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ARTICLE

SOME OBJECTIONS RAISED AGAINST SOCIALISM BY CAPITALISM—THE ANSWER.

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ONE of the most widespread prejudices against Socialism, fostered by pulpitmen, newspapers and capitalist professors, who are in the pay of the capitalist class, is that Socialism proposes to abolish the family. This is a vicious misrepresentation, for Socialism does not contemplate any such thing. The family form, like all other institutions, has undergone great changes during the development of the race. It has not always been as it is to-day, and in the future progress of the race it may again change its form. One thing is sure, and that is, Socialism is not hostile to the present family form. But while the pulpitmen, the newspapers and professors are endeavoring to work up prejudices against Socialism as a would-be destroyer of the family, the very capitalist social system for which they stand is actually tearing the family asunder.

It doesn't take a very old man to remember, that even in his day, skill and strength were necessary for a workman, and that apprenticeship or training required several years. Now, however, perfected machinery and the division of labor that it makes possible, where each does but a small part, render skill and strength of no importance and training or apprenticeship unnecessary. The use of machinery worked a great revolution in the lives of women. When man was a handicraftsman it was part of the domestic duties of woman to spin, weave and sew, and she did many other things, such as make candles, soap, etc. These things which she had produced at home and for family use, were next made in factories and much cheaper than could be done at home. This change released a vast amount of labor power that had been used in home production, for home consumption, and made it available for capitalist exploitation. Woman now became a factory operative. But as machinery made easier the work that skill and strength had previously reserved to man,

woman who could not obtain employment at what had been female occupations began to compete with man, and to do so had to undersell him to get the job.

The woman became self-supporting, as it is called. Many men unthinkingly hate the women who compete with them. They talk as if women did it as a matter of choice, whereas they do it as a matter of necessity. The revolution that was worked in her life was none of her making. Originally the workman had to earn wages high enough to enable him to support himself and family; but now that women and children can support themselves by competing with him, the workman's wages must necessarily go down. So that under the present capitalist social system the family life is destroyed, the mother is forced to leave the home and enter the factory, there to compete with the father and very often with her own children. Even in trades where the father is still able to support the family, he must work overtime, or if he tries to bring up his family amid decent surroundings he must travel at least an hour's journey to his work, or he may only come home Sundays. How many workmen are there who go away in the early morning, the children asleep, and when they return at night find the children in bed? What kind of a family life can flourish under such conditions? And the men who "fear" that Socialism would abolish the family apologize for the system that is actually destroying the family to-day!

In recent investigations into the conditions of child labor in the textile industries of the South—not made by Socialists, mind you, but by Congressional and other investigations, it is shown that the natural order of things was reversed, the wife and children being in the mill, while the husband and father, displaced by his own flesh and blood, has no work to do. He stays at home, attends to the house and carries the dinner pail to his wife and children at the factory! And they tell us Socialists would destroy the family! They are like the robber who cries "Stop thief!" and joins in the chase raised by his cry.

To-day, under the capitalist system, the working class has really little or no family life, properly so called. In the first place, most of them are compelled to live in the tenement hell, which of itself is enough to destroy the family bonds; Bishop Potter, who prates of tenement betterment, to the contrary notwithstanding. When the mother must go out as a breadwinner the family must suffer. Cheap canned

goods take the place of well cooked meats, and the “charitable” day nursery replaces the mother’s tender care of her children. The suckling babe is torn from its mother’s breast and given to the care of strangers, whose only interest in it is that they get paid by the “charitable” rich for doing the work. Or, as in the case of many Southern mill workers to-day, they take the child to the mill and put it to rest behind the looms where the rattle and din of the machinery drowns its cries.

The slaveholder was accused of separating husband from wife, and parents from grown up children, but the babe was never torn from its mother, and yet the apologists for a system worse than chattel slavery dare accuse the Socialists of contemplating doing the dirty work that those whom they defend are doing right under our eyes! Far from destroying the present family form, which is in nowise incompatible with the Socialist system of production, the Socialist would rescue it from the awful degradation into which it has fallen under capitalism.

While considering the abolition of the family argument, raised by the hirelings of the capitalist class, it will not be out of place to consider that other and twin objection that Socialists desire to have wives in common. This is another cry of “Stop thief!” by the guilty. The divorce courts, patronized almost entirely by the wealthy, prove that ’tis they who not only believe in the community of wives, but practice it. The word divorce is but another term for the word swap. But let us see how the capitalist social system itself promotes the community of wives idea which pulpit, press and college pretend so much to abhor. Who is not familiar with the cry that comes from Western places that there are not enough women for wives, and who has not seen statistical figures showing other localities in which there were “too many women”? Who has not heard the expressions “he-towns” and “she-towns”? The capitalist system of production, through its irrational methods of production, takes men into new or remote districts where they are unable to establish a home life, even if their wages permitted. In big cities young men find it a matter of utter impossibility to marry and establish a home on the meagre wages they receive. Prostitution follows as the natural and inevitable result. It is the capitalist system that forces women into the abhorred state of prostitution. How many do you think live such a life as a matter of choice? How often it is that helpless women, forced to earn their living, fall a prey to capitalist cupidity! The capitalist of to-day, when he

chooses, exercises the “right” claimed by the feudal lord.

In this Christian age, in which the worker’s life is coined into profits for the benefit of the idlers who own the machinery of production, the cheapening of labor permits of more profits, consequently greater luxury for the idlers. The capitalist who pays wages on which a woman cannot live hints at or brazenly refers her to prostitution as a means of increasing her income. This is no fiction, the retort of the superintendent to the woman worker asking for higher wages: “Have you no gentleman friend?” has passed into a current saying.

The paid apologists of the capitalist system will tell you that prostitution cannot be stopped, and they go even further, they declare that prostitution is a necessary evil. For once they speak the truth. Prostitution cannot under the capitalist system be destroyed, and it is not only a necessary evil but a pillar of modern society. In a social system in which each worker received the full product of his toil prostitution would cease. For no woman economically free would for sport make such use of her body, as she is compelled to do to-day—or starve.

Whenever you hear an apologist for capitalism making the charge against Socialism that it would abolish the family and that Socialists advocate a community of wives, just hurl these facts at him. That which such a one holds up as an objection to Socialism is really an exact picture of the actual conditions under capitalism; it is the exact opposite of Socialism.

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