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**THE  
SOCIALIST  
PARTY**

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**ITS  
PRINCIPLES  
AND  
POLICY**

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**PRICE**

**2<sup>D</sup>**

The  
**SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN**

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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 for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

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**DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.**

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

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, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

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 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.

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.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its 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.



## PREFACE.

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THE Socialist Party of Great Britain, together with its associated parties in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America, is sharply distinguished from other organisations claiming to be socialist by the care that it takes to ensure that none but socialists shall become members. At first sight it may be questioned by the onlooker whether any such distinction exists. It may be said, for example, that there are many organisations the members of which are required to declare that they are socialists. Nevertheless, the difference is a real one, for the Socialist Party of Great Britain demands of its members something more than a formal declaration that they are socialists. Applicants for membership are required to sign the Declaration of Principles printed on the inside cover of this pamphlet, and are expected to satisfy the branch before which their application comes that they understand and accept the principles in question.

The purpose of this care is not to retard the growth of the socialist movement, but to secure a firmly grounded and united membership. **Effective socialist organisation cannot develop more quickly than the spread of socialist knowledge.** To ignore this lesson, taught by the many failures in the history of the working-class movement, is to invite the dissensions and desertions which always occur when a party based on a large but disunited membership has to face a crisis calling for firm decision.

In order, therefore, that the Socialist Party may be a fit instrument for the great task before us, we wish to provide applicants for membership with an explanation, as simple as possible, of our Declaration of Principles. That is the purpose of this pamphlet.

A pamphlet of this kind is bound to make somewhat difficult reading for those who are not yet accustomed to a closely reasoned explanation of political and economic problems. Any reader who finds this to be his experience is urged not to be discouraged. The effort to understand the various clauses of our Declaration of Principles and to explore the lines of thought opened up in this pamphlet cannot fail to be of value, even if at first it presents a little difficulty. Readers are advised also to read our pamphlets "Socialism" and "The S.P.G.B. and Questions of the Day," in which the treatment of different aspects of socialism is more general and will present less difficulty to the beginner.

Executive Committee, S.P.G.B.

August, 1934.





# The Socialist Party— Its Principles and Policy

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## CHAPTER I.

### **The Basis of the Social System.**

The Socialist Party of Great Britain 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, BY WHOSE LABOUR ALONE WEALTH IS PRODUCED.

Society is a number of people living together in community, having dealings or relations with each other in the everyday affairs of life.

The sum total of all these relations forms the *system* under which the people live—the social system or the system of society.

It is quite clear, therefore, that the nature of these dealings or relations will determine the form of the social system, and that the fact or facts which shape the relations between the human beings who are the units of society shape also the whole system of society—which is nothing but the sum total of those relations.

Now if you go into a baker's shop and take possession of a loaf of bread, you enter into certain definite relations with the baker.

Those relations will vary, according to whether you have bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen the loaf. In the first case the relations between the baker and you are those of seller and buyer, in the second case those of giver and receiver, in the third case those of lender and borrower, in the last case those of robbed and robber.

But the significant fact is that, though each of these relations is different (owing to the different circumstances of

your acquiring the loaf), they all arise from the one constant and unchanging factor that the loaf is the property of the baker to start with. Had the loaf not been the property of someone it could not have been bought or sold, begged or given, lent, borrowed or stolen.

In St. Paul's churchyard many pigeons may be seen. They belong to nobody. You cannot beg, borrow, or buy one of them, for there is no owner to give, lend, or sell them. If you take possession of one you have stolen nothing. As far as these pigeons are concerned, you cannot enter into any of the relations that characterised your taking possession of the baker's loaf. Even the law cannot oblige you in this respect, for the only charge that can be preferred against you—and that only by an obvious straining of the law to meet an awkward situation—is that of unlawful possession: the charge, not that you have something belonging to someone else, but that you have something that does not belong to you.

Now it is beyond dispute that what makes the difference in the relations between you and your fellows in the given instances is the fact that the loaf is the property of some person or persons while the pigeon is not.

If we look around to try to discover what are the social relations that occupy the largest and most important place in the social scheme, we find that they are the relations which arise out of the production and distribution of wealth (food, clothing, shelter, etc.).

The reason for this is plain to see. It is because every living person must be a wealth consumer as the first essential condition of his or her existence.

These relations pervade the whole of society. They cannot be escaped. What form, then, do these social relations take?

Wealth is produced by the application of human energy to the material provided by nature. All wealth, as the term is understood in political economy, is produced thus, and only thus. Even the "working-power" of the horse is not an exception, for the horse itself is wealth, being the product of human energy applied in horse-breeding and rearing.

The energy of the horse, therefore, takes the same rank in the production of wealth as the energy developed by a steam engine.



The two things, then, which are fundamentally necessary to the production of wealth are human labour-power and nature-given material.

To-day, owing to progress in wealth-production, it is necessary to have highly developed machinery and other means of production and distribution before wealth can be produced and placed at the disposal of the consumer, for, under the present system, and in the broad sense, human energy can only be applied to material through these means of production.

All normal people within certain limits of age possess one of these essentials of wealth production, namely, labour-power. But before it is possible for them to produce they must have access to the natural material and to the means of production.

Here, then, is the first need of every living person, if that person is to be self-supporting—access to the nature-given material and the productive machinery.

Now let us place these things, desired of all people, in the circumstances of the baker's loaf and the churchyard pigeon respectively, and see what happens—see what effect it has upon the great mass of relations between man and man which go to make up the social system.

In the first case, with the means of production owned by individuals, two sets of relationships may arise, according to whether these things are owned by those who use them or by those who do not.

In the Middle Ages, before the capitalist era, the means of production largely belonged to those who used them, and access to agricultural land was the common right. As a consequence the relations between the social units were different from those obtaining to-day. Men had the means of gaining their livelihood in their own hands, and so the wage-worker, the man who had no source of subsistence other than the sale of his labour-power, was the exception.

To-day, however, the things necessary for wealth production are not, broadly speaking, owned by those who use them. Consequently, those who do not share in the possession of the means of production and distribution must get the sanction of the owners before they can apply their labour-power in the production of wealth.

On this the whole structure of modern society is based,



and all the relations between the social units take their shape from it, as we shall presently see.

**In the first place, those people who do not share in the ownership of the means of production find others standing between them and the sources of life. They have to sell their labour-power to the owners of the means of living in order to obtain subsistence.**

Thus is set up that large and important group of social relations and social institutions which we have before noted. First, society is divided into two classes—employers and employees; those who possess and those who do not possess. So the two-class nature of society, with property as the differentiating agent, is shown to be founded on the ownership of the means of living by the capitalist class.

Secondly, the possession of the means of living by a class sets up the wages system, the labour market into which every propertyless person is driven, to seek his livelihood by the sale of his labour-power. It sets up the whole range of relationships between employer and employed, foreman and ordinary "hand," and even those arising between capitalist and capitalist competing against one another for labour-power at the lowest price, and also between worker and worker competing for jobs.

One other striking characteristic of the present social system arises out of this basic property condition, but one to which we are so accustomed that we are surprised to find that this feature is peculiar to the present system. It is that all the wealth of society is produced as "commodities," that is, as articles for sale instead of for use.

This is a very important distinction. For instance, bread is no longer produced because it feeds people but because profit may be made from its sale. The same is true of all other goods.

Where goods are produced solely for use the incentive to go on producing remains until human need is satisfied. But when production is for sale, it is curtailed when there is no longer a prospect of profit, even though millions may be in dire need of food, clothing and shelter.

When the productive instruments belonged to those who used them, there was want only as the result of scarcity; with the instruments belonging to those who do not use them there is acute want for those who, strange as

it may appear, become unemployed on account of the very abundance of wealth produced.

The wealth the wage-worker produces must, in order to satisfy the employer, exceed the amount of his wages, and therefore must exceed the amount he is able to buy back and consume. This surplus of commodities is far in excess of the requirements of the masters themselves. Periodically, owing to the haphazard way in which production is related to demand, surpluses of a number of products, far in excess of what can be sold at a profit, are thrown on to the markets until they are glutted. Then production is strangled and we are told we are facing a "crisis." There is a falling off in demand and prospects of only small sales for further products. The incentive to produce declines. Machines are stopped, factories are partially or wholly shut down, land is taken out of cultivation, workers are thrown out of employment, and the miseries of famine stalk the land in spite of the abundance of wealth.

Were the means and instruments of production the property of society as a whole, instead of belonging to individuals, the wages system could not exist. Each one having equal right of access to the means of living, none would be compelled to sell his labour-power to another person in order to live. In addition, no one would purchase labour-power because no one would have the opportunity to do so. No individuals would possess the means of production and, therefore, none would be able to exploit labour-power.

So society could not be composed of two or more classes. It could know no class distinction at all, in fact. It could not contain masters and men, capitalists and wage-earners, and could not be founded on the labour of a section of the community. No able-bodied member of the community would be exempted from rendering his due quota of useful service to the community, in return for the material wealth placed at his disposal by "society, for in the absence of private ownership there would be nothing on which to base such privileges.

And in a social system founded upon common ownership in the means of living, goods could not possibly be produced for sale. Just as at present the wealth produced belongs to those who own the machinery and factories, the capitalists, so then the product of labour would belong to



the owners of the means of production, society as a whole. Hence goods could only be produced for use, and production would continue as long as there were social needs to be satisfied.

What has been said shows how the social system of to-day is "based upon the ownership of the means of living by the capitalist or master-class," and also how this class-ownership results in the enslavement of the working class, who are doomed to a life of drudgery, insecurity and want, because every avenue of life is closed to them, save that of the wage-labour market.

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## CHAPTER II.

### **The Class Struggle.**

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.

We saw in Chapter I, that society is divided into two classes—a class of sellers of labour-power and a class of buyers of labour-power. This division was seen to arise from the class-ownership of the means of life—those who do not possess being compelled to sell their labour-power to those who do.

Hence we have, in the terms of the clause at the head of this chapter, a class "who possess but do not produce," and a class "who produce but do not possess."

The proposition is that between these two classes in society there is an antagonism of interests manifesting itself as a class struggle.

The very nature of selling and buying presupposes opposing interests. It is clear that since commodities, as such, are insensate, and have no will-power to fight their own battles, it is in reality their owners who must stand in opposition to one another. It is they who resist the forces of competition when those forces are against them, and use them to their utmost capacity when they are in their favour.

It is only by this continual struggle of buyers and sellers against one another—the former to buy as cheaply as



they can, the latter to sell for the highest possible figure—that prices rise and fall. Without this struggle we cannot imagine prices falling when goods are plentiful by comparison with demand, and rising when the reverse condition obtains.

This struggle, presupposed by the competitive exchange of goods which we call buying and selling, can only arise out of opposing and conflicting interests.

Where buying and selling is found, there antagonism of interests must inevitably exist.

So when we show that society is divided into two classes, one of which has no means of livelihood except by selling its labour-power to the other, we are compelled to conclude that there is antagonism of interests between those classes.

Let us look at it another way. One result of the private ownership of the means of life is a struggle over the division of the product of the workers' toil. Whatever this product may amount to, and whatever form it may take, this fact concerning it remains true at all times: the more of it that is taken by the worker the less there remains for the capitalist, and the larger the portion taken by the capitalist the smaller must be the amount remaining for the worker.

Neither side can prosecute its own interest without detriment to the interest of the other, and hence again we find that "in society there is an antagonism of interests between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess."

In the case of buyers and sellers of ordinary commodities, that is, of the products of labour, this antagonism of interests cannot manifest itself as a class struggle, because there is no class distinction between buyers and sellers as buyers and sellers. That which draws the class line between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess is not the fact that the one does not produce and the other does, or that the one buys labour-power and the other sells it. It is the fact that the one possesses the means of life and the other does not.

As a matter of fact, buyers and sellers in the ordinary commodities market cannot be separated into classes as such, for every buyer becomes a seller in his turn. So the antagonistic interests, here, can only manifest themselves

in a series of struggles between individuals or groups of individuals.

On the other hand, in the labour market the buyers and sellers are only such because of the class distinction. There, buyers and sellers are by this very fact separate classes. The seller only becomes a buyer by becoming a possessor and so passing into the other class, and the buyer only becomes a seller by becoming dispossessed and so being precipitated into the propertyless class. And this changing about is comparatively rare in the latter case and extremely rare in the former.

In these circumstances, then, whatever may be the differences between individual non-producers as competitors in the purchase of labour-power, the two classes, as long as they exist as such, must always be opposed to each other as buyers and sellers.

The breach between the individuals of the same class may to some extent be closed, for it is largely a superficial breach. It has been seen that the more one class takes of the product of labour the less there is for the other class. This means that class interests must be antagonistic. Between individuals of the same class, no such thing is true. One worker does not necessarily get less because another gets more, nor does the increased share of one capitalist necessarily leave less for another. The capitalist does not ordinarily increase his wealth by taking away from his fellow capitalist (although certain individuals may do so), but by subtracting from the worker.

Sectional interests, therefore, differ from class interests in this, that though they are often antagonistic, they are not fundamentally so. Class interests, on the contrary, are fundamental and must inevitably clash.

It is recognised among both classes that the conflicting interests of sections may be reconciled to some extent by substituting combination for competition. Hence we have rings, trusts, combines, mergers and associations on the capitalists' side, and trade unions on the workers' side.

The conflict of sectional interests, then, since these interests *are* sectional, can only manifest itself as sectional struggles; but the antagonism of class interests must, from its class nature, exhibit itself in the form of a struggle between the classes.

This class struggle is not fought out with the same



degree of consciousness at all times, for which reason it does not at all times wear the same aspect. In the earlier days of the capitalist system its nature was masked. There did not exist the same clear line of distinction between the two classes. Men were not conscious of the secrets of capitalist production, and therefore could not realise the irreconcilable antagonism of interests between the classes in present society.

The reasons for this are many, but they all rest on the same foundation: the stage of development of the means and instruments for producing wealth.

Thus these means and instruments had not then reached the giant proportions and stupendous costliness which forbid all but an odd worker ever hoping to become possessors of them and so lifting themselves into the class above. Such climbing on the part of individual workers was in the early days of capitalism so common an occurrence as to largely obscure the class struggle. Men could not easily discern a class barrier which could be surmounted, or regard that circle, which was every day being invaded by members of their own class, as a class apart.

Again, the development of the system had not yet reached that level at which it sets the owner of the means of producing wealth free from any participation in their operation. The rise and development of joint stock companies and investment companies have had the effect of largely banishing the owners of the means of production from the arena of production. Their personal command over their productive wealth has given place to personal command over their stocks and shares. They are so far removed from production that they cannot possibly be supposed to have a hand in it. But the earlier capitalists, from their closer connection with industrial operations, never appeared to stand in the position of a superfluous class. Their co-operation seemed to be a necessary part of the productive operation, and therefore the share they took of the product did not appear as surplus-value plundered from the workers, but as wealth which the masters had assisted in producing.

These things prevented the working class from realising that they were the producers of all wealth, that the capitalist class were parasitic, existing upon the "legalised robbery" of the workers, and that there was an irreconcilable



antagonism of interest between the two classes and therefore a class struggle. So the struggle was fought out without any great conscious direction.

But the development of the instruments and methods of production has stripped the capitalist system of most of its secrets. Men cannot let go unchallenged for ever a system in which a progressive increase in the productivity of human energy accompanies the appalling poverty of those who carry on production. Men cannot fail to observe the growing detachment from industry, the heaping wealth and luxury, the increasing idleness and uselessness, of those who own the means whereby all live.

Men cannot witness the strengthening of the barrier which shuts them ever more completely out from the circle of luxury, leisure and comfort without becoming more clearly conscious of the class division. Men cannot see the forces of competition driving capitalists into combines and workers into trade unions without a dawning of light, a conception of the class struggle, a strengthening of class feeling, and the birth of a new understanding and principle to guide and direct the class struggle. In other words, the development of the capitalist system itself gathers up all the scattered, inarticulate forces fighting a ragged battle which they only half understand, and welds them into a solid army prosecuting an ordered struggle for a clear and definite purpose. Industrial development, in short, makes the socialist and the socialist movement.

So the class struggle, as time goes on, assumes a different aspect, in strict correspondence with the changing visage of capitalism. When the capitalist class stood as revolutionaries at the inception of the capitalist system, their victory was essential to further progress. But when they had overthrown the reactionary system of the period and established a new system, that system in its turn, and the class who ruled under it, became reactionary.

And as this reactionary character has become more pronounced, as the system and the class have become a greater clog to progress and more fruitful of social injury, so the character of the class struggle becomes revolutionary. While the fight for the possession of the wealth produced under the system is not less bitterly maintained, the class struggle finds its highest expression in the movement for the overthrow of the capitalist system of society, and the

establishment of a new system in which economic interests will be in harmony.

This, then, is the true meaning of our statement that there exists a class struggle in society. It is a struggle on the one side to maintain and on the other side to abolish a social system.

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## CHAPTER III.

### **The Need for Common Ownership.**

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.

The arguments which were used to support the previous clauses really left little to be said to establish this one. It having been shown that the antagonism of interests arises from the ownership by the capitalist class of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth, it follows that until those means and instruments cease to be possessed by the capitalist class the antagonism of interests must continue to exist.

So long as the means of life belong to a class, that class must be in a position of privilege; and its interests as such must necessarily be different from, and in opposition to, the interests of the class who are without privilege. The reason for this is that the privilege is based upon the possession of something which is vitally necessary to all.

It is this necessity upon which the whole social structure, in its present form, hangs. The only way open to the non-possessors to live, so long as the privately owned means of life are adequately guarded, is by selling their energy to the possessors. To enforce such sale is the object of the private ownership of the means of living by a section of society, and this necessarily places them in antagonism to those whom they coerce into wage-slavery.

It is quite clear, then, that if we wish to abolish the antagonism of interests and the class struggle existing in



society to-day, we must remove the condition which gives rise to it. We must reduce the varying and opposing interests to a common and identical interest.

This cannot be done by making the interest of the workers the same as that of the master class, for that is an exploiting interest, and then there would be no one to exploit—in other words, we cannot all be employers. Neither, of course, can we all be employees. So the only way is to find a new position for both classes.

The way out of this, according to the clause quoted above, is by the conversion of the means of production and distribution into the common property of society.

This would at once strip from the capitalist class all their privileges, and at the same time strike from the workers the shackles which bind them to their slavery. It would equalise, in all matters relating to the enjoyment of the social wealth and services, all the units of society.

To-day the vast majority of men must work for wages or salary because they have no other opportunity of gaining a livelihood. If they go unbidden into the fields to dig, or into the factories to spin and weave, they are charged with trespassing or worse. But take away from the possessing class the ownership of the means and instruments of production and distribution, make them the *common possession* of the whole of society, and immediately they become *accessible* to the whole of society.

The avenues of life then are open once more to all.

But that emancipating act does more than this. When it sets the workers free from the necessity of selling their labour-power it extinguishes utterly the opportunity of the capitalist class to live without working. No longer can they lock, bolt, and bar the gates of the world against a section—the majority—of society. So, being unable to purchase labour-power, and unable, from lack of means of production, to exploit it even if they could purchase it, they could have only the same means of living open to them as to the rest of society.

Make no mistake about it, when you strip the capitalist class of their possessions you blot out every vestige of class distinction between them and the working class. Such class distinction does not attach to them as human beings but as owners of property. It is an attribute of property, not of humanity. Even to-day we see that when one of the



capitalist class loses his property he loses his class distinction and his class privilege. And if he loses his wealth to his butler or his gardener, his class distinction passes with his fortune to his menial.

So the conversion of the means and instruments of production into the common property of society will not only emancipate the working class. It will also dethrone the ruling class and make them one with their erstwhile slaves. With the abolition of classes the antagonism of interests ceases to exist. The interest of the class gives place to the interest of society. That interest, on the economic plane, will be to satisfy as many social needs as the general opinion holds to be worth the cost. This, of course, resolves itself into the economical expenditure of labour-power. This, then, would become the common interest of all the members of the community, displacing the antagonism of interests which prevails in society to-day.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### **The Emancipation of all Mankind.**

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.

This clause speaks of "the order of social evolution." The phrase shall be the starting-point of our explanation.

Society has not always been divided into the same classes that it comprises to-day. The present class division, as was shown in dealing with our first clause, is based entirely on the private ownership of the means of life. From it comes the class distinction, and from it flow the class characteristics. Only this private ownership by a section could, for instance, have developed a wage-slave class (not a class who *occasionally* work for wages, but a class who have *no other* means of living than by working for wages).

But previous to the present social system other social

systems have existed, upon other bases, and with other classes ruling and ruled.

Under the feudal system, for example, the feudal nobility ruled, basing their power upon a certain qualified control of the land. Under the classic States based upon chattel-slavery, a class of slave-owners ruled.

But the constant feature of society ever since it has had the class formation—that is, ever since classes have existed—has been that the ruling classes have controlled the dominating factor in production.

Under chattel-slavery it was slaves, under feudalism it was land.

But against this persistent feature of class society is the constant characteristic of the democratic societies which preceded them—the means of living belonged to no one: they were open to all.

This gives us the key to the clause. Without private property, without privilege in the means of living, there can be no class distinction or class domination.

The emancipation of the working class, therefore, since it can only be accomplished by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, leaves nothing to form the basis of domination. Thus it follows that the emancipation of the working class must end class domination, and must involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

These arguments are developed further in the following chapter.

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## CHAPTER V.

### **The Workers must emancipate themselves.**

THAT THIS EMANCIPATION MUST BE THE WORK OF THE WORKING-CLASS ITSELF.

Before the present social system came into existence the feudal nobility were the ruling class. But they could not prevent the rise to power of a new class. This occurred largely in the towns, where surplus products of a "non-perishable" nature were produced, which fell into the hands of a class who made commerce their business.



The sources of the merchants' wealth were capable of much greater extension than those of the nobles, partly because the products of the country districts, being more perishable than town products, did not lend themselves so readily to international commerce, and partly because the serf, having rights in the land, was chiefly producing articles for his own consumption, and only working for a strictly limited time for his feudal superior, while the handicraftsman of the town was already producing "commodities"—goods produced for sale.

It was quite in the nature of things that with the increasing productivity of labour the capitalist side of production—the production of commodities by wage-labour—should tend to increase rapidly, and certain geographical discoveries (the way to the East round the Cape of Good Hope and the discovery of America) gave tremendous impetus to this side of industrial development. The restrictions placed upon commerce and production—partly feudal, partly customary to the different trades—pressed heavily upon the rising class, and so it was natural that, as their wealth and power increased, they should direct their attention toward gaining social supremacy.

As the new class rose the serfs gradually rose from servitude also, and long before the merchant forerunners of the modern capitalist class had achieved ruling power, serfdom had ceased to exist in this country. The serfs had shaken themselves free of most of their feudal shackles and stood now as independent peasant-proprietors.

The freeing of the serf was a gradual process spread over a long time. The crusading lords who left this country on pilgrimages to the East from the 11th century onwards required money for their journeys and were prepared to commute the feudal services for money payments. The growth of commerce broke up the local feudal market by inducing the producers to sell their produce in a wider market, for money. There consequently commenced a process of reckoning in money instead of in kind. The new method was so superior to the cumbrous feudal one, and it fitted in so well with the new conditions produced by the spread of trading throughout the country, that gradually feudal payments in work and produce were converted into money payments. This left the serf, for the time being, free to develop his land and produce as

much as he liked, provided that he paid to the lord (now become a landlord) the money rent stipulated.

But the rising capitalist class could only elevate themselves on the backs of the class of free peasants. It was from their ranks, chiefly, that these new masters looked to recruit that abundance of cheap labourers they desired for their industries. Already as feudalism waned, the break-up of the bands of retainers of the feudal nobility had supplied great numbers, and the dissolution of the monasteries had set free a great many others, but still the factories cried for more workers, and only the class of peasant-proprietors could supply the needed increase.

Events, however, proved favourable to the needs of the capitalists. An enormous demand for wool had sprung up, and in consequence the land began to wear a different aspect in the eyes of the landed aristocracy. It presented a means of keeping sheep, and hence of acquiring great wealth. But the peasant proprietors were in the way.

The peasants were arable farmers, producing food-stuffs of different kinds, while the wool trade demanded large flocks of sheep, and the sheep needed plenty of grassland for grazing. Sheep required little labour and brought much larger profits than the rents paid by the peasants. Therefore the small agriculturists, whom the capitalists so badly wanted in the new manufactories and whose fields the aristocrats coveted, were, from their point of view altogether out of place upon the land. That was a matter which the capitalist class and their landed opponents could agree upon, for all their class antagonism.

So the two combined to drive the peasants from the soil. At first they were dispossessed of their fields without any legal form, but later the classes interested passed, under various pretexts, legislation which made the expropriation of the peasants more swift. They were hunted out by troops, their dwellings were burnt to the ground, and their lands were appropriated by the great landlords and laid down in pasture for sheep.

The legislation passed against the dispossessed peasants makes terrible reading. They were expropriated at a rate far too rapid even for the rapidly growing capitalist industry to absorb them. Laws were passed, therefore, aiming at dealing with the surplus. Under Henry VIII (see Karl Marx's "Capital," Chap. XXVIII)



“sturdy vagabonds” were to be tied to the cart-tail and whipped until the blood ran in streams from their bodies. For the second offence of vagabondage the whipping was to be repeated and half the ear sliced off. For the third relapse the offender was to be executed as a hardened criminal. Under Edward VI it was ordained that if anyone refused to work he was to be condemned in slavery to the person who denounced him as an idler. If absent for a fortnight he was to be branded on the forehead or back with a letter “S” and became a slave for life. If he ran away three times he was to be executed as a felon. Under Elizabeth similar laws were made. For the first offence a whipping and branding, unless someone would take him into service for two years; for the second offence execution unless someone would take him into service for two years; for the third offence execution without mercy. In the reign of James I the expropriated peasantry were subjected to like enactments.

Hollingshed says that 7,200 were executed in the reign of Henry VIII, while Strype records that in Elizabeth’s time “rogues [those, for the most part, who had been robbed of their land] were trussed up apace, and that there was not one year commonly wherein three or four hundred were not devoured and eaten up by the gallows.” The same individual states that in Somersetshire alone in one year forty persons were executed.

These laws, and many others, remained in force even as late as the beginning of the 18th century, while in France, for three-quarters of a century later, laws as severe were active against the workers.

Other periods of history show the same bloody repression of subject classes by ruling classes, even from the dawn of written history.

This teaches us that with classes, economic interests govern actions, whatever may occur in exceptional, individual cases. Convinced of this, and holding to it as a guiding principle, and knowing moreover that the interest of the capitalist class is diametrically opposed to the interest of the working class, we assert that the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself.

This of course does not preclude the possibility of some members of the capitalist class in spite of their environ-

ment and their class interest, rendering good service to the workers' cause. Capitalists, like workers, are human, which is why, as a class, they are actuated by their class interest. But for the same reason individual capitalists may be moved by any other emotion, even to the extent of taking up the battle of the oppressed class.

The difficulties in the way of their doing so, however, are stupendous. Their outlook upon life is very different from that of the workers. No other system of society ever lent itself more to illusion than the present one. No other system ever concealed so effectually the chains of bondsmen and so artfully surrounded slaves with the atmosphere of freedom. The position of the chattel-slave was always very clear, indeed it appeared that he got nothing for his labour. Yet he, at all events, never starved. The modern wage-slave, on the other hand, appears to be free; nobody owns him and he even has his foot on the social ladder—legally he may own property; perhaps he does own a bit, or has some money in the teapot, or the Post Office Savings Bank. He actually has a vote. It seems that he is robbed of nothing, that he is paid for all he produces. Even the forces of the State seem to be necessary to hold markets abroad for the disposal of what he produces and to protect his small savings at home.

All this presents difficulty enough even in the case of the worker, assisted as he is by his class interest in seeing through the sham. But it is an almost insurmountable barrier to those born and bred in the atmosphere of capitalist circles, so much so that the few who *do* get some glimmering of the position are in most cases shut off from true democracy by class arrogance and class prejudice. They are generally the superior ones, and *must* lead.

It is just here that our clause applies with greatest force. Without shutting the door against any who subscribe to our principles and act in accord with them, it is upon the working class that the working class must rely for their emancipation. Valuable work may be done by individuals, and this work may necessarily raise them to prominence, but it is not to individuals, either of the working class or of the capitalist class, that the toilers must look. The movement for freedom must be a working *class* movement. It must be founded upon the understanding of their class position by the working *class*. It must depend



upon the working class vitality and intelligence and strength. **Until the knowledge and experience of the working class are equal to the task of revolution there can be no emancipation for them.** Hence they must control all individuals in their camp, no matter which class they may belong to, and they must be guided in the conflict by the principle of the class struggle, which is based on the irrefutable fact that all written history is a history of class struggles, and the knowledge that the emancipation of the working class can only be the fruits of a class struggle, and therefore must be the work of the working class itself.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### **The Conquest of Political Power.**

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.

The machinery of government is composed of the governing bodies, from Parliament down to the Parish Council or the Public Assistance Committees; the instruments of the law, from the Lord Chief Justice down to the "Labour" J.P.; and the armed forces, from the navy, army and air force, down to the policeman, the jailor and the common hangman.

To say that all these exist merely to conserve to the capitalist class the plunder they wrest from the workers, looks, to the man who views things through the glasses the

masters provide for him, very much like "drawing the long bow," but it is nothing of the kind.

It is often argued that the hangman is necessary to square accounts with the murderer of the working-man's daughter, that the policeman keeps watch and ward over the workers' small earnings. But, what if he does? It does not follow, by any means, that this is *why* these appendages of the present social system exist, that they are anything more than incidentals.

As a matter of fact it is in the very nature of the "State" to wear a mask—to assume a physiognomy that is not, in reality, its own. It exists to maintain "order." That is the fundamental hypocrisy of its existence. It exists in a false atmosphere of impartiality, as something above the division of class interests, and therefore as competent to deal impartially with petty class squabbles, or even to abolish them, as Mussolini and Hitler falsely claim.

But first of all it postulates a social condition which is entirely in favour of the class whose instrument it is, and the basis of that social condition in the present day is the private ownership of wealth.

The "order" which the capitalist State maintains must be in harmony with that property condition. Anything which is out of harmony with that basis is disorder, and must be suppressed. Therefore, of course, "order" must include the "legalised robbery" of the working class.

Under that condition the State and its machinery pretends to be the servant of the whole of the people, but the pretence is ridiculous, on the face of it. The fact that some working men have a savings bank account, or that the system breeds a certain number of maniacs or desperate beings against whom society at large needs protection, only serves to obscure the real reason for the maintenance of armed forces.

It is not the private property of the workers that the armed forces of the nation exist to protect. It is not even the private property of individual capitalists. It is the central point, the pivot, of the present social system—the private property *institution*.

It is this private property institution that is the vital spark of the capitalist organism, hence its preservation



is of incomparably greater importance than the protection of property from petty pilferers.

As a matter of fact the State is itself an instrument for the violation of private property, as witness the "death duties." One section of the ruling class may use the machinery of the State—and that without straining a joint of it—to plunder another section, as when the Spanish Republic seized the estates of the nobility. But every atom of its composition is formed to resist any attack upon the private property institution.

It was shown in an earlier chapter that the basis of society as at present constituted is the ownership by the capitalist class of the means of living. At the time society reached this basis the machinery of production was in a very different stage of development from that to which it has attained to-day. The steam engine was not invented, and machinery was practically unknown.

The vast strides made by the development of the means and instruments of production have brought about a veritable industrial revolution, but the basis of the social system has not shifted one jot. It was ownership by a section of society of the land, material, factories, and implements of production in the beginning of the capitalist system—it is the same to-day.

How could it be otherwise? The very working of the system itself precludes the broadening of the private ownership so as to include all the people, for the steady tendency of competition has been, and is, to narrow that base by crushing successive circles out.

The only way in which the base can alter is in the direction of common ownership, and in this direction there is no half-way house. Bits of common ownership cannot exist in a world of private ownership by a class. The position is not the same where, even though private ownership is the rule, it takes the form of ownership of the means of production by those who use them instead of by those who do not. In such a system certain portions of the woods and pastures, for instance, might be commonly owned (as indeed they were under feudalism) and people owning their own products would derive benefit from them. But where the workers have to sell their labour-power in a competitive market in order to live, the benefit of all property will accrue to the capitalist class. They have

control through their system, which determines that the wealth produced by the working class shall belong to the capitalists and that the workers shall receive in the form of wages what it costs to keep them.

The increase in what are called "social services" does not affect this basic fact. Where, for example, Governments or municipalities provide houses at cheaper rents, money wages tend to fall correspondingly. An official wage enquiry recently instanced the social services as a reason for reducing wages.

If there were any possible way in which the social base could be gradually changed from private ownership to common, it is doubtful if all the armed force could prevent that gradual change taking place—but we should have seen a commencement made long ere this. As a matter of fact not one shred of commonly-owned wealth can be pointed to. The Post Office, which is frequently mentioned in this connection, is under the control of the capitalist class, who use it to sweat profit out of the workers for the relief of the taxpayer, and to provide fat sinecures for their own sons.

It is quite impossible, therefore, for the base of present-day society to undergo any process of imperceptible change into common ownership. Present society can evolve into socialism only by a change of base. The present base started in essentially the same form that it now possesses, and it must retain that form until it finishes its career. It came in as private ownership by a class, and as private ownership by a class it must go out.

While it is true that in the long run the social system is determined by the stage of development of the means of producing wealth, the social system and this stage of development may, nevertheless, at a given period be totally out of harmony. Indeed, at recurring periods it must be, at least so long as society is divided into classes. The reason is that while the development of the means of production is not under control, the social system, within certain limits, is. The industrial development, which men cannot arrest, is ever shifting the social centre of gravity. Thus, at one time, whoever controlled the land controlled society. As industry developed, however, the implements and machinery became of greater importance. This change of values brought another class



to the surface—the owners of the factories, machinery, and raw materials. But the industrial development which brought to light this new class did not arrange a social system under which they could reach their highest pinnacle of power. It gave them strength by altering the relative importance of the sources of wealth; it prepared the way for a social change by making the stage of development of industry out of harmony with the social base, but the actual work of bringing the social basis into line with the method of production was left to the initiative of the class whose interest demanded it.

And at the same time the old ruling class, whose interest lay in maintaining the system under which they were paramount, opposed the attack upon that system to the utmost.

The social system, then, is within certain limits under the control of men. Each system that permits of class distinctions favours a given class, and that class naturally employs every means to prevent the system from falling.

It is for this purpose that the present ruling class maintain their navy, army, air force and police. By means of these they hold back social change until the social basis of capitalist private ownership has got to be quite out of harmony with the means of producing wealth by social effort. It follows, therefore, that the revolutionary class must dispossess the capitalists of these armed forces before they can change the social basis.

The machinery of government is controlled through Parliament. Parliament provides the money without which no navy, army, or air force can be equipped or maintained. Parliament, which pays the piper, calls the tune to which Jack Tar and Tommy Atkins must dance. The moral is plain: the working class must organise for the capture of Parliament.

When they have possession of this instrument they will have control of the armed forces, and will be in a position to proceed to the abolition of private property in the means of living and the organisation of industry on the basis of common ownership of the machinery of production.

The organisation must be consciously for this purpose. That is to say, the organised workers must understand thoroughly the object for which they are organising. The strength of the revolutionary party does not depend upon

the number who have been voting for fragments of a programme, this or that petty reform of capitalism, but upon the number who understand what socialism means, and whose adherence is founded upon this understanding.

A man who has voted with the Socialist Party because he thought they stood for, say, resistance to wage reductions, withdraws when he finds that they do not stand merely for that, but for the abolition of private property in the means of production, with which he does not agree. But suppose large numbers have been induced to give support to an object that they do not understand and therefore cannot believe in, then a party attempting to take revolutionary action on such a miscalculation of strength would be heading for disaster.

Even if it were no worse than a fluctuation of strength at the polls, that would be sufficiently disastrous to condemn such pandering to ignorance, for socialism must have no backwash in which movements like Hitler's find their golden opportunity, but must clearly indicate, in every trial of strength, the steady advance which is inevitable to it.

But there is another and vastly more momentous reason why the socialist organisation must be free from political ignorance.

One of the most fruitful causes of working-class apathy in political matters in the past few years has been the way in which so-called Labour leaders have gone over to the avowedly capitalist side, as for instance, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Lord Snowden and Mr. J. H. Thomas (who with other Labour Party leaders deserted their party in 1931 to lead the so-called "National" Government) and Sir Oswald Mosley and other I.L.P. leaders who have gone Fascist.

There is only one safeguard against these acts of desertion. The working-class party must build up its strength only on the votes of those who understand the working-class position and working-class politics. If this is done the capitalist class will realise that they are up against democracy; that the representative is only the *delegate* of the "rank and file" who rule the roost, and that, as the elected person cannot switch votes to one side or another at his own discretion, he has nothing to sell. In such instances they will realise that all there is left for them to do is to fight him.



All the reasons here set forth demand the utmost clarity of purpose. Only the socialist is a fit instrument to work for socialism. It would be placing the Socialist Party in a false position to have them occupying seats to which they had been elected by the votes of those who were not socialists, for in the first place they would have to pander to these un-classconscious voters in order to retain their seats; secondly, they would be unable to carry out the policy of the Socialist Party without alienating these voters.

The revolutionary and the reformer are bound to be in conflict. The one stands for the abolition of what the other clings to. It is folly, then, to attempt to unite the two in one political organisation. Each must fight for his interest as he understands it—therefore they must fight each other.

It is the duty, then, of socialists to see that the workers organise *consciously* for the revolution. To this end they must keep the issue clear. They must do all they can to discourage those who do not understand the meaning of revolutionary politics from attaching themselves to the Socialist Party, either through membership or through the ballot. They must at all times clearly put forward the principles of socialism, asking only for the acceptance of those principles. Anyone who intelligently accepts those principles will need no inducement in the way of vaporous promises of reform and palliation. He becomes part of the revolutionary movement, an atom of vital force helping to push it along, instead of an addition to the dead-weight of ignorance and apathy which retards the progress of any forward movement.

We stand for socialism alone, without obscuring our teaching and our object with other issues. Thus only can we build up a political organisation composed of the sound, healthy material necessary for our purpose. Thus only can we base our actions upon exact knowledge of our strength.

## CHAPTER VII.

### **No Compromise.**

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.

The State machine, as we have endeavoured to show, is essentially an instrument of class government. It does not anywhere come into existence until society has assumed a class form—until there has developed within society a class who govern and a class who are governed.

The State machine exists to preserve order in society according to the existing basis of that society; but just as there can exist sections with opposing sectional interests within the ruling class of a given society, so the State machinery can be wielded in different directions to further the several interests of those warring sections of the ruling class—and that without in any way threatening the social base.

Political parties consist of those who organise to gain control of, or at least to exert their influence upon, the political machine, in order to advance their interests as they understand them.

But if it appears from this that capitalist political parties rather indicate sectional than class interests, it must not be forgotten that this is merely because these parties, comprising sections of the ruling class, are at one with the basis upon which their position as a ruling class is founded.

Though it is true that each of these sections will use the political machinery in a slightly different way, this difference can only apply to matters of secondary importance; deeper than this every political party among the ruling class stands for the interest of that ruling class.

This is inevitable. Before these sections can exist as such those comprised in them must be a ruling class. Before the landed interest can clash with the manufacturing interest both the landowner and the factory-owner must be established in a privileged position on a private property



basis. Before free trade versus protective tariffs or currency inflation versus deflation can become burning questions of the day, those whose sectional interest is wrapped up in these details of capitalism must first have their deeper interests one and the same—founded upon the capitalist system.

The class interest, therefore, is paramount; in the last resort it overshadows all sectional interests. The fact that sectional interests loom so large in capitalist party politics at the present day is no proof of the fundamental importance of those interests but is evidence of the weakness of the pressure exerted politically by the working class.

The truth of this is seen in the tendency of capitalists to "close the ranks" against any political party which, either in fact, or in their idea, threatens their interests as a class. The increasing pressure of the organised political party of the workers is destined to reveal with the utmost clearness the fact that capitalist parties stand primarily for capitalism and for the capitalist class—is destined to reveal it by exhibiting them a united party resisting the party of socialism.

There are parties in Great Britain such as the Labour Party, and similar bodies in countries overseas, which do not at first sight appear to be covered by these remarks, but in reality they are. They may be prepared to accept a vague and undefined "socialism" as their ultimate objective but, with their non-socialist membership, their reform programmes, and their willingness to undertake the administration of capitalism, they are essentially parties of the present day; they have no future. As the Socialist Party grows in strength and the line-up for and against capitalism becomes clearer these parties will melt away as their members, one by one, take their decision. In present conditions these reformist parties, whatever their ostensible object and whatever may be the intentions of some of their members, are helping to maintain capitalism and further the interests of this or that section of the capitalist class.

As a matter of fact all political parties must express the interest of one or other of the only two classes in society. In this connection, Frederick Engels finely says ("Origin of the Family," Kerr & Co., p. 211): "For as long

as the oppressed class, in this case the proletariat, is not ripe for its economic emancipation, just so long will its majority regard the existing order of society as the only one possible, and form the tail, the extreme left wing, of the capitalist class."

This is strictly true, and therefore not only was it inevitable that these so-called socialist and Labour parties, composed as they are, of a working class element which is "not ripe for its economic emancipation," should express capitalist interests, but it was inevitable that they should express the sectional brand of capitalist class interest appertaining to the particular phase of capitalism by which they are immediately environed, namely, the manufacturing interest, as expressed in the Liberal Party. In general, they are hostile to the banking and financial section of the capitalist class.

In Great Britain the fortunes of the Liberal Party have declined—but the Labour Party has taken over much of the latter's programme and is indeed its political heir.

The political activities of all who are not ripe for their economic emancipation (apart from merely destructive activities) must necessarily express capitalist interest, for the simple reason that they are helping—however unintentionally—to maintain the existing order of society.

The interests expressed or reflected, and striven for, by political parties, therefore, fall into two main groups—capitalist and working-class. These are diametrically opposed, since they involve wage-slavery on the one hand and emancipation on the other. The position of the party seeking working-class emancipation, then, must clearly be one of uncompromising hostility to all other political parties. It does not matter whether these parties are organisations of working men with capitalist ideas or avowedly capitalist organisations with a working-class tail.

The object of the last is to secure working-class votes, because, as Engels puts it: "The possessing class rules directly through universal suffrage"—and the vast bulk of that suffrage is working-class. In this object they find ever greater assistance in the so-called Labour parties as the workers get a dim idea that their masters' politics are not their own. These parties, often led by men on the look-out for political jobs and personal aggrandisement,



spread confusion by teaching the workers that the difference between themselves and the capitalists is merely one of personality and day to day policy, not of class and system.

This is, where it is conscious, the worst form of treachery, inasmuch as it prevents the working class realising the fundamental antagonism of interests between themselves and their exploiters. It prevents them, therefore, becoming "ripe for their economic emancipation," and from organising politically as a class, apart from and hostile to those who hold them in bondage, ever seeking, working, fighting for deliverance from their chains.

Again, as Engels says: "Universal suffrage is the gauge of the maturity of the working class." The ballot is indeed the means of gauging the working-class strength and maturity, and for that reason it must be kept free from compromise and the entanglement of alliances. It must stand as the clear index of the progress made by working-class consciousness, the clock ticking off the last moments of our long slavery. If, however, it is to have any significance of this character, it must indicate a working-class mind free from the obsession of capitalist illusions. This is a final reason why the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other political party.

The political struggle of the workers must of necessity be waged along class lines. It is on the political field that the sternest battle of all is to be fought. That fight is not for mere votes as such, but for the enthroning of the SOCIALIST IDEA in the seat of power.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### **Conclusion.**

It now remains to consider the general conclusions which logic demands shall be drawn from the seven clauses which have occupied our attention. For this purpose a brief recapitulation will be useful.

The implication of our first clause is that—

The basis of the present social system is the private ownership of the means of living.

This property condition divides society into two classes—possessors and non-possessors.

The class of non-possessors must exist where there is a set of social conditions which makes them the sole producers of the wealth of society, without giving them any share in the control of that wealth. This condition is expressed by the phrase "the enslavement of the working class."

Our second clause follows as the logical deduction from the first. It asserts that as society is divided into two classes, one of which lives upon the labour of the other, there is an antagonism of interests between the two classes, and that this antagonism of interests induces a class struggle.

The implication of the third is that the antagonism of interests, and therefore the class struggle, can only be abolished by the abolition of the cause—the private ownership of the means of living—and the establishment of common ownership of these things.

The next clause pronounces that the workers, in emancipating themselves, will emancipate the whole of humanity, "without distinction of race or sex," and it is next declared that only the working class itself can be the instrument of this emancipation.

The sixth clause states that the machinery of government, including the armed forces, is the instrument for maintaining the present social basis and the oppression of the workers which necessarily proceeds from this basis. It deduces therefrom the conclusion that the workers must organise consciously and politically, firstly, for the capture of this machinery of government, and secondly, having done this, to convert it into the agent of emancipation.

The implication of the last clause is that, as there are only two classes, and therefore only two class interests, which are diametrically opposed, the political party of the workers must be opposed to all other political parties.

That is a brief summary of the implications of the seven clauses which have been set out in these pages.

Now what attitude is imposed by logic upon those who believe these implications to be fundamental truths?

First of all they must elevate them into the position of principles, of guides for their every step and activity in the



direction of the economic betterment of their class. Their course of action will then be clear.

If it is true that the basis of present society is the class ownership of the land, factories, and other means of living, then every feature characteristic of, and peculiar to, the working class as such—the weary toil, the insecurity of livelihood, the grinding poverty, the enforced idleness, the cruel cheating of childhood's pleasures, the hopeless outlook of old age, the thousand and one brutal, humiliating and painful details that make up the miserable total of the workers' existence—can be referred to that class ownership of property.

The central point of the workers' attack, then, beyond all dispute, is this social base, the class ownership of the means of life. The possessors must be dispossessed.

If it is true that the machinery of government, including the armed forces, exists only to preserve that social base, then, clearly, the barrier of the machinery of government must be surmounted before the social base can be interfered with. The method, therefore, must be political. The political power must be captured through the ballot, in order that the control of the machinery of government, including the armed forces, shall pass into the hands of the working class.

We must enter the field of political action in order to capture political power, with the object of using it as the means of dispossessing the propertied class.

Let every man and woman of the working class, therefore, who is interested in the welfare of that class, who is weary and sick at heart with the miserable tragedy of the workers' position, take up the Socialist Party's Declaration of Principles and examine them. Let him take them up as a challenge to his intellect, and either convince himself of their truth or prove their falsity. Let him then bring his actions into line with his convictions, rejecting the socialist principles if he thinks them unsound, but adopting them and cleaving to them if he finds them true and unassailable.

True, these principles and the policy they dictate offer nothing but battle and victory—nothing but the last arduous campaign of the class struggle and the fruits thereof. But it is sufficient. It must not be exchanged for the power and pelf of office and a place near the fleshpots of Egypt for a few who dub themselves leaders of the working class.

We who know the class to which we belong, and build up all our hopes on the capacity of its intellect, know that it will not be so exchanged. We know that the working class, as a class, is capable of judging all things for itself, and of marching on to its emancipation under the guidance of its own avowed principles without leaders or use for leaders.

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