

**THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION**

One thing more than any other, shows that the top of the boom which began with the law authorizing the coinage of the silver seignorage, the increased output of gold and the increase in the national bank circulation has been reached, is the sudden resolution of the managers of several of the large railroad systems to stop all further extensions and betterments until the cost of labor and the price of material is largely reduced. Such orders will curtail purchases of iron and steel and many hundreds of various commodities and reduce the demand for common and skilled labor to a very great extent. That will react upon the sales of a vast amount of manufactured goods and lessen the demand for labor in those lines. When the downward movement begins after a boom, no man in the past has ever been able to predict where it would end.

The whole world has been subjected to these disasters ever since commerce became a factor in the life of mankind. The foundation of it all is the money question. The fact that panics occur with never-ending regularity no one denies. There is a rise in prices and everybody gets to work. Then one after another of the different lines of manufacturing finds that the cost of raw materials and labor has become so great that it must suspend production until there is a fall. The suspension of work cuts off the means of living of those engaged in it, they cease being purchasers of the products of other manufacturing plants, and so it goes until the bottom is reached and all the surplus saved up in better times has been consumed, and the old and bitter experience is all gone through with again.

Whatever injustice and wrong the common people suffer from trusts, private ownership of railroads and telegraphs and exorbitant tariffs, the money question is always the great fundamental question of all. Stable prices would prevent these ever recurring depressions and booms. As prices rise and fall according to the increase and decrease in the volume of money in circulation, they never can become stable as long as a single set of mines is relied upon to furnish that volume. That is not to deny that from psychological reasons affecting the conduct of men, that prices go way above and fall far below what the volume of money would justify in times of booms and in times of depression. If prices were kept stable for a considerable time, the want of confidence and the hope of suddenly accumulating fortunes would not sweep over the country at stated intervals.

In a private letter to the editor of The Independent, Senator Allen says "I have never lost faith in the populist party and its ultimate triumph. I believe that the republican party as now organized will disintegrate and be destroyed and that a people's party will be ultimately enthroned in power. The populist party should be speedily revived in every state and territory and prompt steps should be taken to have an organization well in hand for the national campaign next year." To all that, The Independent gives a hearty approval.

**A COMMODITY**

Dr. Edward Aveling in "The Students' Marx," an introduction to the great socialist's monumental work, "Das Kapital," thus defines a commodity:

"A commodity (1) is an external object; (2) satisfies human wants; (3) has human labor embodied in it; (4) is not consumed by the producer, but by some other person." (p. 1.)

Now, the question arises, To whom is a commodity an "external object"—the producer thereof or the consumer? This because—

"Still seeking the origin of surplus value, it is not in the money itself. . . The change cannot be in the value of the commodity, since equivalents are exchanged. . . The change takes place in the use-value of the commodity, that is, the consumption of the commodity.

"A commodity has therefore to be found, whose use-value has the property of being a source of value, whose consumption creates value. The commodity is labor-power.

"The free laborer . . . must therefore be obliged to sell his only commodity—labor power." (p. 38, 39.)

Is the laborer's labor-power an "object" "external" to himself? If not, how can it be "his only commodity?"

Aveling points out three kinds of value—value, "the amount of abstract human labor embodied" in a commodity; use-value, something "intrinsic to . . . commodities," forming "the basis of commerce, the substance of wealth" and "the material depositories of the third kind of value—exchange-value," and the latter he calls "the ratio in

which use-values exchange." And sums up by saying that "a commodity contains use-value and value, even if it stands alone. Its exchange-value can only appear when it is brought in relation with some other commodity."

Now, if exchange-value is "the ratio in which use-values exchange" and "since equivalents are exchanged," it must follow that the use-value of the wages paid the laborer for his labor-power is exactly equal to the use-value of that labor-power. If so, how could there be any "surplus value" for the capitalist?

Again, if every "commodity has human labor embodied in it" and has "use-value intrinsic" to it, which forms the "basis of commerce, the substance of wealth;" and if human energy or labor-power be "a commodity," then labor-power must form part of the "basis of commerce" and "the substance of wealth." Is this true?

Will some socialist enlighten The Independent on these points in the Karl Marx Edition?

Notwithstanding the innumerable strikes and the vast efforts of the labor leaders, the cold, hard fact is that the wage-earners receive less than they did before. The increase in the cost of living has been greater than the increase in wages in the most favored trades. All this was foretold by The Independent to men who carried torches and shouted for the full dinner pail. Will these men after a while stop and think a little? As long as franchises worth millions are given away and after ownership is acquired by private parties are allowed to escape taxation, as long as the means of transportation and communication remain in private hands and by this private ownership, congresses and legislatures are controlled in the interest of the few, just that long will the producer of every sort contribute "all the traffic will bear" to rapacious capitalism.

**WHO DID IT?**

Of course it was the votes of the wage-earners and common people that turned the state of West Virginia over to Elkins and the rapacious greed of the republican party. What these people have received for their votes has been a few dollars in money, many promises of office, government by injunction, forced labor in isolated mountain camps, and now comes Judge Kellar with heavy fines or \$100 each and six months imprisonment for a large number of these same men who have been "whooping" it up for the monumental thief and great republican, Elkins. The injunctions issued in West Virginia were the most infamous in all history. The suffering among the women and children of those fined and imprisoned by Judge Kellar, who is one of the modern Judge Jeffrys of America, can only be understood by those who have for years been allowed only enough of the wealth that they have created to keep them from starvation. The Independent expresses its sorrow for the inhumanity that these wage-workers suffer and the deepest sympathy with the wrecked families and broken hearts that this infamous Judge's orders have caused. It can only say that in the future as in the past, it will continue to fight that liberty and equal rights may be accorded to all men.

Russian cruelty is not confined to the persecution of the Jews. The stories that come from Finland, show that the cruelty there is just as barbarous. It does not consist in wholesale massacres, but in the imprisonment of innocent men while their wives and children are left to die of starvation. In Finland it is not the acts of mobs but of the government officials themselves. The base of these inhuman persecutions in Finland is the same as that which resulted in the slaughter of the Jews. While the Fins are Christians, they do not belong to the Russian Greek church and that is a sufficient reason in the eyes of the Russian officials for their extermination. While the Jews are forbidden by law to follow most of the occupations by which men make a living, the situation in Finland is practically the same, although such laws are not in force against the Fins. If the rapacious Russian officials desire to oppress a protestant or Catholic Fin, they simply demand his discharge by his employers and when such a demand is made by the police, no employer dare disobey.

It is preposterous that the welfare of millions of people should be in the control of a few law-breakers like the managers of the anthracite coal trust. Their recent contention with the miners about the selection of the members of the board of conciliation is denounced by many papers, the Springfield Republican among them,

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Why pay rent when you can buy a good farm, a farm that will make as much money per acre as the farm you are renting, and pay for it with the money you pay out in one year for rent. The following is a list of good land bargains in Red Willow county. We are safe in saying that the crop this year on every acre of this cultivated land will sell for as much as the land costs.

No. 741. 37-1-2 acres joining the town of McCook; 10 acres in orchard, 14 years old apple, cheery and plum trees with small fruit. Splendid garden; 9 acres in alfalfa; some forest trees; 16-1-2 acres in pasture; frame house one story 22x22 with kitchen 12x14, stone foundation, cellar, chicken house 16x18, coal house, barn 20x30, with basement, two wells with overshot irrigation ditch; one mile from the postoffice. Price, \$3,750.

No. 742. 360 acres, 110 acres in cultivation, balance in pasture, 160 acres smooth, balance rolling; sod house 14x32 with shingle roof; outside cellar; frame stable for 14 head of horses, granary, well and wind mill, chicken house, corn crib, etc.; seven miles from McCook and 2 miles from church. Price \$2,200.

No. 743. 240 acres, 120 under cultivation; 180 smooth land, balance rolling; all fenced; one and half story house, well and wind mill; 9 miles from McCook, three and half miles from railroad station. Price, \$1,800.

No. 744. 400 acres, 10 miles from McCook, 6 miles from railroad station, 125 acres under cultivation, sod house, frame granary and stable, well and wind mill and two cisterns; this farm is rented for 1903. Will sell share of wheat if the farm is sold. Price, \$2,200.

No. 745. 160 acres, three and half miles from McCook, 70 acres in cultivation, 60 acres first bottom, 80 acres second bottom, land all fenced. A splendid alfalfa and sugar beet farm. Price \$2,250.

No. 746. 221 acres, all bottom land. 100 acres under cultivation, nearly all fenced; frame house 24x24, one story, watered by well and river; 15 acres of hay, one mile from railroad station, 7 miles from McCook. Price \$15 per acre.

No. 747. 160 acres, 80 in cultivation,

145 tillable, 15 acres rough, 31-2 miles from McCook. Price \$1,700.

No. 748. 480 acres, 4 miles from Indianola, 200 acres cultivated, balance pasture, frame house 24x24, all necessary farm buildings, well, wind mill, etc. A choice farm nicely located. Price \$4,000.

No. 749. 1,720 acres, all fenced with 4 wires, 200 acres cultivated, 2-1-2 miles of timber along the creek, timber enough if cut into cordwood and posts to sell and pay for the farm; good house and barn that cost \$1,200, watered by wells and wind mills, 1,080 acres deeded land and 640 acres school land leased with an annual rental of \$57 per year; an assignment of the lease goes with the place. Price of the whole property \$10,800; low interest and easy payments if one-half or more is paid in cash.

No. 750. 320 acres nearly all smooth, 220 acres in cultivation, all fenced, 7-room house, well and wind mill, stable for 12 horses, corral, 100 acres fenced in pasture, 2 miles from McCook. Price \$7,000.

No. 751. 100 acres in cultivation, 60 acres in pasture; frame house 16x24 with sod addition 16x24, stable for 8 horses, corral, granary, well, wind mill, etc; 9 miles from McCook. Price \$1,600.

No. 753. 160 acres all level, all fenced, 100 acres cultivated, story and half house 36x40, 7-rooms, brick foundation, well and wind mill, storm cave, stable for 10 horses, chicken house, double corn crib and granary, half mile to school, 3 miles to church. Price \$2,100.

No. 754. 160 acres, 93 in cultivation, 155 tillable, frame house 16x18, well and pump; 6 miles to McCook. Price \$1,400.

No. 755. 160 acres, 100 cultivated, 120 tillable, small house, well and wind mill, 9 miles from McCook. Price \$1,000.

No. 756. 320 acres, all fenced, 230 acres cultivated, 90 acres in pasture, rough; frame stable for 8 horses, granary, cribs and 5-acre hog pasture, 5 miles to Danbury; church and school house across the road from the house. Price \$3,200.

There is a heavy acreage of sugar beets in Red Willow county and a good many thousands of acres of alfalfa. Land is advancing rapidly in value, and every one of the above pieces is an especially tempting bargain, considering the prevailing prices and demand for land. These are all offered subject to prior sale—the first man on the ground and prepared to close deal gets the land. For further information write Weber & Faris, Lincoln, Neb.

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The theory of "surplus value"—see Karl Marx Edition, July 23, 1903.