



THE KINGDOM of SELF RESPECT

By Harriell Dunlop Prenter

The fact that food, and how to get enough to eat is so great a problem to-day may account for the other fact that the producers of food are for the first time in human memory accounted of great importance—the war can scarcely be the cause of this new attitude, because the poor fools have gone off to kill each other too often and too cheerfully in the past century, to bring them any special attention, the only consideration they have received hitherto, was just before the election, and the effect of this was all that could be desired—from the ruling class view point — like a glass of strong liquor on an empty stomach it turned the head—also the vote.

But just now, this focusing of public notice on the common people begins to look serious—it appears that “the Kings of the earth have set themselves” to do things for us, and nothing seems surer than that “the Gobelins will get us, if we don’t watch out” and the “Gobelins” of philanthropy are a dangerous species, under the name of “reconstruction” certain “housing schemes” are in the air’ also many other plans of the patchwork quilt order, and we must step lively, lest some of these atrocities settle down on us.

For many ages the working class might be compared to a great giant—a Samson with blinded eyes and dulled brain—an “articulate imbecile” he was called by historians, but evolution and education are doing their work and already the eyes are opened and even now the dulled brain is awakening and the giant is no longer either grateful or submissive, he no longer wants things done for him, now that he can see to do for himself, he is discovering his own value, he is coming into his own Kingdom “The Kingdom of Self Respect”. At last he is learning why it is that things have commanded a higher price than Man and he suspects that the reason why “bread should be so dear and flesh and blood so cheap” is because the working class brain had not understood the infinite value of the worker’s flesh and blood.

There is no eye opener like Self-respect, nothing which will so quickly stir up intelligent unrest, an unrest which will not spend itself in useless ragings for “reprisals”, but which is ever now setting itself to the discovery and application of the law of Social Justice.

It is—for instance—no longer possible to preach to the enlightened worker about the glories of another world, he is not interested—he knows he should get a fair share of the blessings en route — he wants his own roof tree while he is here, and ‘the house not made with hands’ will keep till the time comes.

And in all this, our self respecting worker is not an unspiritual person—“Democracy has a religious root”—there never was a more fundamental Democrat than the Carpenter of Galilee, if he had been a patch work reformer’ he would never have been crucified, and today the social and red blooded doctrine of self respect, which he preached is being redis-

covered—outside the churches, the toilers realizing that they are in truth “the salt of the earth” and not an unsavoury thing fit only to be trodden underfoot.

Visitors to any part of the world have thought it quite natural that the slum and the squalid quarter should be pointed out as “the place where our working people live”—very few of either the church-goers or the privileged class have seen any inconsistency in this arrangement, and the fact of poverty and starvation in the midst of great abundance rarely raised a question—no wonder that Mark Twain said “Man is the only animal that blushes — or that needs to”.

It remains for the self respecting worker to change all this absurdity, the task is heavy, but this type is equal to it, and in a land of plenty he will no longer grind corn for the Philistines while his own children go hungry : he is always the best agitator against a vicious social system, because he *thinks* as well as *feels* and nothing but justice will ever satisfy him — he despises and spurns the “uplifters” and their “schemes”, realizing that philanthropy “hardens him who gives, and softens him who takes”.

It is true that there are yet many workers outside this “Kingdom of Self-respect”, this fact is made clear from time to time : here in Canada where we have much of the equipment for the perfecting of a new social order, where all adult men and women hold in their hands that “tool of civilization”—the ballot,—we still find working class people declaring by their use of this power that they actually believe themselves to be incapable of self government—that they are still in the ancient bondage:

This is what Henry Dub says of himself every time he votes in favor of a representative of privilege or wealth, and every time he allows his “Lodge” to dictate his decision — he simply proclaims aloud that he is a member of the great army of feeble minded’ to be sure Mrs. Dub is a sinner too, but in lesser degree, and we have great hopes of her, she has not been gathered into so many “Lodges” and she is more inquisitive than Henry — more apt to find out things for herself.

Incidentally one is reminded that in a few weeks from now, the Henry Dubs of Toronto will have a chance to join the ranks of self respecting people, and also incidentally, the very facts of this coming bye election are encouraging; it is not so long ago that the mere suggestion of a working man daring to oppose politically or otherwise one of the “big guns” of the church would be horrifying—but the joyous fact remains, and on August the 19th—we must choose the “Canon” or the common soldier as our own representative.

It will be an opportunity to quit us like men” and to prove that in spite of rich and well regulated party machinery, in spite of Churches and Lodges the workers in North East Toronto are self respecting human beings.

When the workers learn how to vote as they strike, they won’t need to strike.

The art of making some men rich also includes the art of making other men poor.

Socialism alone points out the cause of poverty and Socialism alone can remove the cause.

COMPULSORY LABOR.

By George Makela.

At present time there is much talk in Canada about industrial conscription which is nothing else but compulsory labor said in finer words. As industry and agriculture have become more active and as over four hundred thousand physically best fitted workers have been taken out of productive labor, it is only natural that industries feel the labor shortage, and our employers are therefore compelled to pay little higher wages than formerly, especially the days immediately preceding the outbreak of war.

Conditions, where employers can not get all the labor they want at the terms they offer, are not desirable to our bourgeois class. And moreover as the war conditions make it impossible for them to import laborers from European countries, as they formerly did, they have begun very loudly to demand maximum price for the labor power, such maximum price which will give unlimited profits to all kinds of employers and as meager an existence as possible to the laboring class.

These conditions have actuated our patriotic employers to demand compulsory labor. It began in the west where the great farmers have suffered perhaps most from the labor shortage and eastern industrial interests have repeated it as an echo. But they do not want compulsory labor for the whole working class of Canada; they want it only for the foreigners. As these workers thus far have been left out of the operation of the Military Service Act, the employers who are looking after their own interests hypocritically demand that these men must be compelled to serve the country, which have sheltered them, on industrial lines on such wages and in the service of such masters as the government sees fit to order. The employers are playing under cover. As usual they try to use the national prejudice to their own advantage. They hope that the organized workers, who are mostly English speaking men and women, will not defend their foreign brothers but leave them in helpless state into the clutches of capitalism.

The government has not made any public proclamation on this question but from the statements made by the private ministers we gather that this far reaching step is under consideration. We do not know if the intention is to include all foreigners in the scope of this act. But the knowledge of this is immaterial. No government has right to enact such laws. Even the intention must be condemned in the name of democracy and in the interest of workers. It must be denounced especially then, when it is contemplated by the government which has not done anything to lower the prices of the necessities of life or has even seriously tried to stop their increase.

Food controller Hanna has repeatedly said that he can not undo the scarcity of food by proclamations and prevent the “legitimate” increase of prices which is caused by the law of supply and demand. How then the same government, which in its own words, wants to be “impartial”, can prevent by proclamations the increase of wages. And the government which, again according to its own words, is defending the democracy, consistently can not place great numbers of wage workers into chattel slavery.

A Return To Slavery.

We are not yet sure if the government really intends to satisfy the demands of capitalists in this respect. If it intends to so satisfy, it will be more dangerous to our national life than the infamous War Time Election Act. A government which contemplates such action, by so doing, shows the whole world that it does not want to develop from this land a great country, where in some future time will live a free, happy and a great nation developing its own culture, but that it regards this country as a exploiting ground from which wealth will be exploited in shortest time possible and in which foreign labor will be used as means of exploitation. The exploited country will be left to our posterity as an inheritance and the whitened bones of cruelly exploited slaves as a remembrance.

Our national life will never be in so great a danger that it demands the return to slavery from which we have just emerged. And remember, only free men can defend their fatherland slaves have no fatherland to defend.

Labor Organizations Task

The organized labor of Canada will have a great task ahead. Those hundreds of thousands of foreign laborers, who live in Canada, hope that it will defend them in this imminent danger. Do they hope in vain? They have been slow in joining the labor movement, it must be admitted’ but there are many reasons for this, and the organized workers, who have not always sincerely welcomed the worker from across the sea, who does not speak their language, into the ranks of labor unions, are not altogether without the blame. But in no case they should not refuse their aid when the aid is sorely needed. If the organized workers consent to play nationalistic role according to dictation of their masters of bread, and if they regard the immigrants as the eaters of their daily bread, then they do not possess even the rudimentary knowledge of the need of the solidarity of labor and the great historical function of the labor movement. By that action they make the organizing the immigrants more difficult than it has been before. Foreigners however must be organized even if we do not take into the consideration the revolutionary aims of the labor movement. In this country there are and there will be hundreds of thousands of foreigners. They form a considerable portion of our working class. Unorganized they are a continuous menace to the aspirations of the organized workers.

A gang of renegade American Socialists including Spargo, Russel, Simons and others who have been bribed and scared into supporting the war policy, are touring Europe posing as representatives of American Socialism. The genuine Socialists of the United States, like those of Germany, France and England are either in jail, or maintaining silence to preserve their liberty, for which they can hardly be blamed.

TRUTH.

Love truth, my child, love truth;
It will gladden thy morn of youth
And in the noon of life,
Though it cost thee pain and strife
To keep the truth in its brightness,
Still cleave to thy uprightness.