTIES OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND therefore enter the field of political action, determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether阵阵 liberal or reactionary, and to call upon the members of the working class to form a new party to work for the emancipation of the working class.