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A Bourgeois on Strikes and Deportations

THE mind of the bourgeois is peculiar. It is a perverted thing. It is the mind of the master—and the master is an enemy of life and humanity.

I had an insight into the bourgeois mind the other day. I was riding to New York from Boston, and in the "smoker" a gentleman sitting beside me started a conversation. He was a clean-cut fellow, very amiable and courteous. Doing you a favor—if you were of his class, or he thought you were—was a pleasure to him. "Business" was all over his appearance.

The conversation was of a fragmentary character. He was very emphatic in his opinion that "the only good German is a dead German," very violent and implacable. He mentioned his wife a number of times, very beautifully and sympathetically; and in speaking of his son, who was in France and had been for one year under fire, a great love welled up in his heart. His son, it was clear, was a comrade. On the whole, in spite of his attitude toward the Germans, a pleasant old gentleman.

Something he said informed me that he was riding from Lawrence, Mass., to New York, and that in a business way he was connected with the textile mills. Naturally, I steered the conversation to the strike. Immediately, a completely new man was shown to me—a man who had "sympathy" for a worker only if that worker was meek and abject; a man who believed in the most brutal means to make the worker "satisfied" with his conditions; a man who would go the limit in protecting his class interests.

"There is a great labor unrest," he said. "The workers got good wages while the war lasted but instead of saving it they spent it on drink and other unnecessary things. They should have known that the war wouldn't last forever. It is stupid of them to expect that, now the war is over, they should get the same high wages. In the Lawrence mills they made as much as \$30 and \$40 a week."

My cue was to innocently indicate surprise, and I asked about the newspaper reports that the strikers earned about \$16 a week.

"The unskilled workers get that," was his answer.

"Are the unskilled in the majority," I asked.

"Yes."

"The textile workers earn \$30 or \$40 a week"—but the majority are unskilled, and they earn only \$16 a week. . . .

"The strikers are pro-German," continued the nice gentlemen. "Ime Kaplan, their leader, was against the draft. He's a bad man and we're going to deport him." (This with absolute assurance, as if he was the government: but isn't his class the government?)

"These foreign workers are terribly ignorant. They fall for the Bolshevik stuff. But (exultingly) we're just deporting 54 of these dangerous agitators, and we'll deport more."

"There seems to be a good deal of protest against these deportations," I suggested.

"Not very much," he answered. "But even that we'll prevent. Thousands are being prepared for deportation, and they will be shipped across the country and out quietly and secretly; no one will know anything about it except the government, so that there won't be any agitation about it."

He said this in a quiet, unemotional, matter-of-fact tone, as if the enormity of depriving a man of even the little opportunity for defence that the law affords was a natural thing. . . .

"This labor unrest must be severely dealt with," continued my bourgeois companion. "The I. W. W.'s and the Bolsheviks must be crushed. Haywood is a dangerous man; he's in jail now and he'll stay there. Those whom we can't deport we'll jail."

I asked him whether, in his opinion, the labor unrest would last long and whether it would have dangerous consequences.

"No," was his confident answer. "It's a sort of epidemic and will die out; it's all over the world. But we'll wait, and can afford to wait; and we'll also use the iron fist. What we need is a State Constabulary to use during strikes. The police are not enough; but

Are You in the Fight?

Three weeks, and the great textile strike in Lawrence, Mass. is as solid as ever, acquiring new strength and determination.

The strikers, 30,000 of them, are isolated, opposed by press and state, having practically no money, but they are determined to wage the fight to the end.

They are prohibited from holding demonstrations in the streets by a city government prostituting itself to the mill barons: but the strikers fight. They are terrorized by the police and their pickets arrested. They are refused permission to hold mass meetings on the common by a municipal government determined to crush the industrial revolt: but the strikers fight. They are refused satisfaction in their protest against these outrages by the Governor of the State of Massachusetts: but the strikers fight, fight on and on.

The strikers have practically no money. They are living—if you can call it living—on short rations; but starvation does not lessen their determination.

Threats have been made to deport the strike leaders; the whole 30,000 strikers thereupon made application for passports for all of them to leave the country. Can you crush that spirit?

The men, women and children of the Lawrence mills are maintaining the fight. Inspired by their courage, textile workers in other towns are considering a strike—a general textile strike. A great industrial strike in all the textile mills seems to be coming; and this general strike would flame through the country, inspiring action everywhere. That would be a great event. That would give a mighty onward push to the emancipation of the American working class.

But money is needed. Money is needed to feed the women and children; money is needed to buy even the small portion of necessities required to sustain life. Money is needed to spread the strike.

Will you help? Now?

Send money to C. SILIN, 885 Washington Street, Boston, Mass.

the State Constabulary, with their horses, their shot-guns and their clubs, can move from place to place easily and quickly, and maintain order against strikers and Bolsheviks. We'll get a Constabulary soon.

"Then Samuel Gompers' return will help matters. Gompers is a very sensible and able man. The union officials are doing all they can to deal properly with the employers; in Lawrence they are against the strike: but Bolshevik agitators are getting the men against their officials. Gompers will stop this. We must have conciliation and arbitration, instead of strikes. It was the union officials who prevented a revolution in Seattle.

"American manufacturers must meet foreign competition, and in order to do this the high wages paid during the war must come down. Labor must be reasonable, if Gompers can't make labor reasonable, we'll do it in our own way."

I asked him what would be the result of the Lawrence strike.

"They'll be beaten," he answered confidently.

"They must have the jobs in order to live. We'll starve them into submission."

Isn't this characteristic? Here is a man, full of sympathy and courtesy in relation to his own family, to his own class, with absolutely not a spark of sympathy for the workers; kind toward his own, but brutal to the workers.

But this is the psychology of the master. The workers are there, in their opinion, to work and keep the wheels of industry running; they are as necessary as the machine, and just as important—or unimportant. They have no rights. The sense of mastery develops contempt in the master toward those who work for him; and contempt becomes brutality.

The bourgeois is a dual personality. They are not necessarily brutal, as such; they may have wells of sympathy and affection for their own; but the men, women and children of the working class are dirt under their feet.

Mastery degrades the master and the slave. That is inevitable. It is a perversion of life, and it perverts the finest instincts. The gentleman I was conversing with was not a brute; in fact, he was a fine fellow, in his way: he was not at all conscious of the brutality in his attitude toward workers, strikers and agitators.

When will the workers realize this? When will they realize that under the system of capitalist economic mastery they are not humans, but beasts of burden, machines for the production of profit? They do not have the opportunity to really live; they live to work, to make profits. Under Socialism alone will they work to live, to make joy and happiness for all.

My gentleman acquaintance was wrong. The labor unrest will not end—it will become stronger and more general: the workers *must* and *will* strike, more and more; Gompers will not check the revolts of the workers—Gompers will himself be repudiated; the masters cannot starve the workers into submission—the workers are coming to realize that they must act definitely and finally to become masters of their own lives by becoming masters of the shops, mills and mines in which they must work in order to live.

We are in a revolutionary age; in an age when Capitalism is breaking down, and the working class realizing its enormous power and the necessity for action. The State Constabulary and deportations cannot frighten the workers. A club and a gun cannot purchase food for the workman's family or yield him joy in life: human needs will prove mightier than guns and clubs. Deporting men and women cannot deport their ideas: wherever there are workers, there is oppression; wherever there is oppression, there are revolts and strikes; wherever there are strikes and revolts, Socialism develops, revolutionary Socialism. Oppression, strikes and Socialism are an expression of the human needs of the working class: and these needs are universal, therefore revolutionary Socialism is universal. Deport every single agitator and Socialist; and to-morrow, out of life itself, will develop a host of new agitators and Socialists, tempered and made as steel by the fires of repression.

Capitalism degrades man and perverts life. Life itself will conquer Capitalism, life itself will revolt against the power that stultifies life.

My conversation with the bourgeois gentleman, in the "smoker" in which were other bourgeois gentlemen, soldiers and workers, confirmed my faith. It is coming! Strikes—more strikes—then the Revolution, and Socialism.