

# THE RED FLAG

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Editor ..... C. Stephenson

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## Who Needed the Strike?

THE end of the great war came at last. Its insatiable market was closed and the readjustment of industrial and commercial operations to the normal conditions of a peace market became imperative. The thread of the economic life must be picked up again that had been dropped in 1914, but under different conditions. When the war broke out a serious economic crisis confronted the world. Some countries, Canada for one, were already badly affected by the shock. Overproduction the economists diagnosed the crisis.

The world market was glutted with the products of labor—commercial and industrial stagnation had set in and unemployment was assuming proportions, ominous to the statesmen, and desperate to the proletariat. But the war came, a hell devised ransom, and we were saved from we know not what. And now we are in the same predicament again, a market incapable of absorbing all the products that the productive forces of the world are capable of putting on to it. A limited market means intensified competition. Indeed we have been warned by the inspired press that we were entering a period of the fiercest commercial competition that the world has ever seen. And that if Canada was to hold her own and her industry live and thrive, that costs of production must be reduced. That we must work longer hours and harder and for less wages. That is how the wage workers are to solve the capitalist dilemma.

The workers, however, were in no hurry to do these things. They were barely making ends meet anyway. During the war, although the rise in wages had been far outstripped by the rise in the cost of living, yet wages had become fixed and standardized when the labor market was more favorable than it is at present, and organized labor having grown in strength was acting as a counter check on the depressing effect of a glutted labor market.

What were the capitalist interests to do?

Also, organized labor bodies, scenting danger, were cutting adrift from the International and were falling over each other to get into the O. B. U., grasping hold of it as a superior weapon for the struggle with the capitalists.

What also was the "foreign" Gompers' Machine, Gideon Robertson and all his hosts of old line trades' union beneficeries to do?

What were the big and little interests of the bourgeoisie who live on the backs of the workers and the parasitic labor fakers and the honest and ignorant reactionaries generally, to do?

They soon let us know.

The strike in Winnipeg was engineered. A recognized principle of collective bargaining was refused. Some of the employers in Winnipeg conceded that the demands of the men were fair, but they said they had been told by the banks that they would be refused loans "if the prices of business increased." The "word" had been sent out from the center of control.

The sympathetic strike commenced, and much howling ever since ensued about the dishonesty of breaking agreements. But we hold that when it is a question of helping a brother in need and a question of a contract with a capitalist to stay on the

## Force, Force---Always Force

WE have discovered something. That is, President Wilson has discovered it—for us. It is some thing we have long suspected, but the preponderance of opinion contrariwise held our suspicions in check. In duty bound we had to read Wilson's speech, so we happened on the discovery in black face type, which suggests that the editor of the "Province" also made a discovery.

The desire of one nation to dominate other nations and having no other means than armaments and alliances has lain at the heart of every arrangement of Europe—of every arrangement of the world—that preceeded the war. Restive people have been told that fleets and armies which they had toiled to sustain meant peace; and they now know that they had been lied to; that the fleets and armies had been maintained to promote national ambitions and meant— They knew ambitions. They knew that no old policy meant anything else but Force, Force—Always Force."

So there we are; where are we?

We are curious as to what the people knew these armies "meant." The President is somewhat abrupt there. But we have been lied to, and the old policy meant "Force, Force—Always Force." Very fine!

Of course, the new policy means peace, justice and brotherhood. Who says so? Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Orlando. That's very fine too. But the trouble with the human animal lies in a constitutional ineptitude to prosper on words. Peace, justice and brotherhood, represent certain states of being, of law and of ethics. If it were a question of color, of distance, of weight, we could proceed to visualize them. If the Big Four told us that the future world policy would be Red, or four feet to the yard, we would know that "Force, Force—Always Force" would be absent.

What is justice?

In justice to his dynasty—Czar Nicholas II, killed and wounded 5000 workers who were peacefully presenting to him a petition in October, 1905. In justice to the British Empire, Lord Cromer had some Egyptian villagers of Denashawe, hanged flogged and imprisoned, for daring to resist some British tourists who were shooting their pigeons. In justice to American womanhood, President Wilson permits the most atrocious outrages on the negroes of the United States, and Kolehak sends his Death Trains through Siberia in justice—to justice. All this too is very fine. So if the Petrograd worker—or Egyptian Fellahs, or the American negro, has another sense of justice, who shall decide which is just, which unjust? "Force, Force—Always Force."

You must understand that a color say, red, denotes the same to all normally constituted humans, or bulls. It may excite widely divergent sentiments, but the normal, that is, the average, will pronounce it red, though they may shake their tails and ears and froth at the mouth. No one ever had to go into a court of justice, or a field of battle to emphasize and make good his concept of the color—red.

When Omar, writing in the twelfth century tells us that he—

"Sometimes thinks that never blows so red  
The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled."

job, that the former is the holier obligation.

We are all familiar with what followed. The arrest of the strike officials, the raiding by the police, all over the Dominion, of Labor and Socialist Halls, and the private residences of those known to be active in the labor and socialist movement, in order to find materials to justify the arrest. And following on this, the organized attempt to intimidate those unions who had cast in their lot with the O. B. U. and to frighten others from joining. Also, the blacklisting, the firing, the refusal of employment to all O. B. U. members.

Well! the capitalist interests know their friends. So shall we. The rats will have to come out in the open.

he speaks to us in terms which we and he apply to the same physical manifestation notwithstanding the eight centuries which divide us. King Richard, the Lion-heart, and Omar had the same concept of red, but did Omar consider it just that Islam should suffer under "the iron hoof of hostile faces," because the Crescent had supplanted the Cross in Jerusalem? Richard did! Bishop Langdon and Pope Urban II, at the same period had no diversity of views as to the color of a "filthy hat." The cardinals hat was red, no one would deny that, as to its being filthy, that was dependent upon whose sister, wife or daughter was violated. But Langdon and Urban had a mighty quarrel over the "justice" of the cornerstone of our British greatness, the Magna Charta. And "Force, Force—Always Force" was advocate, judge and jury. So Popes Urban II and Benedict XV, would clearly pronounce a cardinals hat red, but Urban would have had any son of a shoemaker or priest "put to death mercifully and without shedding of blood" who had dared attempt the grossly sacrilegious "injustice" of settling the fate of Europe. Pope Benedict XV, sees nothing unjust about it. Urban had the force, Benedict has not.

"We see then that justice as a concept of ethics, is different to red as the name of a color. And this for a very good reason. Justice implies an ethical relation between human beings, color, connotes, a physical characteristic of something.

Justice is implicative of some social state, and can only appear with property, physical properties are independent of and anterior to Society. But justice appears long after mankind collected together in bands. Wherever justice manifests itself, someone is injured, not in an ethical, but in a physical sense. Suppose we start a One Big Union, Sammy Gompers has his booze allowance threatened, that is an injustice. Suppose we advocate a General Strike, the Bankers' Association see poor collections ahead, that is an injustice to the widow and orphans who own shares in those institutions. So they whip all their dependent creditors into line—to oppose injustice. Suppose they, by the machinery under their control, seize the strike leaders at four queu M, and jail them, that is an injustice to the strike leaders, and to the great body of workers.

Someone is injured physically every time justice is applied. Therefore, we have a dual justice.

Who then shall decide which is the just and which the unjust. The Lord maketh his rain to fall on both. That is, providing they don't live in Southern Alberta during the wheat growing season.

Hitherto, President Wilson says, Force, Force—Always Force has been the dread arbiter. But the future is bright with the light of another and "juster" method.

We would admire to see it. But in the meanwhile it appears to our suspicious nature that this "juster" method is reserved for Huns and baby-slayers. And for home application, the good old homely medicine will still suffice, "Force, Force—Always Force."

Just to keep our terms clear, not the packet variety which was responsible for the happy nature of Sunny Jim.

J. H.

Up to a week ago the "kept" press was saying that it was the "Reds" who were the cause of the Winnipeg strike. Now the Vancouver "Sun," in an editorial on Wednesday, says that the steel firms were responsible for it. The "Sun" can guess again. Also it can save the butter when dealing with working class affairs. It cuts no ice. We respect the open and consistent enemy, but.....

The American Press has now fallen foul of "our Ally" Japan. Some old familiar phrases are being polished up for use again.