

The Indicator

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THE steel workers' strike in the United States, makes brave copy for the press. Plots, conspiracies, bombs, anarchists, red propaganda, Bolshevism, R-Revolution. Everything that would satisfy the esthetic taste of a people who take a morbid delight in being terrified.

"Give 'em circuses," said a low-brow student of human nature, and skin 'em alive, while you are doing it, no doubt was implied. Like President Wilson, most of us have single track minds, being unable to think exhaustively on a subject without giving it undivided attention. One subject, the high cost of living, threatens to draw attention to some fundamentals of the capitalist method of production itself. Hence, the suggestion of an approaching terror of unknown character and magnitude may act as a counter-attraction. Protesters and enquirers into the cost of living problem will feel discouraged on the insinuation being made that they are but camouflaged emissaries of social disorder.

How stands the situation on this steel workers' strike then? The employees of the Steel Corporation demanded the right to organize, and on their behalf, Organizer Fitzpatrick of the American Federation of Labor, requested an interview with Mr. Gary, head of the corporation, to discuss the matter. True to the old time policy of his corporation, he turned the request down, refused absolutely to consider the matter. He has refused to consider the matter with anyone. He and the group of employers in the Industrial Conference now sitting in the States, are blocking the attempt of the labor group to have the conference intervene in the dispute. He objects to his employees organizing, even while he sits in the Industrial Conference around the same board as the accredited representatives of organized labor. He is also one of the most violent advocates of the immediate signing of the Peace Treaty without amendment. And yet in that treaty is the following clause: "The right of association for all lawful purposes by the employed as well as by the employers." A jewel of the first water is Mr. Gary's consistency. It is 100 per cent. United States Steel Corporation. His denial of that right to his employees is the issue of the strike. They desire to organize, so that their delegates may sit in conference with the employers representatives and discuss one day's rest in seven, and the abolition of twenty-four-hour shifts, and an increase in wages as these aliens express it "to guarantee American standards of living."

But Mr. Gary shouts, Bolshevism! And his cohorts of press agents, all

over the continent, take up the cry. Well: So far as we are concerned, we thank them for popularizing the word.

The "New Republic" of New York, is a bourgeois journal of liberal tendencies, and it is one of the few solitary voices raised in criticism of Mr. Gary and his policies. We quote the following from its October 1st issue:

"Had Mr. Fitzpatrick declined to confer with Mr. Gary, he would have been denounced from one end of the country to the other as a firebrand. But Mr. Gary can decline to confer with the representative of a very large section of his men; he can refuse to arbitrate even to discuss; he can bluntly repudiate all the known methods of peaceful adjustment, and so far as one can judge from the press, few voices are raised to brand him for what he is: an inciter of violence, a provoker of industrial war, an industrial barbarian. Calculating that the unions may not be strong enough to win this time, relying on enormous war profits to tide him over, knowing that the men's organization is immature, trusting to his automatic control over public authority in the steel districts, exploiting the fevered and panicky condition of the public mind he has deliberately chosen to provoke the strike now because he thinks he can smash the union. He has not taken one step to avert the strike. He has not made one move for peace.

He has distributed guns, suppressed meetings, refused a hearing. He wants this strike and he wants it now, because he thinks he can win and have a few more years of absolute power in his industry. After that—well Mr. Gary is not looking ahead." . . . And much more to the same point. The New Republic has one of its editors covering the ground in the steel districts and continues its attack on Gary in the issue following the one quoted from. This editor says "In the misrepresentation of motives it is perhaps the 'foreign element' that has suffered most. Who was it brought the 'foreign element' to Pittsburg, if not the United States Steel Corporation itself? It is not hard to remember days when the Steel Corporation advertised 'Men Wanted, Foreigners Only Need Apply.' Foreign labor was plentiful then. Why did the Steel Corporation want it? Because it was cheap; because, with religious and racial differences it was thought that the 'foreigners' would not easily unite; and because, therefore, they would serve as a bulwark against unionization. Today, fighting off standards accepted in every civilized community, the companies turn on these men for the wholesale importation they are themselves so largely responsible for and insult them with insinuations, not once, so far, substantiated by the fact."

Mr. Gary and his associates in the steel trust are in the limelight for the time being as playing the capitalist game. The support given him in the press of every city, town and village in the land, and the way in which it is villifying the workers, shows Gary as the hero and hope of the capitalist world.

NOTICE TO READERS

As soon as we receive sufficient subscriptions for the "Indicator" to comply with Postal regulations, from points outside the Vancouver mail-

ing district, we intend to apply for the mailing privileges granted to newspapers and periodicals. Between two and three hundred are required. Should these privileges not be granted, obligations will be fulfilled at the usual postal rate, or if this is found not possible, the subscription money will be refunded.

THE INEXPLICABLE FOREIGNER

The foreigner has hitherto been held to be the evil genius of labor unrest. The Vancouver "Sun," however, now comes out with a variation. Under the caption "Paid Agitators in Camps" it says in part. "It (the agitation) was giving the foreigner a better chance, for he was not so susceptible to the influence of agitators having the interest of the dollar at heart and knew that a stoppage of work means a stoppage of pay also." The English-speaking worker thinks his pay goes on when he isn't working. We don't think.

EDUCATIONAL CLASSES

Vancouver Local No. 1, S. P. of C., has commenced its winter season of Educational Classes. On Sunday, at 3 p.m., the first class on economics was held. The text book used was "Wage-labor and Capital," by Marx. Some 70 or 80 attended, and a brisk and interesting discussion showed the interest taken by the class in the subject.

On Wednesday evening, at 8 o'clock, the class on history was opened. The text book chosen was H. De. B. Gibbin's "Industrial History of England." Owing to the expense of this book which is \$1.50, it was decided to allow those who wished, to purchase it on the installment plan. The leader of the class, Comrade Harrington, gave a review of various theories and methods of presenting history and compared them to the materialistic method of the Marxian School, which gives more prominence to the economic factor than the other schools. He showed that class struggles in society were the instruments of political progress and that these arose out of the economic structure of society.

Discussion followed upon the opening address. Next week, the class commences the study of the text book.

All are asked to attend these classes. There is no distinction made between race, color, creed or sex. All are welcome. No questions asked. Just walk in and sit down. One hour and a half is given to reading and discussing the text book, and the last half hour to general discussion. Anyone is free to take part in the discussions. The classes are held at the hall, 401 Pender Street East, corner of Dunlevy avenue and Pender street.

"The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice"

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is that hitherto the material conditions—by which we mean all the contributing factors and circumstances—have been such as to promote and develop different social structures of which individualism more or less has been the basis. We will not deny that in this process men's ideas have

played a part. But theirs has been but a small part of the whole and should by no manner of means be regarded as a dominant or determining factor. Furthermore, for Mr. Leacock's enlightenment, we will venture to assert that those material conditions which are largely the outcome of the present economic basis must inevitably, and very shortly, give rise to a new social structure of which Socialism as opposed to Individualism will be the basis. And it will come,—this new social order—we would beg Mr. Leacock to note, not merely because we desire it, nor will it delay its coming because Mr. Leacock is not ready for it, but it will come because the material conditions will make it necessary.

Mr. Leacock is obviously very much concerned with saving the essence of the basis of the present social structure. In this he, unconsciously perhaps, but nevertheless, definitely aligns himself with the governing class. There is a striking similarity between the ideas of the sociologically inclined members of that class from Plato up to the present day. Plato's "Republic" was frankly and outspokenly a slave state. The slaves were to be as well treated as was possible, that is to say they were to be allowed as full a measure of life as was compatible with the interests of those who governed them, and lived on the proceeds of their labor. But it was obviously as impossible for Plato as it is for Professor Leacock to conceive of a society in which there should not be an economically enslaved working class to do all the necessary productive labor and to submit to be governed by those who lived on them and in some inexplicable manner held themselves to be superior. In short, as a spokesman for the working class has somewhere expressed it, the attitude of such bourgeois reformers as Professor Leacock, is that "they are willing, when driven to it, to do almost anything—except get off our backs."

It may perhaps be imagined, by some who have observed the quite touching manner in which Mr. Leacock writes of those who suffer under the "bitter inequalities of the present system, that he is genuinely concerned over the unhappy lot of the work-class, but unfortunately does not perceive the real root cause of their distress. We must confess to being a little skeptical of this, especially when we read such sentences as the following: "The hardest capitalist that ever gripped his property with the iron clasp of legal right relaxes his grasp a little when he thinks of the possibility of a social conflagration." This suggests to us that Mr. Leacock knows quite well wherein lies the efficient cause of our social ills. And the fact that he nowhere makes more than the merest passing reference to this point, suggests furthermore, that he is in no mood to have it altered. Indeed he goes so far in one instance as to state that; "the private ownership of land is one of the greatest incentives to human effort that the world has ever known. It would be folly to abolish it even if we could."

Perfectly true, professor, only too true! It certainly is "one of the greatest incentives to human effort." And so is private ownership of the means of production. And so is the

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