THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND WAR

Overpopulation and religious and ideological differences as causes of war was considered in the new SPGB pamphlet and found wanting. Neither the United States nor Russia, principal antagonists in the current crisis, is overpopulated or likely to be in the next century, and unemployment is at a minimum in both countries. As for religion, there is no dearth of instances in which nations of one religion have allied themselves with nations of another for the holy purpose of slaughtering their spiritual brethren. The same is true of ideology and is similarly evidenced by the late alliance of "democratic" America and England with totalitarian Russia.

Likewise, the greed of armament manufacturers as a cause of war is easily disposed of. Nations in which the munitions industry is controlled or owned by the government prove to be no less warlike than those in which the industry is privately owned. The merchants of death "fish in troubled waters and help to keep them troubled, but Governments are antagonistic to each other over markets, trade routes, strategic frontiers, etc., irrespective of anything armament firms may do."

However, the demolition of these and other specious reasons often advanced as causes of war is not as important as the analysis of the actual causes, and the latter task is ably performed in **The Socialist Party and War.** The wars of today are shown to spring from the basic nature of capitalism which "with its privileged and exploited classes, and its competitive sale of goods for the purpose of realizing profit, creates the international rivalries that lead to war. It is a cut-throat struggle in which no country and no person can be secure or sure of peace; all are involved. Capitalism is the cause of modern war, and all who support capitalism — even though they may believe themselves to be seeking peace — must share responsibility for war."

The attitudes and policies of the British Labor Party and the British Communist Party also come in for close examination and their fallacies and inconsistencies are pointed out. Both parties have reversed their positions on a number of occasions and their blithe contradiction of word with deed is noteworthy. Ample material is provided for a comparison between the principles and records of these so-called Marxist parties (and other parties) and those of the SPGB, especially in reprints of the SPGB manifestoes of 1918 and 1939 included in the current pamphlet.

Some socialists have supported wars on the grounds that they might be turned to advantage as an aid in the progress of the socialist movement, and among these was no less a socialist than Karl Marx. The SPGB, however, rejects the idea and exposes the fallacies behind it. For to true socialists Marx is no infallible prophet whose utterances must be accepted **per se** as dogma. His work, as much as that of anyone else, must stand on the facts and survive the test of scientific analysis.

Altho work on **The Socialist Party and War** was largely completed by June 1950, it was possible to add a postscript on the current "police action" in Korea, and the comments of the SPGB are a refreshing contrast to the wordy smoke-screen thrown up by the opposing sides. This section alone is worth the price of the pamphlet.

It is all too seldom that the public is afforded an opportunity to obtain a scientific explanation of international friction such as that offered by the SPGB. No one who has any regard for his own future can afford to miss reading **The Socialist Party and War.**

S. A.

ECONOMIC NOTES: CORRESPONDENCE

Socialism Means Exploitation?

Gentlemen:

I note with interest that in K. Frederick's review of the book "This is Russia — Uncensored" (May-June issue of The Western Socialist), "surplus value," "profit," and "higher incomes" are interchangeable terms. Mr. Frederick says Marx long ago discovered their source in the exploitation of the working class.

Marx also said that it is through the ownership of the means of production by the capitalist class that the working class is exploited, this being so because this ownership gives the workers no alternative but to work for the capitalists and to hand over to them what they produce above their subsistence. As a remedy for this condition, Marx advocated the expropriation of the capitalists.

In Russia the capitalists were expropriated and there is yet a very evident exploitation of workers, so it becomes necessary for apologists of socialism to explain. This, it seems, is why "surplus value" and "profit" are identified with "higher incomes" in Mr. Frederick's review, and it is also why socialists identify the old capitalist class with the party hierarchy that governs Russia.

The expropriation of the capitalist class must inevitably result in an increase in worker exploitation, since power is thereby concentrated in the hands of the few. The many can never manage the wealth taken over, and the few are only too willing to manage it for them.

The way to end exploitation is to permit people to acquire, hold, and use wealth as they see fit. This they may do if they enjoy equal right to the use of the earth, from which all wealth is drawn, and if they enjoy also the right freely to exchange their wealth with one another.

Sincerely yours,
R. T. H., Boston, Mass.

REPLY TO MR. H.

Dear Sir:

First off, thanks very much for your letter of June 14th. We welcome criticism of articles appearing in **The Western Socialist,** and as a matter of fact, Economic Notes was initiated with precisely the purpose of raising controversial issues on economic theory and practice such as you bring forth in your letter.

I shall endeavor to answer your letter point by point:

It is regrettable that I should have given the impression that "surplus value", "profit", and "higher incomes" are interchangeable. Of course, that is not true at all, and the confusion is the result of trying to put a lot of material in a short article.

The distinction is as follows: Surplus value is the total wealth which the workers produce beyond what they receive in the form of wages. Profit is that portion of surplus value which accrues from the production of commodities (industrial profit) and exchange of commodities (commercial profit) — the latter being that share of the industrial profit which the capitalist manufacturers pass on to the merchant to relieve them of the work of commerce. The other portions of surplus value are rent and interest.

However, in popularizing Marxian economics, profit as defined above is often used synonymously with surplus value, and hence the manner in which I used it. In other articles I have written for Economic Notes the distinction between surplus value and profit is made as above.

The matter of "higher incomes" is more embarrassing to me, and requires a little more explanation. The existence of "higher incomes" is not any indication that the receiver is obtaining surplus value. A highly

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