

SOCIALIST COMMENT and Review

AUGUST, 1946. No. 13.

Two and Two Don't Make Seven

(Mathematics of Economics)

The Chamber of Manufacturers of New South Wales, that smug denouncer of "class-war," has begun an offensive against the working class. The attack takes the form of an advertising campaign, under the heading "Two and Two Don't Make Seven." We are given an example of C.O.M. economics and the advertisement continues:

"We can raise our standard of living only if we produce a greater volume of goods and services than we have done previously. There is no other way to it."

At first glance, this statement seems sound enough. Surely, if there is not enough to go round, the obvious solution is to produce more. If we examine capitalist economy superficially we can solve many other problems just as easily. But let us face facts and get to the core of the question.

Should We Produce More?

This "produce more" argument is not peculiar to the C.O.M. It savours of the recent statements of Mr. Cosgrove (Labor Premier of Tasmania), Mr. P. Walsh (Economic Advisor to the New Zealand Labor Government), Mr. Chifley (Australian Prime Minister), and Mr. Attlee, all of whom voiced similar opinions when dealing with the present position in their particular localities. What these prebendal apologists for capitalism fail to see is the lesson of his-

torical records of the past twenty years teem with glaring instances of over-production with its attendant poverty and want in the ranks of the working class. Only a fool could forget those two-year years when millions of bushels of coffee were dumped into the sea while workers went without; when wheat was fed to locomotive furnaces while unemployed workers died of starvation; when fish, unsaleable at a profit, was used as a fertiliser to produce more food to glut subsequent markets. (For further examples, see files of S.C. and R. and Companion Party papers.) While Premier Cosgrove wailed about "producing more," millions of cases of apples went to waste in his home State, Tasmania, and, as if to taunt unsatisfied workers, the news reels depicted scenes showing pigs, so satiated with apples, that

they could eat no more. Such contradictions in capitalist economy are no new phenomena. They existed before the war, during the war, and appear again in the peace-time economy. At some time or other, almost every commodity has had its "glut" period. This in itself should constitute a telling reply to the "produce more" economists.

No Hunger — No Profit

It is a paradox of capitalist economy that *without hunger there can be no profits*. Sounds strange, doesn't it? But, given capitalism, it's not so strange on examination. Under the existing social order the means of wealth production and distribution are owned and controlled by the capitalist class. The workers, a propertyless class, can work only by permission of the owners and are, therefore, dependent on the owners for their livelihood. An independent working class would mean a lack of wage-slaves for the employers. NO WAGE SLAVES—NO PROFITS. The economic lash has taken the place of the slave-drivers whip of a previous social system, and the conditions which gave rise to changes in the methods of exploitation have also given rise to an increasing consciousness on the part of the workers that they are being robbed by their new masters. Hence the guile required to gull the workers into accepting the changed social order. New exploiters require new excuses.

The "produce more" slogan implies insufficiency. Were the implication valid, capitalists as well as workers would suffer want whereas we know from experience that it is workers alone who suffer shortages during so-called scarcity periods. Actually it is not a question of insufficiency—the capitalists always have MORE THAN ENOUGH. The workers are always short.

Mathematics for the Masses

We agree that "Two and two don't make seven," but while most of us know that two and two make four, few seem to realise that C.O.M. arithmetic fails to see that, assuming the total production to be 4 the magnitude of that number places no limit (within the magnitude) on the size of its component parts. We may have four loaves, but if the capitalist gets three and the workers one, or

SOCIALIST
PARTIES
OF
AUSTRALIA and
NEW ZEALAND

vice versa, it is futile to condemn the number four because some numskull drew wrong conclusions through bad arithmetic. The distributive limitations of capitalist production do not depend on faulty figuring. The apportionment of the wealth produced is determined by economic laws which are inherent in the social system itself. The non-producing capitalist class owns the wealth produced by the toilers, and what is more, they are entitled to own it. But our moralising reformers and "humanitarians" object and cry "What about the workers' share?" Well, what about it? Just as the capitalists are entitled to as much as they can get so are the workers entitled to get whatever they can. It boils down to a struggle between two conflicting rights. As Philosopher Hegel pointed out many years ago, "Between equal rights, force decides," and the question is: "Who has the force?"

Revolution the Answer

The owning class maintain their privileges by virtue of the force crystallised in the State, i.e., the armed forces, the judiciary, the police, and all the other organs of oppression. In democracies, these forces are controlled and used by the Government party which happens to be in power at any time. The Government rules according to the interests of the political party which forms that Government, and as the electors elect capitalist representatives to power the "rights" of the exploiting class are maintained. The only alternative in keeping with working class interest is the overthrow of the capitalist class and the acquisition of political power by the workers. This implies the conquest of power by a class conscious body of working men and women for the specific purpose of dispossessing the owning class and establishing a new economic order; in plain words, it means

A Socialist Revolution

Only in a Socialist Society will the slogan "Produce more to get more" mean anything worth while; for when "each produces according to his ability and each receives according to his needs," then an increase for one will mean an improvement for all. Under present conditions, the more the workers produce, the sooner they will be out of work for history teaches that the time must inevitably come when production will once again reach the paradoxical point where the majority of the population have not enough to eat BECAUSE THEY HAVE PRODUCED TOO MUCH.

Art Under Capitalism

The worker, sweating his guts out in the factory, is apt when he takes the missus and the kids to the pictures to dream of the fabulous incomes of the film stars. Going to the pictures has become a habit everywhere. The capitalist knows how to dish it out—luscious blondes with beautiful dresses, poor little rich girls, million dollar babies in a five-dollar cent store, happy endings to these pictures with monotonous regularity. Even those pictures which have what is known as a "social background" are carefully watered down.

Span from the self-embodiment of the movie industry, there are various religious "Leagues of Decency" which make sure that nothing is shown which isn't "fit for the public."

Jan Aird, the "Herald" film critic, points out that "Hollywood is not all Gold." Quoting "Hollywood" by Dr. Leo C. Rosten, he writes:

Dr. Rosten "takes 1938 as his basic year, one of great prosperity in the industry and still typical enough in 1944-1945. He points out that the top star only 80 Hollywood actors and actresses earned \$25,000 or more. . . . The facts are that 80 per cent of the actors (extras included) in Hollywood earn under 15,000 dollars (\$5,000), and 41.5 per cent earn less than 4,000 dollars (\$1,300). . . . Extras sometimes earn less than 400 dollars (\$130).

Mr. Aird should have added that even these relatively high wages must be measured against the high cost of living in the U.S., and that it is necessary for actors to spend a lot of their money on "being seen in the right places," dress, appearance, etc.—(Quotes from Herald, 22/6/46).

Turning now to England, we find that painters and sculptors who reckon that they are quite "different" from the factory or office worker, have a rude shock coming to them.

Reviewing a book, "The Visual Arts," full of "information about the economics of painting and sculpture," (The Listener—B.B.C.—16/6/46) we find: "Not more than five hundred painters and thirty sculptors earn a living by their arts." A few fashionable portrait painters may make large sums, but before the war very few serious artists were earning over \$500 a year. . . . Who were these artists? The "serious" art? Is it the working class who buys the pictures? Hardly. . . . Between the wars there were scarcely more than a dozen regular patrons on a large scale; so that, had two or three of these died, or together suffered a decline in income, the effects would have been felt immediately. . . .

Without entering into a controversy as to what is and what is not "serious" art, it is obvious from the above that the artist under Capitalism is faced with an insoluble problem. If he wishes to be "serious" or "good," he must be pre-

pared to take the consequences—and unold pictures don't fill hungry bellies. On the other hand, if he wants to make money, he must become a "fashionable portrait painter." Now, anyone who knows something of the history of art and visits the various exhibitions (mostly they are only open during working hours) would probably agree that a "fashionable" portrait is nothing but more than a flattering, colored photograph of the sitter. Where then is the "art"?

What is the solution most artists attempt? It is as simple as it is fallacious. They compromise—go in for what is known as "commercial art" and hope to make enough money from this to enable them later on to paint what they really would like to paint. However, what happens to them is the same as the fate of the writer who works on potboilers in order to write his masterpiece one of these days. The masterpiece is never written. The great picture is never painted. They find, as they must find, that they cannot retreat into an ivory tower, that with every new back-story, with every new ad. painting, they lose something of what they call "creative faculty." If they make enough money to allow them to get away from things and paint the long-desired picture—lo and behold, it turns out to be a slightly improved version of the "commercial" pictures they have been turning out like sausages for a long time.

No attempt has been made, intentionally, to show here the relation of art to the economic structure of society. We have been concerned with showing yet another facet of capitalist "civilization." We do NOT claim that the establishment of Socialism will automatically solve the "personal" problems of the individual, whether they be sexual or artistic. We put first things first and advocate Socialism as a solution to such very material problems as poverty, unemployment and war. But, as far as the artist is concerned, we can at least say to him: Your "personal" problem is largely a SOCIAL one, having its roots in class society. It can never be solved under Capitalism. Socialism will not solve it for you, but it will bring about the social prerequisites which are absolutely essential for even an attempt at the solution of so-called "personal" problems. H.H.

Test Your Socialist Knowledge

WHO WROTE THIS

"We cannot therefore co-operate with people who say that the workers are too uneducated to emancipate themselves and must first be free from above by philanthropic bourgeois and petty bourgeois."

Answer on page 4.

THROUGH THE PRESS "Volunteers"

"Anticipating the redrafting of King's Rules and Regulations, the Kent sub-district of Eastern Army Command has abolished compulsory church parades. . . . Yesterday nine states, voluntarily attended, whereas previously 250 to 300 attended each Sunday."

"At the nearby detention barracks there were good attendances of volunteers—those who did not have to march round the square.—Melbourne Herald—25/6/46."

Germany's "Liberated" Press

"The American news service in Germany announces today that the Munich newspaper Sued Deutsche Zeitung has been ordered to reduce its size from six pages to four for 30 days because it published an article criticising the Czechoslovakian Government's treatment of the Germans."

"An American spokesman said German papers in the American Zone were uncensored, but editors had said that criticism of the military government of the Allied Powers or the United Nations would not be tolerated.—Herald, 26/6/46."

"A new dictionary seems to be required. The Oxford Concise defines 'volunteer' as 'spontaneous undertaker of tasks, etc.' We suggest it add 'whose spontaneity is due to threat of punishment.'"

"An 'uncensored' paper is one which publishes no criticism. See?"

150 Years of "Justice"

"When the first British landed in Australia the aboriginal population was not less than 300,000. To-day it is 50,000. A quarter of a million had been wiped out by wholesale shootings, poisoning, alcohol and various 'white man's diseases.'"

"The President of the Aborigines' Uplift Society (Mr. Gillespie Douglas) says this today—"

"Our men in the two world wars fought for justice for the smaller nations, but within our shores we have the aboriginal who has been pleading for 150 years for mercy and common British justice.—(Herald, 25/6/46)"

Wars are not fought for "justice," Mr. Gillespie. They are fought for the oil, the iron, the rubber, the trade and control of trade routes over which rival Capitalist Classes clash. The problem of national minorities, whatever the color of their skin, cannot be solved under Capitalism. What about having a look at the Socialist case?

No Comment

"Ten million adults in the U.S. can neither read nor write, according to Dr. Stella S. Cauter, director of Reading Clinic of New York University."

The figure was calculated by the Federal Bureau of Education, which, she said, estimated that from 20 to 25 per cent of children in elementary and high schools failed to achieve reading standards in their respective grades.—(Age, 30/5/46.)"

The Chief Judge Wants To Know Something About The "New Order"

Where Ignorance is Bliss

During the hearing of the application for the 40-hour working week before the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, Mr. Eggleston, representing the Australian Council of Trade Unions, told the Court that the 40-hour week would be the first instalment of the 'New Order. Apart from an existing 30-hour stipend in the A.C.T.U., the statement provided Chief Judge Drake-Brockman with an opportunity to display his blissful ignorance. Said the C.J.:

"This New Order—I have heard it from the public platform, from the radio, and from individuals. I have asked the men who have mentioned it what it is, but I have never received an explanation from anyone."

One thing is certain; he will not receive any intelligent enlightenment from any of the parties represented in the Court. "If the Court please, may we present the case for a new order?"

THE Present Order

The present social order is based upon the private ownership of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by the capitalist class. That is to say, the land, factories, mines, railways, etc., and owned by one class in society. The workers, therefore, own nothing but their labor power are forced, in order to get the wherewithal to live, to sell their labor power to the owning class. THIS PLACES THEM IN THE POSITION OF WAGE-SLAVES TO THEIR EMPLOYERS.

It is clear then that the wealth of the country is produced by the application of workers' energies, through the machinery of production, to the materials provided by nature. For the services rendered, the workers receive wages which, in Australia, are not according to the prices of certain commodities contained in a regimen allegedly corresponding to what it takes to sustain a man, wife and two children in "moderate comfort." This system does not take into consideration many items which are included in the expenses of every worker such as fares, amusements, tobacco, beer, newspapers, etc. And what is still more important, the statistics on which the wage is calculated do not correspond to the actual prices of commodities contained in the regimen, a fact which has been demonstrated from time to time in the Arbitration Court.

So, of the wealth produced BY THE WORKERS, the producers receive barely sufficient to live on while the non-producing capitalist class takes the major share. But there is a limit to the consuming ability of the capitalists and they are always faced with the problem of disposing their surpluses. Some find an outlet in overseas markets, but as the capitalists of all countries are chas-

ing the same markets, sooner or later, the markets become satisfied and demands fall off. Surpluses build up like a rolling snowball which can only be dissipated in the throes of an economic depression. Occasionally the competition becomes so acute that the rival capitalists switch from the trade war to military operations. Wage workers are converted to war-workers; production of peace-time products is changed into production of instruments of murder. THE EMPLOYERS: THE QUESTION OF A NEW ORDER DOES NOT COME WITHIN ITS JURISDICTION. The establishing of a New Order can be realized only by the class conscious organization of workers who recognize the NEED for the change and who KNOW HOW TO BRING THE CHANGE ABOUT. To suggest that the 40-hour week is "an instalment of the new order" is an indication that those making such a suggestion do not understand the nature of the present social order.

The New Order

What then is to take its place? A New Order. But when Socialists speak of a new order we have something vastly different in mind from the nebulous vapors of the reformist representatives of capitalism who, be they Labor Party, Communist, or Trade Union officials, masquerade as champions of the working class.

When we speak of a New Order, we meant the ABOLITION OF WAGE SLAVERY—CAPITALISM. We aim at the dispossession of the capitalist class of their OWNERSHIP of the means by which we live and the conversion of the means of wealth production and distribution from PRIVATE OWNERSHIP TO COMMON OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL BY THE WHOLE COMMUNITY. Things would be produced for use and not for sale and profit-making. All capable of working would work and all needs would be met according to the supplies in the common coffers. No individual, like the Chief Judge, for instance, would be paid 20 pounds a week to decide that workers should scrounge which, in Australia, is basic wage, on present monetary values of 50 shillings a week! (See panel on Basic Wage.) Neither would workers starve on a miserable dole during depression periods BECAUSE THEY HAD PRODUCED SO MUCH WEALTH THAT THE OWNERS COULD NOT GET RID OF IT AT A SUITABLE PROFIT.

There would be no economic difficulties in the way of meeting the requirements of the community. There is ample raw material in the world to meet the needs of all. There is sufficient labor power available to perform the necessary work, connected with production and distribution. Even capitalist statisticians have provided the requisite information on which the average requirements of the individual and scientific administration the production and allocation of goods and services would be carried out IN THE INTEREST OF SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. The evils associated with the profit system would disappear with the abolition of the present order.

What Can the Arbitration Court Do?

With regard to the essential conditions of wage slavery the Court can do NOTHING. The Court itself presupposes the continuance of the wages system. IT IS NOTHING OTHER THAN AN INSTITUTION OF CAPITALISM FOR TRYING TO REGULATE THE EVERYDAY CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE WAGE SLAVES AND THE EMPLOYERS: THE QUESTION OF A NEW ORDER DOES NOT COME WITHIN ITS JURISDICTION. The establishing of a New Order can be realized only by the class conscious organization of workers who recognize the NEED for the change and who KNOW HOW TO BRING THE CHANGE ABOUT. To suggest that the 40-hour week is "an instalment of the new order" is an indication that those making such a suggestion do not understand the nature of the present social order.

It is little wonder therefore that the Chief Judge wonders what it all about. On the other hand, he may be indulging in a little sarcasm at the expense of the "intellects" of the Trades Union Movement. After all, a man, who has been handling Arbitration Court matters for twenty years and who has been connected with employers' organizations should have some knowledge of what is meant by the New Order advocated by those with whom he has everyday contact. There may be some excuse for him not knowing the Socialist conception of a new society for such things are anathema to him; his utterances from time to time indicate his bias against the overthrow of the 'order' so dear to him. Nevertheless, THE DAY MUST COME.

W.J.C.

Why Not Sleep in the Church?

"The Vicar of St. Michael's Goders Green, the Rev. M. W. Cuthbert, advertised for an assistant priest, and said that no house was available. He had no replies."

"Then he advertised that a house would be available. He had replies from all over the kingdom." (Quoted in "Freedom," London, 4/5/46.)

PARTY NOTES

S.P.A.—SYDNEY, P.O. Box 2291, G.P.O., meets Tuesdays. Room 3—Melb. House, Rawson Place.

S.P.A.—MELBOURNE, P.O. Box 1440-M. Meets every Tuesday, Temperance Hall. Fortnightly Lectures. See "Age," "Argus" Meetings—Column every Saturday.

CORRECTION

Several errors crept into our last issue. We hasten to correct them.

In the report on the debate between the S.P.A. and the N.W.R.M.—

Page 1, col. 1, line 53: "Charity" should read "Charter."

Page 1, col. 3, line 8: "Socialism" should read "Capitalism," "Censorship and Socialism."

Page 2, col. 2, line 56: "Legislation" should read "Capitalism."

Answer to "Who wrote this?"

Marx and Engels in a letter to Bebel, Liebknecht, Bracht and others, September, 1879. Marx-Engels Correspondence p. 377.

COMPANION PARTIES

S.P. of CANADA: P.O. Box 1751, Winnipeg, Man., Canada.

S.P. of GREAT BRITAIN: 2 Rugby Street, London, W.C.1.

S.P. of NEW ZEALAND: P.O. Box 62, Petone, and P.O. Box 1929, Auckland.

PETONE MEETINGS: See local press.

AUCKLAND MEETINGS: Economics and Discussions Class, every Monday, 7.30 p.m., Carpenters Union Rooms, Union Bank of Australasia Buildings, East Street, and Karangahape Road.

WORKERS SP. of U.S.: 27 Dock Square, Boston 8, Mass.

HERE'S YOUR OPPORTUNITY!

The Socialist Party will send Speakers to any Organisation to explain the Socialist view on any subject affecting working class interest

Ask Your Party.
Ask Your Trade Union.
Ask Your Organisation.
TO FORWARD YOUR
REQUEST.

WE WILL DO THE REST.
AND REMEMBER

IT COSTS YOU NOTHING.

Published by W. J. Clarke, Box 2291, G.P.O., Sydney, and printed by Premier Printers, 66 Arthur Street, North Sydney.



S.P.A.

S.P.N.Z.

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

The Socialist Parties of Australia and New Zealand hold:

1. The 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, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
 2. 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.
 3. 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.
 4. 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.
 5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
 6. 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 organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national 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.
 7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is 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.
 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 alleged Labor or avowed Capitalist, and call upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under their banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour and that poverty may give place to comfort privilege to equality and slavery to freedom.
- Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment, apply to nearest address.

THE BASIC WAGE — NOMINAL OR REAL

It is generally agreed that the £A1 is worth 12/6 compared with pre-war costs. If we deduct the tax from the present basic wage we get the following comparison with the pre-war basic wage:—

	Basic Wage, July, 1946.		Tax.	Take home pay		Present purchas- ing power compared with 1939.
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.	
SYDNEY	4	19 0	11	0	4 7 3	2 15 0
MELBOURNE	4	18 0	11	9	4 6 3	2 13 0
BRISBANE	4	14 0	10	3	4 3 9	2 12 6

Average basic wage of 1939 was £4. The real wage has been reduced by approximately 25 per cent. Further allowance must be made for the shoddy nature of goods supplied to-day.

N.B.—Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Communist Party proposes an "increase" of one pound per week in the basic wage.