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Let the Masters Celebrate Their Own Victories. The Class-conscious Working People the World Over Celebrate the First of May—Untermann

THE HISTORY OF MAY DAY

GEO. EDWARD

May Day came into existence through a resolution which was adopted at the International Workingman's Congress, held in Paris 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.

THE SWEEP OF THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION

GERALD DESMOND

All hail the first of May! All hail the jubilee of Labor! The hour is inspiring. On other days and amidst other surroundings we may be prosaic, ordinary, commonplace. At other times we may falter distrustful of our own strength; we may hesitate dreading the power of our enemies. But to-day is not as other days. To-day we rise above the sordid degrading environment of capitalism. To-day a vision of the new civilization comes to us. To-day it is for a little while as though the sun of freedom springs above the horizon dispelling the mists of our ignorance and illuminating the darkness of our slavery. To-day in the world wide celebration of labor and the myriads which march beneath the red flag of humanity, we realize and rejoice in the strength, the grandeur, the irresistible,

all conquering power which makes itself felt and known in the sweep of the Social Revolution.

The sweep of the Social Revolution. Grand, awe-inspiring, glorious. Old earth has seen aforetimes no such thing. History finds no fitting precedent. Tradition and legend can afford no parallel. The impossible has been achieved. From the humblest of beginnings comes the mightiest of movements, leading to the grandest of consummations. From a people enslaved has risen the most wonderful of all thoughts, the most transcendently, gloriously, beautiful of all ideals—the thought, the ideal of complete and absolute Freedom. Many slaves have struck for their own liberty; many peoples have fought for national or racial ideals. All honor to such. But for us has been reserved the greatest of all tasks, the grandest and noblest of all conflicts—the freeing of humanity. We conquer to liberate, not to bind, to free, not to enslave. We win the battle for all peoples; not for ourselves alone. We save the master from himself and the consequence of his own acts as well as the slave from the master. Truly we are the Proletariat in the infinite magnanimity of our purpose and the grandeur of our cause are become akin to Gods! What powers can withstand us, what obstacles stay our progress? None! Such a cause is irresistible; such an ideal all conquering. We draw all people to us. Our humanity conquers all hearts even as our science conquers all minds. Even our enemies, deserting their own ranks, spring to us.

Enemies? We have none. Who will dare, when the day comes, to call the Liberator of all Humanity enemies, or bear arms against the Saviors of the World? Who will attempt to dam back the majestically onrushing waters of progress or stay, even for a moment, the sweep of the Social Revolution?

THE BRITISH WARSCARE

Vickers, Sons and Maxim, makers of guns and war-materials, is a company capitalized at twenty-six million dollars. This company, if it does not make guns and other things for the destruction of men, cannot pay dividends. If dividends are not paid the owners of the shares will find their stock certificates valueless. Consequently the shareholders have a direct interest in seeing that this company obtains large army contracts for the making of destructive material.

When peace reigns over the world, then the nations have little need for war material. When, however, nation becomes suspicious of nation then there will be great activity in the giving forth of contracts for guns and the other things which companies like Vickers, Sons and Maxim make. Consequently the owners of the shares of Vickers, Sons and Maxim have a direct interest in making Great Britain suspicious of other nations.

Recently in Great Britain a systematic campaign has been undertaken to arouse the British nation against Germany. M. P.'s have gravely announced that Great Britain must arm herself more thoroughly, and the aristocracy have been engaged in arousing the English martial ardor.

Among the shareholders of Vickers, Sons and Maxim are forty-one titled gentlemen and seventeen M. P.'s. The speaker possesses a hundred thousand dollars worth of shares. These gentlemen cannot be altogether disinterested in seeing large army contracts go to the company in which they are interested.

There are other companies, coal companies, shipbuilding companies, steel companies and many others in which British members of Parliament and Lords are interested. Surely these gentlemen have one eye out on their interests when they make such frantic efforts to increase the war appropriations of the budget which will eventually be paid over to themselves in dividends.

There is a big boss down in one of the American cities who says that he can buy all the brains he wants for twenty dollars a week. Capital can command brains, brains cannot command capital. Think this over and you will see that it is true.

THE ORIGIN OF MAY DAY

JULES LAVENNE

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 hours 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 twentieth anniversary of the celebration of Labor Day.

THE CANADIAN LABOR DAY

W. U. COTTON

Our wise Dominion Parliament has fixed Labor day for Canada as a public holiday. Did the Dominion Parliament set his holiday in the fresh springtime when nature is renewing herself and the blood runs gladly in the veins at the thought of the coming of summer? Not at all. This would have been too much honor for labor. Labor Day for Canada has been fixed for the first Monday in September.

The United States Congress has also fixed the American Labor in the autumn. In both countries this was done for the direct purpose of breaking the international solidarity of the labor movement. Happily, labor on this continent has refused to be blinded and the workers are celebrating May Day on their own account.

The capitalists may as well recognize the solidarity of labor, and grant them May Day as their day of rejoicing. Laws are made to curb and thwart the rising proletariat. The workers, however, will soon be too strong to be bound by any purely vexatious laws that a servile Parliament may enact. Labor claims the right to its own holiday and it claims that right for the first day of May.

LABOR'S HOLIDAY

GERALD O'CONNEL DESMOND

Rise from your sleep, my comrade toilers,
Casting your fears away;
Showing your strength to the quaking spoilers,
Is this not Labor's day?
Hang out the flags so the world may see them;
Emblems of brotherhood,
Workers enslaved, we have sworn to free them;
We be of common blood.

Workers of every race and nation,
Hark to our marching feet.
Circling the world with our celebration,
Gathering on square and street.
Not as of old when, with wistful longing,
We bowed around the despot's throne;
Now in the might of our numbers thronging,
Boldly we claim our own.

Surely today is a promise glorious
Showing the time is near
When, in the last hard fight victorious,
Labor's day shall be all the year!
When from the depths of the gloomy prison
Claiming the world in fee,
Labor shall spring like a God new risen,
Spite of their tyranny.

Blind we have been but the spell is ending.
See how we break each chain,
Myriad voices in the war cry blending—
"Nought to lose and a world to gain."
Onward the ranks, then, firm, unfaltering,
Banish each doubt and fear;
Onward the ranks then, the foes are faltering,
Victory hovereth near!

THE TORCH OF LEARNING

The argument has been frequently advanced that a certain class must be raised above the necessities of want in order that it may give its undivided attention to carrying forward the higher things of civilization. Thus in Roman days the patricians had their slaves to do the menial work while they themselves cultivated the arts of oratory, of politics, of state-craft and sometimes of literature and poetry. In Palestine the Levites were set apart and were supported in order that they might carry forward and elaborate the worship of Jehovah. In England the aristocracy and the state priests were under the impression that they should be given the material cream of life in order that they might be fitted to guide the state and the spiritual affairs of the nation.

These privileged classes based their theory of supremacy upon the assumption that civilization was a very tender plant which needed very careful nourishing or it would die, and they gave themselves as the embodiment of the spirit of civilization, that careful nourishing on the purely material plane.

History is filled with the refutation of their theory. Corrupt priests and dissolute noblemen have been the rule, not the exception. The higher the priest, the more corrupt he has been; and the more aristocratic the noble, the more dissolute.

Civilization is something that will take care of itself. The only thing that humanity can do is to assist in giving the individual the freest opportunity to express the powers that is within him. There is the great power of life back of humanity, urging it forward to some unknown height. Any class, whether noble, priest, or capitalist, which strives

to repress the great mass of humanity for its own aggrandizement, no matter on what pretext, is hindering the onward march of civilization.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SPRING

W. U. COTTON

Poets and novelists have long recognized the influence of nature's moods upon the spirit of man. It is a cheap trick of a novelist to make the moods of nature agree with the moods of his heroine. Weddings take place in the sunshine and dark deeds are done when nature is morose.

The beneficent influence of the sun works on the human frame. Nature revivifies all life with recurring springtime. The myths and religions of man have been influenced by the seasons and even the politicians take advantage of nature's changes. The gods have been said to have been born on the twenty-fifth day of December. This is the day on which the sun is first perceived to have turned northward again and to have risen higher in the Southern skies. Bacchus, Apollo and Christ are all said to have been born on this day.

Easter is the time when Christ is said to have risen from the dead. Easter is fixed at the time of the spring equinox when the sun crosses the equator. The Christian festival of Easter derives its name from the Norse Goddess Eastre, whose worship was celebrated at the same time.

In Greek mythology Proserpine, daughter of the goddess of harvests, Demeter, is said to be stolen in the fall by Pluto, King of the Nether World, and to be returned to her mother in the spring. Demeter mourns all winter until her daughter returns. Hence, the Greeks fixed their Eleusinian festivals in the springtime.

In ancient Egypt the people worshipped the bull. The spring equinox, over three thousand years ago, coincided with the zodiacal sign of the bull. With the precession of the equinoxes the equinox later coincided with the constellation of the ram. The Egyptians thereupon began to worship the ram or the he-lamb. This is illustrated by the worship of the paschal lamb given to the Jews by Moses.

In Brittany, as late as the fourteenth century, the peasants sacrificed a virgin and buried her in the ground to appease the powers of nature and to render their fields fruitful.

All through the ages, in myth, religion and politics, the springtime and its influence upon man's nature has been exhibited and been taken advantage of. Queen Victoria's birthday fell on the 24th of May. The 24th of May was made a holiday for the worship of royalty. The patriotic enthusiasm raised in the British Empire on behalf of the reigning house has been more the natural ebullition of springtime vigor than real love for the sovereign. After Queen Victoria's death Edward ascended the throne. He was crafty enough to continue the 24th of May as a holiday. He, or his advisers, had sufficiently studied history to know that a national celebration fixed for his own birthday, which falls on the ninth day of November, would be a dismal failure. Nature is bleak and bare. Spirits of men are low. Man does not celebrate under such conditions.

In Canada Labor Day is in September. The cunning rulers will not give labor a holiday in the spring when men feel glad and joyous. Like the royal purple, which was kept sacred in ancient days for use of royal persons, so the glad May time has been kept sacred for the celebration, and with the Tories actual worship, of British royalty.

Royalty must have the best. Labor can have celebration on a day when the powers of nature have failed. Is it any wonder that triumphant labor revolts and, in the might of its own strength, forestalls puny royalty and snatches, even under the glaring eyes of capitalism and the hostile manoeuvrings of aristocracy, the first glad day of May and takes it for its own?

The interest of the boss is not the interest of the worker. The boss wants to skin the worker and the worker does not want to be skinned. Where is the community of interest?

MAKE A START THIS MAY DAY

ROSCOE A. FILMORE

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 5 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 5 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 crowd 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 socialists' 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.

Everybody's Magazine declares that stock exchange gambling in the United States costs the investors a hundred and eighty-four million dollars a year. Everybody's Magazine wants the investors to free themselves from such a parasitic drain. This is not the workingman's battle. Workingmen don't invest. Their fight is to free themselves from the parasite investors.

It is reported that the German Emperor is extremely worried over the spread of the socialist propaganda among German recruits. The German army may not be such a ferocious instrument of war as the capitalists of Great Britain would like us to believe.

A big salary, under modern conditions is an almost inevitable sign that the man who is getting it is crooked.