The WESTERN SOCIALIST

JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

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THE WESTERN SOCIALIST is published by the World Socialist Party of the United States and the Socialist Party of Canada. Subscriptions, donations, articles and correspondence for insertion in THE WESTERN SOCIALIST should be addressed to the World Socialist Party, 3000 Grand River, Room 307, Detroit 1, Mich., or Socialist Party of Canada, P. O. Box 1751, Winnipeg, Man.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

3 ISSUES ..... 25¢ — 12 issues ..... '1.00

LIFETIME $10.00

Above rates include postage

BUNDLE RATES ON APPLICATION

The Two Classes

Our Socialist "Declaration of Principles" starts out with the plain and pointed statement — "That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labor alone, wealth is produced." This tells us that a certain section of society owns and controls everything essential to wealth production and distribution. It is not a large section. Considered in relation to the total population, it is very small. But weak though it is in a numerical way, it is powerful in a political and economic sense.

Those few favored individuals, families, and groups own the landed areas, the mineral deposits, fishing reserves, and all other natural resources that are necessary to the peoples of the world. Occasionally, we do find an individual outside this group that does own a home, a Cadillac, a fish pond, or a "glory hole" in which he is digging for gold or silver, but such economic permits are not of sufficient potency to influence the economy of our social system. Only the big things count. Then, too, the same class that owns the natural resources referred to also has an elbow-lock on the improvements that have been made to such resources in order that society may make use of them. When a railway is built to connect certain areas with contiguous or remote territory, big capital is required to finance the undertaking. The little fellow with the Christmas fund or the life insurance policy is not important enough to call into conference. Only the financial brass hats can expedite the venture.

When mills and factories are constructed at favorable points to change nature's material into things to eat, and wear, and ride in, and live in, great investments of capital are again required to erect buildings and install machinery. When the prospectors discover possibilities of mineral wealth, or sources of oil supply, the most seductive yodeling or coaxing will not lure them to the surface. Expensive mechanical apparatus is essential to place them within the category of exchange values. To secure such equipment, the home with the "piggy bank" is conveniently overlooked, and pedigreed bankers and brokers must be approached so that loans may be secured, stocks sold, and bond issues floated.

Potential Abundances

The reader will note that in the first section of the Declaration quoted, it says this basis of ownership **applies** to society as at present constituted. This implies that previous social forms were constituted on a different basis. This they were. Primitive man knew nothing about private property in land, mines, mills, factories, or railways. He wasn't even acquainted with private control of the piggy bank, duck pond, or glory hole. His society was a crude and simple form of Communism. All the members had access to the means of living, but a lack of knowledge concerning his environment and its possibilities caused a grave shortage of human comforts.

The problems confronting ancient and modern man originated in different causes. Savage man was up against it, and his shopping bag often empty, due to his ignorance of going about getting things. Modern man suffers from the fact that he can produce too much too readily.

Next point, still in the first paragraph, and one worthy of emphasis, is that this modern ownership basis enslaves the working class. It seems logical to conclude that if one class is especially equipped to own and control the wealth, then, by that same right or privilege, this class has the power to exclude the rest of society from participating in the good things of life that scientific production makes so abundant. This they do. The natural consequence is that the great majority of the people is placed at the mercy of the few who rule.

Labor Produces Wealth

The final statement adduced in this first section informs us that it is this enslaved class whose labor alone produces all wealth. This is a reasonable conclusion. "Labor produces all wealth," is an old and well known formula. It definitely implies that the owners of the means of living lend no assistance in supplying the market with the goods society requires.

To see a capitalist with a hodful of mortar on his shoulders, a sack of flour on his back, a shovel in his hands, or hobnailed boots on hsi feet, would be as rare a sight as to see a kitten in a kennel, or a penquin at the equator.

Not only are the real owners not interested in contributing anything to the social welfare, but even the hordes of little shopkeepers and big merchants, whose function it is to circulate commodities, produce no wealth and add nothing to the values of things produced while they operate in the channels of circulation.

The workers alone are responsible for the production of wealth. If we turn the phrase around and make it read — "all wealth is produced by labor" — we are still correct, and we draw our lines in a much more decisive manner. We confine the term "wealth" to those things that are produced by the working class.

This small treatise, we trust, will serve to amplify and extend the statement — "That society, as at present constituted, is based upon the ownership of the means of living by the capitalist, or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labor alone wealth is produced."

J. A. M.

MARX AND ART

In the staid **Art News** (New York, Summer edition, 1952) there appeared an article written by Arnold Hauser, the author of the two volume **Social History of Art.** Mr. Hauser's views as published are highly interesting to a socialist because his general point of view is that art must be looked at from a sociological perspective rather than the old treatment of looking at art for art's sake as self-contained, independent.

And as far as he goes, this is all to the good, For according to our understanding of Marxism, art does reflect the society existing at the time it was produced.

However, in the article there is a development that Hauser makes with which we wish to take serious issue.

The classic statement of Marx and Engels on the materialist conception of history is as follows:

"The ultimate cause of the great moving power of all important events is to be sought in the economic