

sumed twice as much as any one of them and his pool of wealth continually increased. In a little while, reckoning the little squares at their market value of 1 credit each, he was worth about 100 credits, and the working classes were still in the same condition as when they began, and were still tearing into their work as if their lives depended upon it.

After a while the rest of the crowd began to laugh, and their merriment increased when the kind-hearted capitalist, just after having sold a credit's worth of necessaries to each of his workers, suddenly took their tools, the machinery of production, the knives, away from them, and informed them that as owing to over production all his store-houses were glutted with the necessaries of life, he had decided to close down the works.

"Well, and what the bloody hell are we to do now?" demanded Abendigo.

"That's not my business," replied the kind-hearted capitalist. "I've paid your wages, and provided you with plenty of work for a long time past. I have no more work for you to do at present. Come round again in a few months' time and I'll see what I can do for you."

"But what about the necessaries of life?" Demanded Thandi.

"We must have something to eat."

"Of course you must," replied the capitalist, affably; "and I shall be very pleased to sell you some."

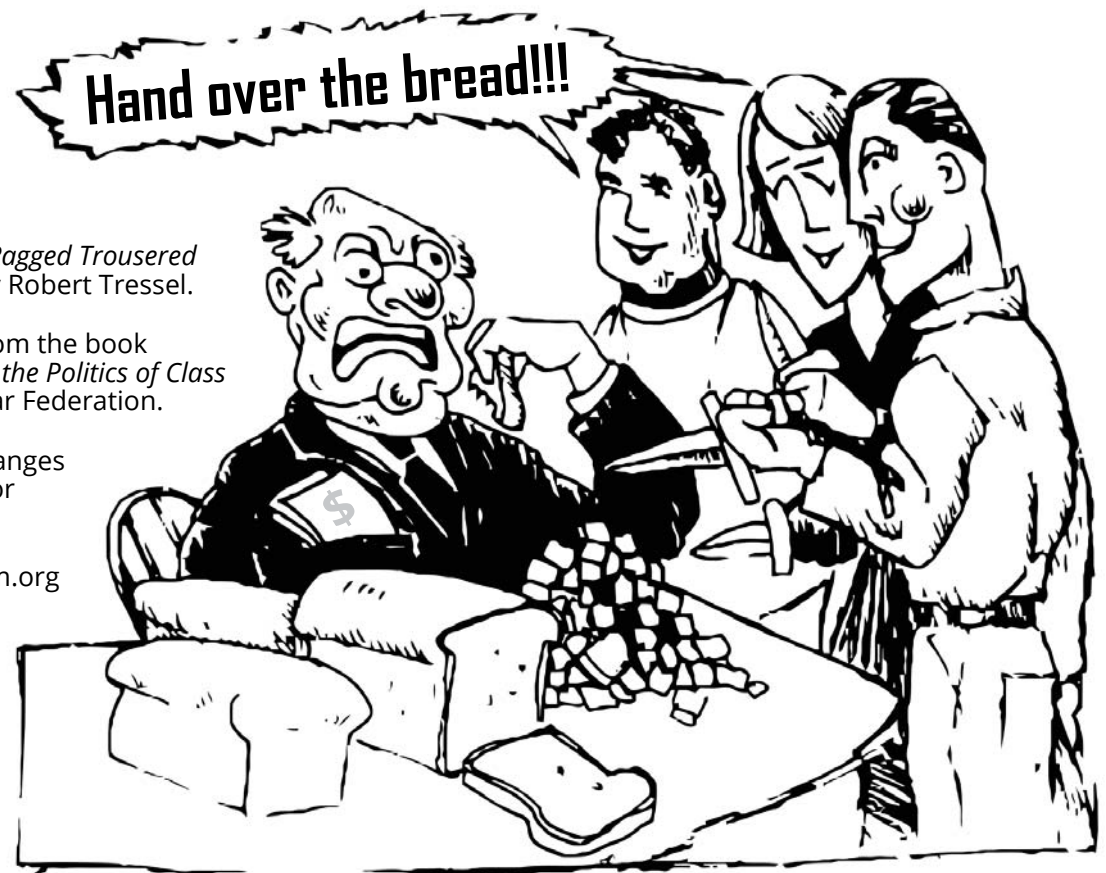
"But we haven't got any bloody money!"

"Well, you can't expect me to give you my goods for nothing! You didn't work for me for nothing, you know. I paid you for your work and you should have saved something: you should have been thrifty like me. Look how I have got on by being thrifty!"

The unemployed looked blankly at each other, but the rest of the crowd only laughed; and

then the three unemployed began to abuse the kind-hearted capitalist, demanding that he should give them some of the necessaries of life that he had piled up in his warehouses, or to be allowed to work and produce some more for their own needs; and even threatened to take some of the things by force if he did not comply with their demands. But the kind-hearted capitalist told them not to be insolent, and spoke to them about honesty, and said if they were not careful he would have their faces battered in for them by the police, or if necessary he would call out the military and have them shot down like dogs, the same as he had done before at Soweto and Marikana.

# The Great Money Trick



Taken from *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist* by Robert Tressell.

This text is taken from the book *Unfinished Business: the Politics of Class War* by the Class War Federation.

It has minor changes by the editor

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"Money is the real cause of poverty," said Sipho.

"Prove it," said Thandi.

"Money is the cause of poverty because it is the device by which those who are too lazy to work are enabled to rob the workers of the fruits of their labour."

"Prove it," repeated Thandi.

Sipho slowly folded up the piece of newspaper he had been reading and put it into his pocket.

"All right," he replied. "I'll show you how the Great Money Trick is worked."

Sipho opened his dinner basket and took from it two slices of bread, but as these were not sufficient, he requested that anyone who had some bread left should give it to him. They gave him several pieces, which he placed in a heap on a clean piece of paper, and, having borrowed the pocket knives they used to cut and eat their dinners with from Nkosi, Thandi and Abendigo, he addressed them as follows:

"These pieces of bread represent the raw materials which exist naturally in and on the earth for the use of mankind; they were not made by any human being, but were created for the benefit and sustenance of all, the same as were the air and the light of the sun."

"Now," continued Sipho, "I am a capitalist; or rather, I represent the landlord and capitalist class. That is to say, all these raw materials belong to me. It does not matter for our present

argument how I obtained possession of them; the only thing that matters now is the admitted fact that all the raw materials which are necessary for the production of the necessaries of life are now the property of the landlord and capitalist class. I am that class: all these raw materials belong to me."

"Now you three represent the working class. You have nothing, and for my part, although I have these raw materials, they are of no use to me. What I need is the things that can be made out of these raw materials by work: but I am too lazy to work for me. But first I must explain that I possess something else beside the raw materials. These three knives represent all the machinery of production; the factories, tools, railways, and so forth, without which the necessaries of life cannot be produced in abundance. And these three coins" – taking three 1 credit pieces from his pocket – "represent my money, capital."

"But before we go any further," said Sipho, interrupting himself, "it is important that you remember that I am not supposed to be merely a capitalist. I represent the whole capitalist class. You are not supposed to be just three workers, you represent the whole working class."

Sipho proceeded to cut up one of the slices of bread into a number of little square blocks.

"These represent the things which are produced by labour, aided by machinery, from the raw materials. We will suppose that three of these blocks represent a week's work. We will suppose that a week's work is worth 1 credit."

Sipho now addressed himself to the working classes as represented by Abendigo, Thandi and Nkosi.

"You say that you are all in need of employment, and as I am the kind-hearted capitalist class I am going to invest all my money in various industries, so as to give you plenty of work. I shall pay each of you 1 credit per week, and a week's work is that you must each produce three of these

square blocks. For doing this work you will each receive your wages; the money will be your own, to do as you like with, and the things you produce will of course be mine, to do as I like with. You will each take one of these machines and as soon as you have done a week's work, you shall have your money."

The working classes accordingly set to work, and the capitalist class sat down and watched them. As soon as they had finished, they passed the nine little blocks to Sipho, who placed them on a piece of paper by his side and paid the workers their wages.

"These blocks represent the necessaries of life. You can't live without some of these things, but as they belong to me, you will have to buy them from me: my price for these blocks is, 1 credit each."

As the working classes were in need of the necessaries of life and as they could not eat, drink or wear the useless money, they were compelled to agree to the kind capitalist's terms. They each bought back, and at once consumed, one-third of the produce of their labour. The capitalist class also devoured two of the square blocks, and so the net result of the week's work was that the kind capitalist had consumed 2 credits worth of the things produced by the labour of the others, and reckoning the squares at their market value of 1 credit each, he had more than doubled his capital, for he still possessed the 3 credits in money and in addition 4 credits worth of goods. As for the working classes, Abendigo, Thandi and Nkosi, having each consumed the credit's worth of necessaries they had bought with their wages, they were again in precisely the same condition as when they started work – they had nothing.

This process was repeated several times: for each week's work the producers were paid their wages. They kept on working and spending all their earnings. The kind-hearted capitalist con-