

THE BASIS OF COMMUNISM.

By HERMAN GORTER.

(Continued).

All Communism teaches is this: the big trade is becoming predominant, and gradually, as far as the power of production is concerned, it has come greatly to surpass the small trade.

The only arguments the Anarchists and Liberal-Democrats can find against this first great foundation of Communism, which is that: Labour becomes more and more concentrated in the big enterprises," is either to bring forward elements that are of small significance for society at large, or to misrepresent the doctrines of Communism.

We have not yet here completely demonstrated this first foundation of Socialism. Other phenomena prove it more, perhaps even more clearly than those we have cited, for instance, State and Municipal enterprises.

Entire branches of industry are annexed by the State and the Municipality. The State has ship-yards, arsenals, workshops, post and telegraphy offices, beside departments of all branches of administration, the departments of buildings roads, railways, and so on. The State employs tens and hundreds of thousands of workers in concentrated enterprises.

A city like Amsterdam has the administration of gas, waterworks, cleaning, fire-brigade, public safety, the telephone, the tramways, abattoirs, as well as the electricity for motive power, lighting and heating. All this which used to be small trade, carried on by private individuals, now concentrated into Municipal service. Other cities go even farther, including even the laundry works in the public services.

Here again, thousands of workers, thousands of mechanical horse-power are concentrated into immense enterprises.

And next to all this, we see the biggest kind of trade-concentration the world has ever seen: the syndicate, the cartel, the trust.

Capitalists unite in a joint fixing of prices; a common establishing of bureaux of sale: a syndicate.

Capitalists unite to obtain a joint production or their separate, not yet united factories. They decide about the quantities that each shall produce, to avoid over-production: a cartel.

Capitalists unite into one body, either of their free will, or on compulsion. Factories of the same product are united into one company, with one capital, under one direction. Competition is done away with, tens of gigantic concerns make up one monstrous concern: a trust.

First, on a national, then on an international basis, entire industries or transport concerns are thus transformed into monopolies, and dominate an entire country, a continent, the world.

We give a few examples here:—

A few years ago, we find in America, the following monopolies:—

The sugar trust	90% of the entire production.
The tin-plate trust	90% "
The whisky trust	95% "
The oil trust	84% "
The sugar-refinery trust	80% "
The bituminous coal trust	100% "
The paper trust	70% "
The sewing cotton trust	70% "
The salt trust	90% "
The starch trust	90% "
The window-pane trust	72% "

Hundreds of trusts exist openly, and in almost all branches of big industry.

The Steel Trust works, with a capital of two thousand, five hundred millions. As a proof of how in England also, the trust-system is making its way, we quote the following statement: Macrosty, in his latest work about the trust movement in England, gives a list of 26 of the principal iron and steel firms, with a joint capital of over £47,000,000. These firms are all closely connected with each other. The heads of the various enterprises addressed to their shareholders, a circular of April 1912, with which they explained this: "The keen competition in commerce has convinced your directors that a unity of interests is urgent"; and in another circular, they said: "Several of the directors . . . are at the same time directors of or shareholders and partners in other important companies or firms on the East or West coast, in which they are interested for considerable sums, often preponderatingly."

As an example of international syndicates, we give the following fact, that a contract was made between the rail-manufacturers in Great Britain, Belgium, Germany and France. To every country was assigned its own region, the minimum price for the export was appointed, and this was proportionally divided. England about 58 per cent., Germany about 29 per cent., Belgium about 19 per cent., and France about 6 per cent. In July of the same year, the United States likewise joined this international syndicate.

Moreover, in September, 1905, a syndicate was formed to take in both the English and German screw manufacturers. They then pledged themselves no longer to take any orders from each other's country.

In Germany, in 1912, there were over 400 cartels and syndicates, which covered the principal industries. One of the most known among these is the famous Coal-syndicate.

In the same year, 1912, England had trusts for: the manufacturing of portland-cement, in the steel industry, the manufacture of spirit, the wallpaper-mills (where the trusts already controlled 98 per cent. of the production), in the saltworks, the fine-cotton mills, the sewing-cotton and thread factories, the bleaching and dyeing factories, the printed-cotton manufacture, the locomotive-works, the whisky-distilleries, the soda, and tobacco factories, etc., etc.

Thus the period of monopolistic capital had come also in England, the land of the big industry, the land of free trade, which ever seemed impervious.

The big trusts penetrate all countries; we name for Holland, the Steamship trust, the International Glass trust, the Cement-syndicate, the Royal Oil Company, etc., etc.

They penetrate in every branch and especially banking.

This is very clearly demonstrated by Germany. In 1883, the banks had a capital of 1,422 marks, in 1908, of 4672 millions.

In 1883, the profit amounted to 145 million marks, in 1908, to 611 millions.

But in 1906, the nine credit-banks of Berlin (Germany has 169 of these banks), already controlled 80 per cent. of the total German Banking capital. In 1907, these banks controlled 82 per cent., in 1908, 83 per cent. Thus a small group of bank directors in Berlin control the entire industrial life of Germany. One of the directors, Mr. Bleichröder openly recognised this not long ago.**

Not only do the various industries converge more and more towards one central point, but the entire circle of one industry is well nigh becoming one single centre, one whole, outside which nothing remains.

The prediction by Marx, that the mammoth enterprises will swallow the smaller ones, is becoming a reality.

What does all this mean? This immense change, which now we view only from the outside as yet, but which shortly we shall consider from that of the working proletariat, under an altogether different aspect. How can its meaning be expressed in one short and clear formula, which may be clearly intelligible to every worker?

The following formula expresses it: *Labour* is becoming more and more *Socialistic*.

What does the word *Socialist* mean? It is derived from the Latin word *SOCIUS*, meaning "ally," or "comrade." *Social* means "of good fellowship," or "as comrades." *Socialist* something or some one inclined to fellowship.

A *Socialist* commonwealth would be a community where all members were comrades or fellows of one another.

* We remind our readers of the fact that all these figures date from before the world-war. During and since the war the forming of trusts has increased to such an extent, that to-day well-nigh the entire banking system and industry are governed by trusts in all the big, and in many of the small countries.

** We purposely left these figures as they were, in the last edition (of 1912) of this brochure. They demonstrate how in those years already Capitalism developed towards Imperialism, the world-war, and the revolution, the growth of which is represented in the present series of brochures.

Socialistic labour means: labour that is carried out on a basis of fraternity and fellowship.

Well then, we declare, Communism declares, that labour is becoming Socialistic.

Is that not correct; the absolute truth? Is not the labour of a thousand men in a factory, the 40,000 workers of Krupp, the hundreds of thousands employed by the railway or postal service, a labour of comradeship, a Socialist labour? Does not the labour of these many workers fit together, is it not organised, will not the whole effort fail if only a small portion present a hitch?

And more than that, do not the various branches of industry more and more fit into one another? Has not labour been divided according to a plan, not in one factory only, but in a series of factories? Has not the entire productive community become more and more one workshop, with an infinitely refined, and ever more refined division of labour? How many phases must the one pass through, in how many workshops is it wrought, before it becomes the fine instrument, or the huge, mighty, but accurate machine? And how very closely the transport, the production and distribution are linked together! How they are interwoven!

The factory is a place for joint labour; the trust is a gigantic whole, where labour is organised socialistically, on a basis of comradeship, where each individual depends on the collectivity and the collectivity on each individual. It is more and more Socialist.

Formerly labour was carried on on a small scale. It was individual and individualistic. Every worker produced separately, and one worker often produced the entire product. The cartwright constructed the carriage, he painted and varnished it, and he also lined it with leather and tapestry.

This has changed for all trades. Without a division of labour and a gigantic co-operation nothing can be achieved.

Labour is, or is fast becoming, Socialist. The true Socialist trade and industry, the big industry, is rapidly developing.

Two things only are not Socialist as yet, the ownership and distribution. Those are yet organised in the old way. Labour has become Socialist, ownership of the means of production and the distribution of the products are as yet individualistic. The thousand workers yet produce for the one owner, as it was in the days when the latter employed but one or two hands.

It is the task of the workers to reorganise private property and distribution in accordance with labour. It is the task of the workers, now that labour, the real foundation of society, has become Socialist, to reorganise the distribution and ownership so that these also shall be Socialist, that is to say, on a basis of comradeship, of true Socialism.

The development of this Socialist labour, as we have already seen, is growing so rapidly, that the time of that revolution can no longer be far off.

ESTHONIA'S MIDDLE-CLASS GOVERNMENT.

"Daily Herald's" Appeal.

The "Daily Herald" reports that a Labour crisis is developing in Esthonia, and its special correspondent, George Young, says:—

The Middle-class Government badly wants our advice and assistance. But we refuse recognition. Why? Because it means renouncing a certain combination against Russia.

We are glad that the British Government does not assist such Middle-class Capitalist Governments, whatever may be its motive for refusal. As Communists, we wish to see all such governments ruined and replaced by Soviets.

HAROLD BURGESS DEFENCE FUND.

Comrades are asked to send donations towards the legal expenses incurred in defending Comrade Harold Burgess.

BUYING UP ENGLAND.

"England is changing hands," says "The Times," recording the sale of the southern slopes of Mount Snowden and also 11 miles of Somerset land and other sales. When will England belong to the whole people?

SUGAR.

It will take two or three years to make up the world sugar shortage, says Hoover, the American food controller.