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W. U. COTTON, Editor

Cotton's Weekly

SPECIAL MAY DAY EDITION

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This is No. 137

COWANSVILLE, P. Q., CANADA, APRIL 27, 1911

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THE HISTORY OF MAY DAY

Geo. Edward.

May Day came into existence through a resolution which was adopted at the International Workingmen's Congress, held in the year 1889 and afterwards at the Brussels Congress 1891, Zurich 1893, London 1896, Paris 1900 and Amsterdam 1904.

The resolution calls upon the workers of the world to unite in celebrating the 1st day of May as a holiday and further that henceforth they shall do their utmost to establish a universal eight hour work day.

May Day is typical in most countries, as being the dawn of brighter and better times or in other words of the glorious summer about to arrive and the end of the cold winter just finished.

The day was well chosen by our comrades in Paris on which the proletariat of the world should express their joy at the signs of decay, already so pronounced in the present abominable wage slave system and the ushering in of a new era when all shall be free from exploitation and the evils that are now so prevalent in our body politic. This holiday is not generally understood by the proletariat of Canada, England and the United States, on account of the backwardness of the class-conscious Socialist movement in these countries, but wherever the workers do comprehend its meaning their enthusiasm for it knows no bounds.

May Day is celebrated differently according to place and conditions. For instance, should there be serious labor troubles, great strikes are often commenced, but should there be no labor trouble our German comrades usually spend the day at a picnic or in one of their favorite concert gardens. In France where most of the workers celebrate this holiday, some take advantage of it to have a day's rest, others to visit some favorite place, theatre or lecture hall.

Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Russia, and other European countries celebrate May Day in a like manner. This holiday is very different to other holidays in as much as it is the only one which has been named by the workers for themselves. They have declared that May Day shall be their own, that on that day they will recognize no master. Hence the antagonism displayed by the capitalist class against all celebrations, parades, Socialist meetings, etc., held upon the 1st of May.

May Day is usually celebrated in a very different manner to other holidays, because you will find that those who take part in it are imbued with a spirit of fraternity and their chief desire is to learn something about the great hope of the workers, the Socialist movement, or else to impart knowledge to their less informed brothers. New hopes are kindled on this day of a better system of society, when they gather together to sing their revolutionary songs or to listen to one of their favorite orators.

The drunkenness and rowdiness so common on other holidays is conspicuous by its absence among those who celebrate May Day. The reason is two-fold, because the class-conscious worker is more intelligent than the average, and also because he looks upon May Day as his most sacred holiday.

Judge Lanctot of Montreal waxed indignant in his courtroom on April 19th over the employment of child labor. An undersized boy under fourteen years of age had been employed by the Dominion Cotton Company. The judge declared that the company who employed child labor was the one who ought to be punished. Here is a judge who sees an evil. But he is powerless. Nay more. He must enforce the conditions which bring about child labor. He must enforce laws which evict people from their homes. He must give decisions according to laws which compel wage slavery. The Socialists of Canada will confer a great benefit on many human hearted judges of Canada by bringing about a revolution which will allow just judges to adjudicate according to just laws.

The judge on the bench is paid his seven thousand dollars, not to give economic justice, but to enforce wage slavery and to decide in difficult cases just which particular labor thief shall have the wealth stolen from the workers.

The Origin of May Day

Jules Lavigne.

It was in 1888 after the general election at which our old comrades, Barley and Lamandin were elected to the French Chamber of Deputies by the French Federation of the Arrondissement De Bethune, Pas-de-Calais, that the Syndicat des mineurs du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais, composed of some seventy-three thousand miners, held their convention at Lens, P. de C. At this convention it was moved that the Socialist Deputies be requested to present the 8 hour day bill before the French Chamber. It was also resolved to keep the first of May as labor day.

The following year the capitalists did all they could to make the miners work the first of May. They succeeded in keeping about half of the men at their tasks. But the same year the International Socialist Party endorsed the Lens resolution. Since then the first of May has been recognized as the international Labor day.

Now all the workers of France, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, a big portion of England and of the United States keep the first of May as Labor day and carry a red ribbon in their buttonhole. This year is the twenty-second anniversary of the celebration of Labor Day.

There are reforms everywhere. The masters are planning old age pensions and workmen's compensation acts and model dwellings and many other things. Why do they do these things? For the love of God? Do not believe it. God has been held up to the workers as the fearsome creature who would punish workers if they did not remain content in the sphere wherein God had placed them. Are they doing it for the love of humanity? Don't you believe it. The ruling class has never loved humanity. It has always oppressed and enslaved it. No. The rulers are weakening and trying to placate labor. The masters have felt the rising wrath of the toilers. They have felt a slave class tugging at its bonds. Priest and warrior, judge and orator, all have been used to keep the workers in physical and mental slavery. Now the slaves are thinking. The spirit of the slave is going. The workers are looking at their masters and the light of freedom burns with a steady light in the eyes of a class that once cowered. Wherefore the masters fear. Wherefore they try to win with flattery and coaxing. But all in vain. For the workers reply, "You may give us old age pensions but that does not compensate for the years of our manhood which you deprived of joy and ease. You may give us workmen's compensation acts but your hell holes of factories still blight the earth. You may give us hospitals but they would not be necessary were our daughters not forced to prostitution. You are a damnable exploiting class. Your days are numbered. Prepare for your end."

There are a class of men who preach the gospel. These men are called ministers. Many of them who have studied a few musty books and got their knowledge of life from afternoon ladies teas are not worth bothering about. They have no influence. There are other ministers who know that Socialism is right but will not preach it because they would lose their comfortable quarters and easy life. The Christian ministry in Canada is on a mighty low pair of wheels just at present. It is filled either with men who do not think, nice smooth-checked men, who talk soft soap for the dollars there is in it, or with men who preach what they know to be a lie. The Christian church in Canada is carried captive at the chariot wheels of big business and successful dishonesty. The Socialists are the ones who are bearing the burden for the freedom of humanity.

Economic interests determine men's conduct. The parasite will do those things which will secure him in his parasite condition. The Socialists cannot expect to have Socialism come through the efforts of the capitalists. Socialism will come by the workingmen realizing how well they can live if they will only take hold of industry and have it socially owned and operated without having the parasites getting the greater share of the wealth produced.

THE BATTLE IS ALL BUT WON

The night of despair is over. The dawn of the day for the last great battle for liberty is come. The hosts of labor go forth to conquer.

It has been a long struggle. The masters have been cruel and cunning. The heroes of the social revolution, who gathered the first recruits against capitalism, engaged in a desperate venture. No master class has ever allowed the agitators against slavery to act with impunity. Our Comrades of the past have been exiled, proscribed, shot down.

Now their heroic struggles are bearing fruit. Their weak voices crying amid the babble of slaves have at length prevailed. Their message fell on deaf ears. But one by one the slaves heard and listened. More and more the slaves became attentive. Many of the slaves took up the message and cried it aloud to other slaves. "Workers of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains and a world to gain."

The slaves have heard. The hosts are gathered. The might of the oppressors is shaken. They tremble. They endeavor to win some of the slaves by promise of a share in the ill-gotten wealth that was produced by the sweat and misery of the slaves. Their cries fall on unhearing ears. The few cowardly slaves who are tempted and yield and forsake their Comrades find themselves cut off from the great living world. They find themselves ranked with flabby skinned, white livered traitors of humanity.

The international exploiters endeavor to give aid the one to the other. But they find themselves forestalled. The revolt of the slaves spreads from country to country, from continent to continent.

Would Germany hurl her soldiers upon France in order to destroy men and maintain slavery? Her rulers dare not. For facing the exploiters in Germany are the slaves and were the troops flung into France, the slaves at home would revolt. England dare not send her troops abroad. Her rulers fear the Welsh, the Scotch, the Irish, the English slaves.

France must keep her troops at home. The railroad workers, the vine dressers, the postal employees are on the verge of revolt. The exploiters fear, even as it is, the temper of the troops.

Spain sent her troops to Morocco and the monarchy trembled on the verge of collapse from the quaking mass of revolting proletarians.

These are sorrowful days for the plundering plutocrats.

Laurier piles military burdens upon the workers, and many fool workers cheer Laurier.

Do you believe in Socialism? Yes, do you say? Then what are you doing to make it come? Nothing? Then confound your lazy bones. Wake up, get busy and root for what you know is the grandest movement that has ever come to bless humanity.

Did you ever take a good look at the plutocrats? Take an average specimen. You will find he is a soft-headed, portly, unathletic sort of a creature. When the muscled and skillful workers just get a few thinks in their heads they will wonder why in the everlasting blazes they ever allowed such a gang of puny creatures to rule and rob.

Did you ever go into a courtroom and see the judge on the bench with bailiffs and policemen and courtiers round him? Did he not look awe inspiring in his wig and woman's gown? Next time you go in and take a look at one of the creatures, just use your brains and exude a little thought for your own benefit. Just remember that that thing on the bench is paid seven thousand dollars a year, not to give justice, but to enforce wage slavery. Remember that all the mummery with which he is surrounded is not erected to advance right but to fool people into thinking this particular wage slave of the parasite plunderers of humanity is some pumpkin and should be obeyed. When you get the right viewpoint our Canadian judges will cease to appear to be great men. On the contrary they will think into shrivelled little puppets who are drawing large salaries from a slave driving class for the dirty work they do.

In Canada the masters see and fear. The army is being strengthened. The cry of imperialism is raised. Why? Not because Borden wants imperialism. He fears the slaves of Canada.

Not because Laurier wishes to protect Canadians against American aggression. No. But because he wants to protect the multimillionaires of Canada against the wrath of an oppressed slave class.

It is good to be alive these days. It is good to be in the thick of the greatest movement of emancipation the world has seen.

The revolt that is shaking Canada is not given publicity. The capitalist press dare not publish the news. The slaves would know too much of their own strength, their numbers and their mutual spirit, and did the capitalist press tell the truth the revolution would break tomorrow.

From Ontario come tales of whole factories permeated with the spirit of revolt. British Columbia and Nova Scotia tell the same story. The echo of the Socialist agitation is still ringing in the hearts of the wage slaves. They do not speak out. They dare not speak individually. But in the workshops and in their little gatherings the same tale is told. The slaves realize their condition and are prepared for freedom.

The coming year in Canada will be the most momentous year in the history of Canada. The agitation of the Fillmores, the Waymans, the Gribbles, the Stebbings, the O'Briens, the Kingsleys, and the countless other workers has taken deep root. It remains but to marshal the recruits of the army of revolting wage slaves to let them see their own strength. When they see their numbers and see the shrunken force of the exploiters, composed of traitorous slaves without spirit, of word-spinning parsons without backbone, of tongue-wagging judges without sense, a laugh of contempt will go up from the ranks of embattled labor and plutocracy will vanish in contempt.

Wherever the Western Clarion circulates, wherever Cotton's Weekly reaches, wherever the voice of the travelled Socialist agitator is heard, there is spread the glad news to the doubting slaves that Canada is on fire with a burning of hearts among the exploited and a marshalling of hosts for the sweeping of capitalism into oblivion.

Courage, Comrades. The battle is all but won.

The capitalist will rob as long as the worker is content to suffer the robbery.

The slaves of Canada are organizing not for the right to have better slave conditions, but for the right to be free men.

There is many a capitalist who wants Socialism to come as long as it will not hurt his own particular graft.

The grab fest is on at Ottawa. It has been going on many months now. Laurier and the rest of the political henchmen of the slave drivers have been talking day and night over reciprocity. There is a plan back of all their loud mouthings and empty vapors. They are trying to make such a loud noise as to prevent the workers of Canada from thinking. For these professional rangers know that if once the workers begin to think there will be a revolution in Canada that will shake every financier and industrial magnate into the working class.

Formerly education had to be paid for. Only the rich could afford to hire tutors for their children. Now education in many places is free and compulsory. All the people came to the conclusion that ignorant people were a drawback to a community and all the people furnished schools and means of education for all the children. We would not go back to the old system of private education for the few. We are going forward and we are furnishing free school books and free dinners for the children. Is not that a sensible step to take? If it is why not have more of a good thing and furnish proper clothing for all the children and for all the people as well?

We March in Millions Today

Rosecoe A. Fillmore.

What is your idea of life? Do you never wonder whether you were created to become a machine or not? Don't you know that the never-ending grind of which you are the victim is making a machine of you? You rise at 6 a. m. eat something, (always the very cheapest that can be bought) go to work at 7 a. m. eat something at 12 a. m., go to work at 1 p. m., quit at 6 p. m., eat some more, go to bed at 9 p. m. to rise at 6 and resume the same routine.

I ask you, brother worker, is this your idea of life? Are you satisfied? Do you believe that such a mechanical existence should satisfy a rational being?

Your wife or mother finds life even more monotonous than do you. It is always speculate and calculate over the food she must buy, the manner in which it should be cooked, etc., in order that it may last as long as possible. When a special season comes around such as Christmas or Thanksgiving you put your hands together, count the pennies in the purse, and choose not the food which you would like, but the miserable odds and ends which can be bought cheaply because milady or milord will not take them at any price.

These are the conditions when you are steadily employed. If you chance to lose your job you must starve or, if you have any credit, mortgage your future by buying your groceries on "tick." Do you call this living? I don't. I call it simply a miserable brute existence and I intend to do all in my power to change these conditions.

We are approaching a day which has been set apart by men who are not satisfied with this miserable condition of things. We call it May Day and we use it for the purpose of spreading our doctrine of working class unity among our brother workers. On this day we march, millions strong, and we make the idlers in their palaces turn pale. Their cheeks blanch as they realize that our ranks are filling up, that every May Day sees millions added to our army. They know that when we get crowded enough we intend to change the conditions which force you and I to work that they may loaf and it makes them unhappy. They are alive to their own interests. They are class-conscious.

But you, my brother, have not yet discovered wherein lies your interests. If you had you would be marching with us. You too would be dreaming of and working for the glorious future. You would be working for the time when men shall be free. You would be carrying a pocketful of Socialist literature to give your friends; you would be hustling for subs for Socialist papers. You would be doing all these things if you were true to your class and to yourself.

You'd better make a start this May Day. Fall in! You will easily catch the swing. You will feel happier when working for a time when your children need not go to work when still babies. You will find yourself in line with progress. You will find yourself in line with economic evolution, the power which has brought industry where it can very easily be made cooperative, in place of private property. And if you join us this May Day you will be able to bring along some of your friends, by next year and thus we add to our army. Come on, brother, we are marching in millions today. Come with us and we will show you how to win a world.

From St. John's, Newfoundland, come reports that there is a scarcity of labor. Until recently the workers of the city were practically without work for two months. Then the season of navigation opened up, all the idle men were put to work and still the employers wanted more. That is how the cry of scarcity of labor originates. The capitalists want many unemployed men around a city in order that the employed workers may be kept subdued by the fear of being displaced in their jobs and in order that there may be many workers in case the capitalists want some seasonal work done in a hurry. The suffering of the unemployed means nothing to the employers save that their miseries will make them all the more eager slaves. Will it not be a glorious change when Socialism will have provided opportunity to all to do useful labor?

ECONOMIC FREEDOM

H. Martin.

Fellow workers—The most important issue of your class today, is that of your economic freedom. We hear a great deal about "freedom" today. Our politicians, clergy, college professors and editors never tire telling us of the most remarkable heritage we are privileged to enjoy. This vaunted freedom is made the theme of thousands of songs, stories, essays and editorials of every description.

Freedom, means to be free; liberty; ease in performance. Does this fit your case, fellow worker? Are you at liberty to work at ease? Have you any voice in regulating your wages? You may think you have; the capitalist class (your masters) are willing that you continue to think so; but as a matter of fact you have no choice but to accept the market rate of wage.

If you were free, it would not be necessary for you to rap at the factory door and beg a master to buy your power to toil.

This vaunted freedom is a delusion. The man who owns the jobs, owns the people who must have them. The few who own the jobs can only give them out when the workers return a profit in exchange for the privilege of working.

Today such a profit is impossible in millions of instances, so the jobs are not given out. Never in the history of the world have there been so many willing hands denied an opportunity to produce a livelihood.

Mr. Workingman, has this not been your experience? I know it has. Experience is all you have had; you have never lived. Just experience in trying to make a living.

Your class are the most generous people on earth. You do all the work, you pay all the bills, you give away all you produce. You suffer from enforced idleness; you see your wives and children in rags and poverty; you live in hovels and shacks, all this so that a few may riot in idleness and luxury.

The men who own the jobs in any society rules that society. We may have convents and constitutions, legislatures, free schools, universal suffrage and rights and privileges without number, but while jobs are privately owned those who do not own them are practically slaves to the job owners.

We may sing "My country tis of thee, sweet land of liberty," but as long as some one else owns all the jobs there is no liberty. I appeal to your intelligence, fellow workers, to free yourselves from this economic slavery. You were men before you were workers. Exert your manhood and become economically free. Strike for freedom, join the Socialist ranks; become a worker for your own emancipation. You have nothing to lose, you have everything to gain.

The Toronto Mail and Empire of date Saturday, April 15th, has a stinging editorial against trust breakers. It declares that burglars, highwaymen, pickpockets, and the more vulgar thieves do not do the damage that the big thieves do, the men who betray their trust, who float bogus companies, who wreck banks, etc. This all sounds very radical, but the Mail and Empire is a reactionary sheet. The capitalists get unearned revenues. These revenues must be entrusted to other people to handle and reinvest. It is a horrible thought to the Mail and Empire that the legalized robbers should be preyed upon by unfaithful servants. The Mail and Empire never raises its voice against the continued robbery of the wealth producers by the capitalists.

It would be laughable were it not so pitiable. The workers whose strong labor has subdued the land, built the cities, spanned the continent with steel bands, mined the coal and produced the wealth are ridden by a gang of cunning thieves who rob and plunder, and throw out to starve the men who create the wealth. When once the plundered wake to the legalized miseries they have been forced to endure, then will the masters run trembling to their priests and beg on bended knees that their hireling religion mongers quell the awakened with word thunders and fear of the unknown supernatural. But it will be too late. That trick has been played out and will no longer work.