A Big Job for the Unemployed
And the Employed Also

The existence of widespread unemployment is no secret to American workers. They may, however, be a little confused as to the number of unemployed. The Secretary of Labor stated there are 3,000,000 out of work; some economists say there are 5,000,000; a Congressman has said there are 8,000,000. On the other hand, a few periodicals have placed the number of jobless at 10,000,000. All unite in bemoaning the fact that the proper figures for an accurate report are unavailable, and that they are only estimating the number. It is also obvious that no banker, or large industrialist, or these gentlemen’s gentlemen, care to admit that the unemployed ranks are very considerable, because, since they run industry for the benefit of the workers and humanity, would it not be a reflection on their managerial ability and directive genius, that their prearranged plans had gone awry?

For years, a certain amount of unemployment has existed. The figures have been growing larger yearly, and have reached greater proportions than ever over the past two or three years. Following are a few extracts taken at random, to illustrate this fact:

In April, 1928, when industry was supposedly booming, conservative sources, as The Labor Bureau, Inc., estimated that there were 4,000,000 unemployed in the country, and suggested that:

Secretary Davis’s recent report on unemployment had indicated that there were 7,900,000 unemployed, but at the same time held that no own estimate was more conservative than Secretary Davis’s figures—The New York Times, April 3, 1928.

On March 34, 1928, Secretary Davis stated that, Ethelbert Stewart, Commissioner of Labor Statistics, “by the most careful computation methods available finds that the actual number now out of work is 1,874,090.”—The New York Times, April 3, 1928.

Even this figure is high enough, for a so-called prosperous era, but the same article, continuing, gives the comments of Senator Shipstead:

Then, using the Stewart figures of a 7.43 per cent. shrinkage [of employment] between 1923 and 1928, Mr. Shipstead estimated that between 1923 and 1925, there was a shrinkage of 8.8 per cent., of 2,219,690 unemployed, and between 1920 and 1923, a shrinkage of 16.8 per cent., or 4,357,420 persons unemployed. Addition of the figures covering 1930, 1928, made, he said, a shrinkage percentage of 32.6 and a total unemployment of 8,331,170.

The National Bureau of Economic Research made a study of unemployment during the years of the Harding-Coolidge prosperity period. They concluded that the rock-bottom minimum estimate of the involuntarily unemployed must be put between 1,400,000 and 4,700,000. The best authorities put the number of unemployed in the United States during the Hoover campaign of 1928 at 4,000,000—a moment which Mr. Hoover called one of unparalleled prosperity. In periods of industrial depression as many as one-fourth of the working population is rotting in idleness—Harry Elmer Barnes, in the New York Telegram, Dec. 30, 1929.

Two million jobless seems to be normal today, but at any rate large scale unemployment has existed for several years, and has not been confined to the past few months, as many would have us believe. During recent months, the unemployed ranks have reached swollen proportions. As to the confusion concerning unemployment statements, The World, in an editorial on March 21st, takes President Hoover and Secretary Davis and Lamon to task for giving out misleading figures. Amongst other things the editorial points out that the two secretaries issued a joint statement showing an increase of 8 per cent in factory employment since the low point at the beginning of the year, while the statisticians in the Labor Department showed that employment had increased only one-tenth of 1 per cent during February, and their previous monthly report had shown no increase during January.

America was once the land of promise for the foreign laborer. To-day it has a great unemployment problem in common with the rest of the capitalist world. In England an army of a little less than 2,000,000 jobless workers has been a fixture for years, with less than one-half the population of America. According to the New York Herald Tribune of Jan. 26th, there were “2,000,000 Idle in Germany as Business Lags”; there is unemployment on the whole European continent. In South America there are great numbers out of work. The same can be said of Japan, South Africa, Australia. Today, unemployment is international, just as capitalistic machine production is international. Unemployment is a normal feature of capitalism, and has been ever since the industrial revolution of the 18th century; during trade depressions the number of jobless grows enormously, decreases when trade is brisk, but never disappears.

But what about the future? Cannot President Hoover, the great business executives, the profound political economists and sociologists, or the inspired prelates of the church—supporters and apologists of this heaven-ordained system, best of all possible worlds—not only reduce, but eliminate this embarrassing spectacle of millions of workers on the point of starvation, in this land of plenty, because they cannot find a job, a boss?

In the first place, none of these gentlemen have any desire to end unemployment merely for the sake of the workers. If we will only behave ourselves, lay down and starve to death quietly without disturbing “law and order,”
they will be well content. The extent of their ideas of alleviating the plight of the jobless is their squawking for "work"—not for themselves, but for the workers. But they are motivated by a fear for their own skins.

They know that millions of able-bodied men, willing to work but unable to find work, would become a serious menace. Such armies of unemployed, we can depend upon it, would not choose to starve. They would "start something" infinitely more disturbing to industrial peace and prosperity than the recent Communist spartanings.

As a matter of fact, it is declared, apparently authoritatively, that the alarming increase in crime has been incited partly by inability to obtain work.—B. C. Forbes, in the New York American, March 14th.

Many are the schemes proposed to remedy unemployment. Tinkering with the tariff, more wars, speeding up production, Christian Brotherhood, emigration, and so on, ad nauseam. Many are the schemes that have been tried, yet today unemployment reigns. There is a solution and it is the only one. Unemployment can be ended now, but not by the capitalist class. The solution rests with the workers themselves, and consists in doing away with capitalism and the wages system and establishing Socialism. This means, of course, no more unemployed capitalists as well as no more unemployed workers. That this solution must eventually be adopted will perhaps be made clear by a little explaining.

There was a time long ago when each man could produce only enough to provide for himself; there could then be no possibility of slavery or exploitation. But men improved their tools and methods of making their livelihood. When it became possible for each to supply himself and have a surplus left over, which could be taken from him, only then was enslavement of one man by another profitable, and slavery came to exist. Mankind was divided into classes: owners and workers. The State grew up, to protect the owners and their property, and to keep the slave classes in subjection.

Since those far off days, slavery has changed its form several times. Each change followed an important improvement in tools and methods of wealth production; and each time, a new class came into power, after it had vanquished the old ruling class next above it, always by seizing the state power for itself. One by one, the upper classes have been wiped out by this process, until to-day there are only two classes left: the wage-slave class and the capitalist class.

This, in a few words, is the history of civilization up to the present time: the story of man's journey from naked savagery to the modern machine age. Every step of the way is made of better tools. But the tool making and tool using workers have never been permitted to retain for themselves more than just enough to enable them to exist. This was true when the surplus was small; it is true to-day, when the surplus is enormous. The invention of labor saving devices has been of doubtful benefit to the toilers of the ages; in fact, the worker in 1930 (who has a job) is compelled to work at a pace that would have appalled a worker of only a generation ago, but no matter how much he creates in the form of wealth, the surplus goes to the owners of the means of production.

This private ownership is at the very root of the problem of unemployment. The owners return to the working class only enough in wages to allow them to buy back a fraction of the total product. But the owners cannot entirely consume the rest; the products must, in any case, first be sold. Capitalists with quantities of goods soon find themselves bankrupt if they cannot sell them. To sell, there must be markets, not only at home, but abroad, in the world market. Time was when undeveloped territories could be opened up and made into markets for such goods; but the earth is only so big, and these former markets are now becoming developed capitalist communities, themselves seeking markets.

The day of marked recovery from unemployment crises is gone forever. Unemployment is here to stay:

Unemployment will be the greatest problem before the United States in the next decade, according to experts of the American Economic Association and American Statistical Association, who.

Due to improved technique and the rationalization of industry, Mr. Warren foresees a more or less chronic state of unemployment in the next ten-year period....—The New York Times, Dec. 31, 1929.

We question whether we may not be building up a class of the temporarily or even chronically unemployed far in excess of the normal 1,500,000. —James J. Davis, Secretary of Labor, in Barron's, March 24th.

Furthermore, unemployment will increase just as long as we continue to allow the means of production, the mills, mines, factories, steamships, railroads, etc., to remain privately owned. We propose that all these means and implements shall be transferred into the property of all mankind in common, to be used and worked upon by all the able bodied, not for profit, but for the use of all. The fault lies not in the machine, but in the way it is used. We are not alone in saying this:

Problems of technological and other employment, said Dr. Person, [managing director of the Taylor Society, New York] arose not out of the machine per se but out of the manner in which competitive industry, as organized, is compelled to utilize in a business way its investment in equipment. He said it was like operating a ton-and-a-half horsepower truck in accordance with the primitive rules of the road.

"Individual enterprises in a regime of competitive, highly mechanized industry dominated by the profits motive may run amuck exactly as many drivers of high speed automobiles motivated by the "fter-wake spirit," he declared. "Labor is the pedestrian who gets bumped."

Nor do we bear any longer that the jobless worker is too lazy to work—that any one who wants to work can find a job. But our proposed solution will furnish jobs for both unemployed and employed workers, or rather, one mighty job. That job is to do as other classes have done throughout history, when faced with oppression and misery from the class above; to capture the political power of the state, and use it to establish a social system in harmony with the means of production at hand. The capitalist class did this to the feudal aristocracy; the final task is for the working class to strike the last blow to slavery, thus bringing to a close the age long, bitter struggle between the classes. The only thing needed now is for the working class to decide to take on the job. We outnumber the capitalists many times over; the political machinery is here for us to use; we can accomplish the deed in an orderly manner. (Continued on page 8)
The Farmer—1930 Model

M R. Henry Ford's pronouncements on matters socioeconomic and economic are somewhat like the pieces of ancient pottery that was dropped in the Ford domicile recently: all cracked up when they come in contact with hard facts.

The most recent pearls of wisdom emanating from the "Sage of Dearborn," were reported in the press of March 7th, when Mr. Ford's opinions on farm relief and overproduction were printed. In reply to several questions as to how the problems of the farmer could best be solved, he is reported to have said, among other things: "Solution of the farm problem, like almost every other economic difficulty, lies in work, which is a remedy for all things . . . ."

Mr. Ford, at the time of making the above declaration, was wearing himself out, basking in the Florida sun, enjoying the leisure made possible for him by others. But to those farmers who are rushing to town in "Lizzie" to ask their bankers to allow them a little more time in which to pay their debts and mortgages, Mr. Ford's advice will come like a ray of sunshine into the darkness of competitive agriculture, especially his further advice: "If the farmer believes he cannot crowd more work into a 24-hour day then he must turn to machinery, to chemistry and to a study of production on a more intensive scale . . . ."

From the above statement, one might incline to think that Mr. Ford has been so occupied collecting "Americana" for his Dearborn Museum, that in his anxiety to obtain the first American "scythe and sickle," he has overlooked the fact that these things can only go to his museum because other tools and machines have taken their place. The thing that is most conspicuous by its absence in the whole of Mr. Ford's statement, is an explanation of just what is the problem of the American farmer.

The problem of the American farmer can be summed up in one short sentence: the inability to find markets for his commodities, not the inability to work and produce wealth. The following statement from authoritative sources shows that our American farmer has, if anything, been doing too much work:


This same gentleman's advice recently issued to the farmers in a radio address reported in the New York Times, Jan. 28th, states:

"Blind production for an unknown demand is now the bane of agriculture . . . . Competitive selling by 6,000,000 individual farmers usually gives the purchaser a great advantage. The advantage of the new decade is to act collectively to overcome this situation . . . . If we are to conduct a profitable agriculture we must only produce at lowest possible costs and must also keep our production reasonably close to prospective domestic demands. . . . To obtain a higher level of prices than that which now prevails, it appears necessary to reduce rather than to increase 1930 production, especially the production of crops."

In the past, production of crops has time and again exceeded domestic needs. The surplus has been compelled to compete for the markets of the world, there to further break the farm price. Warnings similar to the above were issued the day previously by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, of the Department of Agriculture, to all branches of the farming industry.

The most important factor of the farmer problem is, that he, like his brother capitalists, produces for sale and no longer for his own immediate consumption or use. As is so well stated by Charles A. and Mary R. Beard in their work, "The Rise of American Civilization," page 273:

Supplemented by other factors, the introduction of machinery made capital almost as important to the farmer as to the manufacturer . . . . The price of his grain in the market being fixed by the cost of production on the most fertile and best equipped farms, he was compelled to buy machinery or to work for somebody who could, just as the handcraftsman had been, at the start of the industrial revolution. Consequently the value of farm implements and machines per acre of land almost doubled itself between 1890 and 1910.

The production of agricultural produce, like that of all other commodities in present day society, is carried on for profit. It necessarily follows that the main problem of the farmer is to find markets for his produce. As the markets are limited, and can absorb only a portion of the farmers' commodities, it is the farmer who can sell cheaper than his competitor who obtains the markets.

As evidence that the present condition of the market is one of being over-supplied, the following is reported from London, England:

"Beets, commenting on the situation, stresses the absence of any increase in European requirements. This he considers more serious, in view of the excessive stocks of unsold wheat held in Canada and the United States, also in view of the probability that an exceptionally large crop of Winter wheat will be harvested in the course of a few months. . . . The New York Times, Feb. 10."

We must now pass on to the question of how the farmer can dispose of his produce in the face of the conditions stated above. Some idea as to how this problem is solved can be gathered from the following:

In 1920, thousands of gallons of milk were poured into rivers and creeks of southern Illinois. In the fall of the same year, the Potomac River below Washington was filled with watermelons--a trailerload having been dumped from the warehouses to avoid breaking the city price below 25 cents. On June 24, 1924, The New York Times announced: "Thousands of pieces of cucumbers and other fresh vegetables were dumped on the ophal dock today." In October, 1924, placards were placed along the highways in middle western states, advising the farmers to burn corn instead of coal. The corn crop was smaller than in 1920, but the bottom had dropped out of prices, due to the panic. The "night rider" is a well known figure in the South--burning tobacco and cotton when price levels are in danger. Every few years a large percentage of the Maine potato crop is left to rot in the ground. In 1934, 5,000 car of Georgia and Alabama peaches rotted in the orchards because the price offered by dealers was not enough to pay the cost of gathering, boxing and freight to market. . . . The Tragedy of Waste," by Stuart Chase, pages 193-194.

The above are but a few instances of the wastefulness of the present mode of production, for sale and profit. We have seen too often this wanton destruction of wealth, because these things cannot be sold and a profit obtained, whilst millions starve.

But the farmer cannot continually allow his products to rot. He must still obtain the necessaries of life, and
to obtain them he must strive, in the scramble for markets, to undersell his competitors. To do this, he must lower his cost of production, which means but one thing: the introduction of still more and better machinery than that of his competitors. This requires money, and only those who have the price of this machinery survive. That this ever-increasing use of machinery means a still greater surplus of commodities, and creates additional problems for the farmers, is suggested by the following:

Technical changes are also taking place with the rapid introduction of power machinery, and the trend toward less labor and larger farms. As a consequence of continued unfavorable incomes and of the general displacement of labor by machines, farm population has continued to decrease to the lowest point since 1900. During recent years, however, the net migration from country to city seems to have reduced. —The New York Times, Jan. 27.

A headline appearing in this same paper on Oct. 17, 1926, shows us that this seeming reduction is much more than what it seems: “75,735 of Our Farms Abandoned In 5 Years.” Thus the owners of these abandoned farms, with their families, have been caught up in the whirl of competitive capitalism, despised, and finally whirled into the ranks of the propertyless working class, where they can now line up with other proletarians at the gates of one or another of Mr. Ford’s factories.

These in the main are the small farmers who could not compete with the larger and wealthier ones. We thus see that the position of the small farmer is similar to that of the small manufacturer and the small shopkeeper. Large scale production spells large scale competition, entailing enormous quantities of capital, and we to him who has not that capital.

It would seem that Mr. Ford is obsessed with the doctrine of work—for the working class—which means more surplus value for the class to which he belongs—the capitalist class. The humanitarianism of Mr. Ford is best observed and understood by those members of the working class who have had the pleasure of toiling in one of his automobile factories, where the doctrine of work is glorified, and the opportunity to meditate upon its benefits can be had by working on the “belt.” Here one sees the altruistic genius of Mr. Ford in the “spirit,” but seldom in the flesh.

The problem of the small farmer, as a small farmer, will be solved when he is forced into the ranks of the working class, but once there he will find himself confronted by other problems, in common with the rest of the workers. Capitalism, the leveller, in forcing the farmer into the working class, also offers a solution to the new problem of the ex-farmer, and that solution lies in the common understanding of their common problem, and from this common understanding will come common action for a common goal, and that goal can only be Socialism.

—S.F.

Boston Study Class

A Study Class, under the auspices of the Socialist Educational Society, meets every Sunday at 10:30 A.M., at the International Hall, 42 Woonah Street, Roxbury, Mass. Admission is free.

Bubbles of Capitalism

A n unemployed demonstration was recently staged in New York by the Communist Party. From a spectacular point of view it was an entire success. The numbers were there in their many thousands, accompanied, as in so many similar demonstrations, by the large force of city police. The demonstration was brought to a sudden conclusion, also in the same manner as other similar demonstrations, with a display of political power reflecting itself in the policeman’s club.

There is nothing new in these unemployed demonstrations; they have been held all over the capitalist world, and it is to be presumed will be as long as capitalism exists, unemployment being a necessary feature of capitalism. Some attempt will always be made, as this condition inevitably becomes worse, to alleviate it, whether it be through the capitalist class or the working class. However, the Communist Party claims to be a revolutionary organization, and it was to be expected that, on the basis of that claim, they would have had something of a tangible nature to offer the unemployed workers that would solve one of their most vital problems. Instead of this, they simply reiterated the slogans that have been used for the last forty years by various social reform agencies that have been attempting without result to deal with the problem of unemployment. Their main demand on this occasion was “Work or Wages,” exactly the same demand made forty years ago in London by unemployed workers who would have been highly indignant had they been accused of being revolutionary. How far have our recent revolutionists of the Communist Party moved since then?

Well, they have a great, big sign on the front of their headquarters on Union (Red) Square: “On With The Fight For Work Or Wages.” Of course, it is not nearly as large a sign as the one in Newark, frankly capitalist, also urging “Work.” But then, the “communists” also pass out handbills, with many more words than can be put on a sign. The writer has before him one of these handbills. Most of it is occupied with telling the workers they are out of work, how miserable that condition is, and that nobody is doing anything for them. The unemployed worker wouldn’t know these things if it weren’t for the “communists!” There is added the information that Russia is being run for the benefit of the workers, and that the workers, yea, the cold, hungry workers, must defend the Soviet Union—where there are only half as many jobless toilers as in America. America, too, is being run for the workers. If you don’t believe this, ask any parent or banker or office-seeking politician!

Yes, and there are demands on this handbill. “Shorter hours... Abolition of the speed-up system, of overtime, of child labor... Unemployment relief from the State... Unemployed workers to be relieved from the necessity of paying rent... clean, sanitary housing and food provided free... Unemployment insurance... Social insurance... old age insurance... equality for Negro workers.”

By no means the least of these “demands” is the one for “recognition of the Soviet (Continued on page 7)
The Saviours of God

PARSONS of all creeds and their faithful dupes the world over have just had a great praying and a big braying over the supposed plight of religion and the church in Russia.

Whatever be the truth about religion in that country it ill behooves the churches to wait about persecution—unless, of course they openly avow that what is sauce for the goose is poison for the gander. Throughout the history of civilization with its incessant class struggles religion has been a most efficient instrument of class domination and class oppression. Always, the church of the ruling class has persecuted rebels against exploitation and all those who opposed its teachings and organization. All churches, Catholic or Protestant, bitterly opposed the spread of scientific knowledge which is the relentless foe of all supernatural bunkum. Read of the murder of Hypatia, the burning of Bruno, of the persecution of the aged pioneer of science, Galileo. Even as recently as 1909, Ferrer, the liberal educationalist was officially murdered in Spain through the instrumentality of the most holy Catholic Church. Martin Luther, hero of all protestants, in 1525 railed at his Catholic foes by his bloodthirsty denunciation of the German peasants in revolt against centuries of feudal oppression. Himself a peasant, he urged the knights and princes to slaughter the peasants without mercy. "They should be knocked to pieces, strangled and stabbed, secretly and openly, by everybody who can do it, just as one must kill a mad dog." How this pious priest must have been gratified at the mass of corpses and agonies of torture that resulted from the revolt!

Napoleon, one of the wildest of all ruling class politicians, well knew the political utility of religion. He wrote, "How can you have order in a state without religion? Society cannot exist without inequality of fortunes, which cannot endure apart from religion. When one man is dying of hunger near another who is ill of surfeit, he cannot resign himself to this difference, unless there is an authority which declares—'God wills it thus: there must be poor and rich in the world, but hereafter and during all eternity the division of things will take place differently.'"

The churches have long had a good job and fat pickings either from exploitation on their own behalf or in payment for services rendered to those in power. No wonder they are alarmed at the suggestion that society can get along without them.

It is extremely unlikely that the Soviet regime will succeed in ending religious belief in Russia, even if that is their object. As long as exploitation, and ignorance exist there is a fertile field for supernatural beliefs. The aim of the Communists in Russia is very evidently political—the crushing or at least crippling of the Church, which is a powerful hangover from the pre-revolutionary era, hostile to the Soviet system and hence traitorous and seductive in their eyes. It may be noted that in this respect the Russian government is but repeating what the bourgeois revolutionists in other lands found it necessary to do—crush or adapt the feudal church. Whether a "reformed" church, adapted to the needs of the expanding state capitalism of Russia, will develop, remains to be seen.

We Socialist workers of America regard the attack on religious belief and organization as an important if secondary part of our general war upon all aspects of capitalism. The church is not by a long way as influential as it once was. That is all to the good. But it still is one of the bulwarks of the capitalist class and their system of exploitation. Let us tear off the blinkers of superstition, economic, political and religious.

A Note from Merrie England

The following is from a letter written by a reader in Manchester, England:

Like many other industrial centers, Manchester is bemoaning the fact of bad trade, financial depression, etc. Well, so far as the working class is concerned, it is bad, the worst I've experienced—and I have had some bad times. The unemployment figures are very high, and it gives me a sickening pain to see the terribly long lines of men and women outside the Labour Exchanges.

With the small trading concerns affairs are very bad. But with the big cotton companies, business is good, despite all the big walls that are going up about trade depression. Good dividends are being announced at their trade meetings. And we can note that this or that individual has recently died leaving 700,000 pounds sterling. However, these walls are serving a purpose—the wholesale dismissals of employees and notices that 'wages are to be reduced from Friday next.' One big combine, the Calico Printers Association, dismissed two hundred of its staff at the end of 1929. This was Capitalism's way of supporting its game of 'A Happy and Prosperous New Year' to its slaves.

The day that I am writing this, J. H. Thomas, the great Labour leader, now Lord Privy Seal, has come over to Manchester especially to address the Lancashire 'Captains of Industry' on how to reorganize their businesses, and so assist in solving the unemployment problem.

The days, the months, the years go by and the working class becomes gradually more off. The standard of living sinks, the number of unemployed increases, and insecurity grows apace. With all this grows more intense the desire of the ruling class to mentally dope its wealth producers. This country has now had seven months of rule by a so-called Labour Party, and no one could have told there had been a change in the 'seats of power;' but for the fact that one knows an election took place, and the newspapers told us that the ballot boxes showed that another political party had been successful. There is not the slightest change for the better to be noted. This new crowd of rulers has so pleased the owners of the nation's wealth that they are given a "good press." It has been interesting to note that the whole bunch of daily, weekly, and monthly newspapers have avoided attacking this misnamed Labour Government. This shows how well these tricksters are administering the system of private ownership. I wonder how long this is going to last?
Science: A Weapon for the Workers
And How to Use It

V.

Society and Its Economic Basis

Every society, be it a tribe, national state, or empire, consists of a number of people held together by certain ties or relationships which impose upon them certain duties and obligations and allow them certain rights and privileges. There are many different kinds of such social relations, industrial, property, family, religious, legal, political relations, and many others. Thus there are employers and employees, lawyers and clients, nobles and commoners, voters and representatives, kings and subjects. Some relations are temporary, others more or less permanent. The relations that exist between people determine, in the main, what their attitudes towards one another will be, their respective interests and to a large extent their ideals of good and bad, right and wrong.

A social system is a series of interconnected social relations adapted one to another and each bearing the impress of the system as a whole. A social system must not be confused with a social group. Many separate communities often have the same system of relations. When people speak of a "civilization" or a "culture" they are really referring to a social system with all its accompanying crafts, arts and ideas. Thus we have Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Medieval and lastly the international capitalist civilization of our own day. Each has special, unmistakable characteristics which are stamped upon its material and intellectual productions. What is it that provides the basis for such a social system and gives it its unity? This question was first satisfactorily answered by Marx.

To maintain life men must have food and shelter. All else is secondary to this. It follows that the most vital and important of all social ties are those concerned with the production and distribution of the necessities of life; in other words, the terms upon which men co-operate or have dealings with one another in what common parlance today calls "business affairs."

The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life—"Critique of Political Economy," Marx, page 11.

Today, for example, the most important economic relation is that between the capitalist employer and the wage-earning worker, between the capitalist class and the working class. This is an outgrowth of two older and more basic relations; first, the private ownership of land and the tools of production; second, the relation of buyer and seller involved in the production of commodities, i.e., goods for sale. After private property and commodity production had become established as a basis, a long series of economic developments, resulting in the concentration of the means of production into the hands of a class, had to occur before the relation of capitalist to wage-earner could become the basis of society. Economic relations today are much more far-reaching and involved than under any other system.

... under capitalism permanent social relations are established between people who never see each other, and frequently have not the slightest idea of the firm threads which bind them. A Berlin stock-exchange broker may own shares in a South American factory. By the mere ownership of these shares, he, every year, receives profits from this undertaking, i.e., part of the product created by the labor of the South American worker, or what is practically the same, part of the value of his product. In this manner, between the Berlin stock-exchange broker and the South American worker there is established an invisible social relation...


The laws, politics, morals and established beliefs of today all have their roots in the economic trinity of present day production—private property, commodity production and the wage-labor and capital relation. It is well known that most laws deal with property, with title deeds, mortgages, legacies, contracts, theft, and so forth, and much of modern legislation has to do with "business problems.

It is further obvious that banks, employers associations and trade unions exist to meet various industrial needs and problems. Later we shall show what is not so obvious, that the whole machinery of government exists fundamentally for the same purpose.

The whole social organization is best understood by regarding it as a means adopted for solving an endless series of problems. Economic relations are a solution to the primary problem of subsistence. These economic relations in turn give rise to other problems to deal with which, laws, political institutions, and morality are called into existence. This superstructure, bare in mind, is not a mere superficial thing, but a necessity to the proper functioning of the productive process under the given conditions. Just as the foundation of a piece of architecture is useless without the edifice it upholds, so economic relations do not and cannot satisfy all social needs, and they are never found, because they cannot exist, without a supplementary superstructure.

As we have noted, the capitalist system of economic relations did not always exist. It developed out of the totally different manorial system of medieval Europe, in which capital and wages scarcely existed and buying and selling were little practiced because production was mainly for direct consumption in small, almost isolated communities—the manors. Its social relations were those known as feudalism—a complicated system of rights and duties between a hereditary land holding nobility and a working class of unfree serfs or villians who were compelled to labor for, and surrender certain produce to their lords in return for military protection and the right to occupy and cultivate land in the manor for themselves.

Earlier still the chattel-slave system of the Roman Empire dominated over most of Europe. Both of these systems evolved through a long series of developments out of agricultural village communism, with common owner-
ship of the land and without classes or exploitation. Village communities on this basis still exist in many parts of the world.

Each of these systems of production had developed upon it to meet its needs and problems an appropriate superstructure of customs, laws and ideas. The manorial system was the basis for the vaunted "knighthood and chivalry" of feudalism, the Catholic Church, and the horrors of the torture chamber. Out of Roman slavery and its accompanying economic relations arose the Imperial Legions, the bloody "games" of the Colosseum and the whole legal and political fabric of the Roman Empire.

It will be noticed that the principal factor involved in each of the economic systems mentioned is a particular form of wealth ownership, recognized and enforced by society. The village commune was based, as its name indicates, upon common possession of the soil. Chattel slavery arises from property in human beings. The manorial system was a complex scheme of land rights. Finally, capital, the dominant form of property today, is private property with a special economic function, that of extracting a profit for its owner from the labor of wage workers.

Is there nothing more fundamental to economic and social organization than property? Obviously there must be, for before wealth can be owned it must be produced, and this, in the first place, is clearly dependent upon the material resources, the tools and the labor available. Every community has at its command definite powers of wealth production that are the result of the accumulated technical knowlege and means of production handed down from the past. When the one-horse plough and the hand tools of the craftsman prevailed, productive capacity was low. Today vast, complex machines enable man to turn out wealth in enormous abundance and variety.

One of Marx's most valuable contributions to historical economics was his proof that property and other economic relations are, in the last analysis, dependent upon the stage reached in the growth of the productive forces.

In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production, and in changing their mode of production, their manner of gaining a living, they change all their social relations. The windmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-wmill, society with the industry capitalist.—"The Poverty of Philosophy," Marx, page 119.

Even a slight investigation shows that productive techniques and economic relations are definitely interrelated. A purely hunting tribe knows no private ownership of land, and indeed can scarcely conceive of such a thing unless it has been in touch with civilized men. Nor can people at this stage possess slaves. Productivity is so low that they would be useless, all their time and energy being taken up in self-maintenance. Both landed property and any considerable development of slavery are found only where agriculture is practiced. It must however not be assumed that the relation between productivity and property is quite direct and simple. On the contrary it is usually indirect and complicated by many other factors besides technique. Nevertheless the development of the productive forces is so fundamental that it must next be considered in some detail in our study of historical materialism. (To be continued)

R. W. H.

**Bubbles of Capitalism**

(Continued from page 4)

Union by the U. S. Government." But no space at all is taken up on this handbill, explaining that millions of workers are out of jobs because under capitalism there must always be plenty of jobless workers on hand, that the toilers are robbed of the wealth they create, and that the producers of wealth starve in the midst of plenty as a result of overproduction, because the machinery of production is privately owned by a small class, the capitalists, who permit production only as long as the products can be sold at a profit to them. Apparently the "Communists" don't know these things themselves; if they did, they would act differently. One might hear from their speakers at unemployed demonstrations something fitting to the subject; thus far we have not so heard.

The common feature noticeable in all unemployed demonstrations, and this scribbler has witnessed many, is that they all demand "WORK." Our Communist revolutionaries, running true to form, have evidently not forgotten their capitalist training, and are still worshipping at the shrine of "Work." Even President Hoover, by no means a Communist, suggested that the solution of unemployment is "Work"! What memories this term conjures up to the writer, he having been forced on occasions to indulge in the glorious pastime! Poets have waxed eloquent on the subject of "Work"; parsons have exhorted their congregations on the benefits to be derived from practice of this noble virtue. They have prated long about the "Dignity of Labor," but all of these apostles try their utmost to avoid it for themselves—allowing the working class to share the Dignity and Labor alike.

The Communist handbill states that "Unemployment is the worst scourge of the working class." We feel doubts; at most, we leave the question open. We could never perceive anything dignified about the irksome occupation of being stripped to the waist, covered with grime and sweat, and shovelling coal into the maws of Dante's inferno in the bowels of a transatlantic liner, carrying across to Europe the members of a class who have never been within smelling distance of the Dignity of Labor!

So much, then, for the revolutionary demand of the jazz band revolutionists of the Communist Party. One other noticeable feature, again common to all unemployed demonstrations, is that the spokesmen at these affairs invariably ask for work—for the other fellow. They are all particularly anxious that the unemployed shall obtain the maximum share of this edifying thing, "Work." Possibly the purpose is that they themselves may escape the necessity of indulging in the ennobling virtue.

Capitalist society is in a state of ferment. Its effects, poverty, unemployment, strikes, war, are the bubbles and froth that rise to the surface but have their origin in the ferment of the social process below. Obviously, any attempt to remove these effects without touching the causes lying beneath, can only end in failure. Therefore, the Socialist, confronted with these effects, is compelled to make a scientific analysis of the cause of these so-called problems. This accomplished, the further task is then en-
talled of finding the method of removing the cause, and, logically following, the effects. Capitalist society is based upon the existence of a working class whose only possession is their power to labor; who are compelled to sell their labor-power, their mental and physical energies, to the capitalist class, who own and control the means of wealth production. This is the basic economic situation underlying modern society, out of which arise all the bubbles of social ferment. Unemployment is, therefore, but one of the effects of this condition, which is inherent in a capitalist mode of wealth production.

Much is being said these days about what is termed technological unemployment, particularly by the apologists of the capitalist class. Another term that is being largely used is “rationalization.” The meanings of these words convey nothing new to the Socialist, but on the contrary support his contention that unemployment is directly due to the private ownership of the means of wealth production, which he has been pointing out for many moons. There is no need to labor the point that the ever increasing improvement and development of the machine, and consequently, the elimination of the need for labor-power, spells increased unemployment.

As long as the wages system exists, and the workers are selling themselves and receiving only sufficient in wages to obtain food, clothing and shelter, to enable them to reproduce their energy, then all the bubbles of capitalism will continue to rise, bringing to the workers distress and misery.

Our “revolutionary” friends of the Communist Party demand wages only secondarily to “Work.” If our “Communists” would take the time and trouble to pick up “Value, Price and Profit,” by Karl Marx; could they but pause an instant in the “revolutionary situation” to look at and curtail the significance of this most excellent treatise on capitalist economies, they would find a statement to this effect, on almost the last page: “Instead of the conservative motto, “A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work,” they [the workers] ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, “Abolition of the wages system.”

The solution of all the problems, including unemployment, is not to be found in demonstrations or marches and parades to City Halls and other citadels of the capitalist class, but in a working class understanding the class nature of society, and organizing politically for the purpose of introducing a system of society based on the common ownership of the means of wealth production, in a word, Socialism.

—Alf.

New Members

Those agreeing with the position of the Socialist Educational Society and desiring enrollment should apply either in person on Tuesday and Friday evening or by letter, to Room 9, 132 East 23 Street, New York, N. Y.

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Declaration of Principles

of The Socialist Educational Society

The Socialist Educational Society holds:

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, with the production of wealth as a result.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, rational and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interests of the working class are diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The Socialist Educational Society, therefore, declares its purpose of carrying on Socialist educational work to the end that this political party be formed, determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the working class to organize under its banner in order that a speedy termination be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labor, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

A Big Job for the Unemployed

(Continued from page 2)

Let us see then, what would become of unemployment after Socialism has been established. First, production will no longer be carried on for profit, nor will we work for wages. Instead of this, we will have in mind the needs of the people who compose society, and will produce wealth to supply their needs. If there comes a time when too much has been produced, we will not tramp the streets starving and cold; on the contrary, we will declare a vacation until the overproduction is used up. The means of production are developed to a point right now, so that, even with only a part of the population engaged in doing the work, it is possible to supply every one with plenty, to furnish carefree leisure for all. By putting all the able bodied to useful work, we can accomplish this with only a few working hours each day. If we can create so much wealth for others, with hunger as the incentive, how much more could we do for ourselves?

Here is a job for the working class. The Socialist is already hard at work at the task. We are ready to end unemployment, how about you?

—A.C.B.