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EDITORIAL

THE “WATER CURE” AND OTHERS.

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THE atrocities of “civilized” warfare are daily provoking fresh outbursts of horror, despite the callousness which their frequency has engendered. One day a Russian battalion fills a river with the bodies of killed and wounded Chinese; the next the British use defenseless Boer women and children as shields in attacking; and now comes the news of the iniquitous “water cure” administered to helpless Filipinos by the American soldiery.

Every one of these savage acts has in turn elicited the unsparing criticism of all the nations, especially those involved. They have also awakened the denunciations of the party out of power against the party in; as in this country, where the Democrats have denounced the Republicans as the incarnation of all that is bloody and revolting.

Considering that every one of these heinous offenses against decency and humanity, are directly the outcome of principles avowed and held sacred by modern “civilization,” these international and party criticisms would be indeed laughable were they not so tragic. When practically all nations and parties are tarred with the same stick, a “holier than thou” attitude, when assumed by any of them, becomes the acme of conscious or unconscious hypocrisy, only worthy of derision and laughter.

Modern society contends that if the race is to progress there must be broadly speaking two classes: one, very small numerically, that owns and controls the land, the capital and the machinery used in wealth production and distribution, and lives by exploiting the other, the greater part of the population, that is without land, capital and the machinery, etc., etc.; and that in order to live must consent to be exploited.

The profit, the superabundance of wealth, arising from such an arrangement, to

this small class, is held to be a necessary incentive to the advancement of the race. Without it, we are told, men would not seek to emulate each other and all would be on a dead level, a theory which the early communistic development of the race flatly refutes.

This profit, this superabundance of wealth, leads to an accumulation of goods, an overproduction, in all modern countries. The home market is glutted {and} foreign markets become a necessity. Territorial expansion, commercial wars for the capture and subjugation of present and prospective customers, are consciously advocated, as a relief to the situation; while the doctrine that weak nations are the legitimate prey of strong ones—to be subdued or exterminated as conditions require—is unblushingly promulgated and practised by monarchist and republican alike.

What can one expect of a society actuated by such principles—anything less or more beautiful than the brutal excesses of modern warfare? When it is held that society cannot progress without exploitation, war and extermination, why stand aghast, if you believe this to be true, at its logical results—a river full of dead and wounded Chinamen; the use of defenseless Boer women and children as shields for the British; or the administration of the “water cure” to the Filipinos by Americans?

The modern strong man has no squirmings, no Christ-like sweat of blood for the sacrifices that must be endured—he accepts with Napoleonic stolidity the logical outcome of a policy based on and advanced by brutality.

Modern society is fast becoming like the modern strong man. It is acquiring a stolidity which the intensity of the conflict for new territory and new markets is bound to accentuate and to lead to still more revolting and abhorrent spectacles.

There can be but one remedy for this abnormal condition. Society must abandon its fundamental principle of class-exploitation. It must make the land, the capital and the machinery used in wealth production and distribution social property, democratically organized and administered. Use will then take the place of profit and the excesses of production will disappear, while the race, enjoying a greater wealth and comfort will progress proportionately more rapidly, just as the capitalists of a nation enjoying great wealth progresses to-day with greater rapidity than do those of a nation of lesser wealth.

With the excess of production gone, the necessity of territorial expansion,

commercial wars and national extermination, with their bloody and increasing repetitions, will go also.

Evolution points the way to this end. It is leading up to it. It is the goal, the only goal worth striving for, especially for the working class: the class that is exploited and robbed by the capitalist class.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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