

STAGGERS REDS SAYS KINGSLEY

Machinery Never Lightened the Load of Workers Is Contention

"It rather staggers the average 'Red'—especially the really scientific one. He goes right up in the air at once." So remarked Comrade E. T. Kingsley at the Royal on Sunday night; nevertheless he receded not one whit from his position that "all the machinery on top of the earth never lightened the burden on the back of the workers or made it possible to produce a solitary thing with less expenditure of human energy than before the invention was ever thought of."

The speaker started out with a repudiation of the idea that the worker is ever "paid" for his work. Master and slave between them consumed all the product from day to day, as fast as it was produced; there was nothing left to "pay" with, except promises, which could never be redeemed. Commodities in the market were sold on credit, resulting in a mere accumulation of stocks, bonds, mortgages and similar promises to pay. "That which Karl Marx called surplus value expresses itself in figures. There is nothing else but a continued accumulation of figures—except an accumulation of misery, which I think the slave deserves. (Hear, of hear.)"

Trade and commerce was not part of the process of production. It was merely a matter of keeping account of commodities as they moved round until they were snuffed out by the consumer. The figures were the tracks left behind—tracks of goods extorted from the toil and sweat of the workers and sold in the market for nothing.

The speaker however, was not one of those who expected the whole machinery to be wiped out in their time. "It will not be abolished out of hand, but by the comparatively slow process by which it has grown up." A mushroom grew in a night, and perished in a night; an oak took centuries to mature, and centuries to decay. The Roman Empire was 1500 years in growing, and 13 centuries in dying.

The capitalist system was about 200 years old. It had reached its climax, and was now in collapse—gradually dying. "It will perish off the face of the earth eventually, without us lifting a finger against it. It may take a hundred years, or two hundred; it may take as long as it has taken to attain its growth."

Machinery came into being in response to the needs of exploiters and masters of slaves, and could only serve their ends, forcing an ever-increasing number of slaves from the production of essential things into the production of things that only served the ruling class interests. "The city itself is a ruling class institution, and could not exist in a society of free people."

In the United States, it had been found that one family engaged in necessary production, had to "carry" three others; the latter were kept just as busy about things not essential in any sense of the word to the comfort and welfare of any people.

"Can any one suggest a way of lightening that burden, except by cutting out ruling class service and turning to the production of the essential things of life? If this system were to pass tomorrow into the hands of the proletariat, not a solitary man can be dispensed with if it is still to be operated by the sons of men. Every one must remain at his post as a non-essential producer, or another take his place."

"There is no living thing except man, and such animals as man can bend to his will, that does not individually provide for itself—and not for others. The working man is all the time working to feed somebody else, and taking a chance on somebody else feeding him." Here the speaker proceeded to laugh the whole system out of court by a most ludicrous "reductio ad absurdum," convulsing his audience again and again, and showing a "per capita" amount of "transportation" far exceeding the amount of necessary things that any human being could possibly get away with.