

Twelve-Hour Day Rests on Brutal Dictatorship of Employing Class

By JAY LOVESTONE

Steel is All-Powerful Today

The Two-Shift system of coining blood into profits rests on a system of unrelenting recourse to savage terrorism. Matched with the wanton outrages of the American Monarch, Steel, the tyranny of the feudal overlords of yesterday would blush with shame.

The Twelve-Hour Working Day is maintained by a highly organized system of force and violence—the employing class Government, municipal, State, and Federal. Every steel town and almost every official, church, and newspaper in these towns are the outright property of the Steel Buccaneers. Only thru Black Cossackism and merciless oppression are the workers held in the abject slavery of the inhuman 12-Hour Day. From their own bitter experiences thousands of steel workers have come to believe that Government is their bosses' rule of blood and iron. A mailed fist policy goes hand in hand with the long working day. Bayonets buttress the powerful dictatorship of steel and profits. A vicious spy system has its deadly tentacles creeping thru every walk of the Steel worker's life.

The union of Steel and Government is today an open, ugly fact. The Democratic President Wilson had Gary act as the representative of the public at his first Industrial Peace Conference. The Republican Harding, only echoes the sentiments and opinions of his Field Marshal of the American employing class.

Mellon, our Secretary of the Treasury, a heavy donor to the Republican campaign funds, is a big steel owner and is the Steel Trust's agent plenipotentiary in the Cabinet. Steel is all-powerful and makes and un-makes laws. Speaking of the Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act which gave

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Brutal Dictatorship of Bosses Backs 12-Hour Day

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the Steel Trust a total bonus of over two billion dollars, Senator Underwood said: "I know this iron and steel schedule and I know that it is a fraud and a shame upon the people of this country."

Government Is Responsible for Continuation of 12-Hour Day.

Considering the why and wherefore of the persistence of the 12-Hour Day and the Seven-Day week, the Interchurch World investigators found that: "The Government as much as the Steel Corporation is to blame." The same authorities reported that one of the chief causes for the loss of the 1919 strike was the support accorded the Steel Magnates "by Governmental agencies and by public opinion." In this sense it is easy to understand that in the strike "the foundations of the United States Government were involved."

But perhaps the most imposing evidence of the relationship between the Steel Trust and the Government is to be found in the fact that the Chairman of the Senate Committee investigating the Steel Strike posted to Mr. Gary that he himself was in favor of the Open Shop. Tersely put, the basic feature of the Government's whole policy is thus shown in the following from the Interchurch report:

"In the twenty-eight pages of the Senate Committee's Report on the Steel Strike much space is devoted to the need for Americanization. Only a few lines were devoted to the 12-Hour Day."

"And this Americanization has meant to the Steel workers only gruesome suffering and unrestrained terrorism!"

Local Government Tyranny Rampant in Steel Area

As soon as the steel workers went into the struggle against the 12-Hour Day the Government—Municipal, State, and National—leaped to the defence of the employers. Describing this situation confronting the strikers the Interchurch investigators reported that:

"Local magistrates, police authorities, etc., around Pittsburgh were frequently steel mill officials. In other cases steel mill officials exercised police authority without the excuse of having been previously elected to public office. For example, besides Sheriff Haddock of Allegheny County whose brother was superintendent of an American Sheet and Tin Plate plant (Corporation subsidiary), Mayor Crawford of Duquesne was the brother of the President of the McKeesport Tin Plate Co.; President Moon of the Borough of Homestead was chief of the mechanical department of the Homestead Mills; Burgess Lincoln of Munhall was a department superintendent in the same mill. The Burgess of Clairton was a mill official, etc., etc. When a striker was taken before the mill official public-officials he was likely to suspect connections between his fate and the steel company's desires. In many other cases officials of the mills only, personally, gave the orders for arrests, and the decisions whether the arrested should be jailed or not, generally after learning whether the striker would return to work or not."

"The charges on which strikers were arraigned before local magistrates, then imprisoned or fined, were often never recorded and never learned by the prisoners. Recorded formal specifications included 'stopping men from going to work,' 'cursing' (the State police or deputies), 'abusing,' 'refusing to obey orders' (to move on, etc.), 'going out of his house during daylight,' 'laughing at the police,' 'throwing strike cards out on the street,' 'smiling at State police.' Fines ran from \$10 to \$50 or \$600. Imprisonment terms ran up to months. Arrested men were frequently taken, not to jail, but inside the steel mill and held there. The charges of beatings, clubbings, etc., often substantiated by Doctors and eye-witnesses' affidavits, were endless and monotonous; in most communities the only public official to appeal to turned out to be another steel mill official."

The terrible odds overwhelming the workers in their fight against the Two-Shift System is thus brought home forcefully in the following from the answer of the Strike Committee to Wilson's request for a postponement of the strike:

"Thru the efforts of the representatives of the Steel Industry, officials in various localities have denied the men free assembly and free speech. Instances are too numerous where meetings have been suppressed, men arrested, tried on unfounded charges, excessive bail required, and cruel punishment imposed, all without warrant in law and justice."

"As one of many examples, in the City of McKeesport a meeting held by the men within their constitutional rights was broken up and men arrested and thrown into jail, charged with riot, and held to the excessive bail of \$5,000 each, while one of the hirelings of the steel industry, arrested for the murder of a woman speaker at Brackenridge, Pa., is being held under bail of about \$2,500. Another patent example is Hammond, Indiana, where four defenseless union men were charged upon and killed by hired detectives of the steel industry, and witnesses on behalf of their survivors have been so intimidated and maltreated that the truth of the killing was suppressed."

"Guns and cannon have been planted in mills, and highly charged electric wires have been strung around their premises."

"Armed men in large numbers are going about intimidating not only the workers but, in many communities, anyone showing the slightest sympathy with the men."

White Terror in Pennsylvania

Regarding the ruthless suppression of the steel workers in Pennsylvania the Interchurch investigators had this to say:

"In Western Pennsylvania the civil rights of free speech and as-

sembly were abrogated without just cause, both for individuals and labor organizations. Personal rights of strikers were violated by the State Constabulary and Sheriff's deputies."

"Federal authorities, in some cases, acted against groups of workmen on the instigation of employees of steel companies. In many places in Western Pennsylvania, community authorities and institutions were subservient to the maintenance of one corporation's anti-union policies."

Typical of the inestimable aid given by the Government to the Steel Trust is the following conditions portrayed by the Senate Committee:

"In the Pittsburgh district, however, meetings have been prohibited from the time the campaign for organization started. In McKeesport and Duquesne, several months before the strike was called, the organizers were forbidden to hold meetings of any sort in halls within the city or on vacant lots anywhere in the vicinity. Appeal was made without avail to the Mayor of the city and the Governor of Pennsylvania. In Clairton meetings were held on Sundays for several weeks prior to the strike, but on September 21 the sheriff proclaimed that there should not be any meetings of any kind anywhere."

Shedding further light on the plight of the workers, the Monthly Labor Review for December, 1919, said:

"There were 15,000 men on strike in Pittsburgh proper. The mayor of the city permitted these men to hold meetings in their own Labor Temple which accommodated only 2,000 men and one other place which the strikers maintained was inaccessible because of the distance from the strike district. Permits to hold meetings were refused at Braddock and Rankin. In towns where meetings were permitted it was stipulated that there should be no speeches in foreign languages. The union organizers were not permitted to pass handbills containing a notice of meetings even tho such meetings were to be held on private property with the consent of the owner. Not more than two persons were allowed to congregate on the streets at one time. Newspapers refused to publish notices of union meetings. In some instances in which halls had been rented by the union organizers notices were found posted, on the night of the meeting, declaring the halls closed by the order of the Board of Health. All owners of halls were instructed not to rent them without a permit from city authorities. The authorities, usually the sheriff or the mayor, refused to grant the permit."

The whole situation on this section of the Strike Army's front is thus summed up by the Interchurch Report:

"Free elections were customarily impossible in steel towns in Western Pennsylvania due to clearly understood manipulations by the steel company officials who were public officials."

"That is, democratic practices as well as constitutional rights are decisively modified by the Steel Companies in Western Pennsylvania and the 'modifications' are for the purpose of defeating labor organizations." During the strike violations of personal rights and personal liberty were wholesale; men were arrested without warrants, imprisoned without charges, their homes invaded without legal process, magistrates' verdicts were rendered frankly on the basis of whether the striker would go back to work or not."

Military Rule in Indiana

In Indiana the conditions were not different from those in Pennsylvania, as can be seen from the following despatch appearing in the New York Times of October 16, 1919:

"The first outdoor meeting of the strikers since the arrival of the troops in Gary was held this afternoon by permission of Colonel Mapes, who sat on the speakers' platform during the meeting. Secret service men were in the crowd of nearly 3,000 strikers, and soldiers were stationed on the outskirts. Near the park machine guns were held in readiness."

On the developments in this strike area the Interchurch Report said:

"General Wood declared that 'the army would be neutral.' He established rules in regard to picketing. These rules were so interpreted and carried out as to result in breaking up the picket-line. One picket, for example, would be permitted at a certain spot; if the striker who came up to relieve the picket, stopped to converse with him and to receive reports and instructions, both strikers would be arrested. Delays and difficulties would attend the release of these men from jail or 'bull pen.' The picket line thus dwindled and its disappearance signalled to the Gary workers that the strike was breaking. Army officers sent soldiers to arrest union officers in other trades, for example, for threatening to call a strike on a local building operation. Workers thruout the city believed that the Federal Government opposed them and that the regulars would stay as long as the steel workers remained on strike. The army was not withdrawn until the strike was declared off."

Interlocking System of Company Spies and Federal Agents

In many instances the spies of the Steel Trust are the same ones who are agents of the Department of Justice. In other instances they work hand in glove in keeping the workers chained to the 12-Hour Day. Apropos of this interlocking system of slave-driving, the Interchurch investigators showed:

"The Commission's investigators, asking the officers of a company in the Pittsburgh district for information concerning their machinery for ascertaining their workers' needs, encountered this: 'Bringing in the labor file.' The labor file, the company's basis for a labor policy, consisted of the secret service report of various detectives and of 'labor agencies.' Here were hundreds of misspelled reports of 'under-cover-men,' 'operatives X, Y, and Z,' contracts for their services, official letters exchanged between companies giving lists of strikers, commonly known as 'black lists.' In some instances original pencilled scraps of paper contained secret denunciations of workers, which denunciations, raised to the dignity of typed documents, were then circulated to other companies, and even to the Federal Department of Justice. The names of independent concerns and of subsidiary companies of the Steel Corporation appear on letterheads showing how this information or misinformation was passed along."

The Commission further reported that:

"In McKeesport in one raid 79 workmen were taken, three were detained and one on final examination was held by the Federal authorities. Federal officers testified that the denunciations which had led to these arrests were made by plant detectives or 'under-cover-men' of the steel companies, many of them sworn in as Sheriff's deputies during the strike. In the Pittsburgh district raids and arrests for Bolshevism were made on the sole complaint of company 'under-cover-men'."

"These company spy-systems carry right thru the United States Government. Federal immigration authorities testified to the Commission that raids and arrests for 'radicalism,' etc., were made, especially in the Pittsburgh district, on the denunciation and secret reports of the steel company's 'under-cover-men,' and the prisoners turned over to the Department of Justice. The Monessen labor file enabled the student to follow one such paper thru to the Government. It is given here as offering light upon the question why many workmen, especially steel workers, have come to suspect that the Government, AS GOVERNMENT, has taken sides in industrial warfare; has taken sides against striking working men."

"The testimony of a Federal officer of long official experience, made at a hearing of the Commission of Inquiry in November in Pittsburgh was: '90 per cent of all the radicals arrested and taken into custody were reported by one of the large corporations, either of the steel or coal industry. I mean by that, that these corporations are loaded up with what they call 'under-cover' men who must earn their salaries, and they go around and get into these organizations and report the cases to the detectives for the large companies. The detectives in turn report to the Chief of Police of the city. Generally, the chiefs of police in these small cities around Pittsburgh were placed there by the Corporations. The corporation orders an organization raided by the police department, the members are taken into custody, thrown into the police station, and the Department of Justice is notified. They send a man to examine them to see if there are any extreme radicals or anarchists among them.'"

Conclusion

The 12-Hour Day is still in force because the workers have not been able to compel the Steel Trust to drop it, largely because of the unlimited aid rendered to the Steel bosses by the Government. The entire cordial between the Steel Trust and the Government runs into every ramification of the Governing agencies of the country—Municipal, State, and Federal.

When the strike deputations of workers sought aid from Attorney General Palmer his only answer was a commendation of a "patriotic" society's effort to run labor "agitators" out of Pennsylvania. Thus wrote the Attorney General on November 26, 1919: "It is a pity that more patriotic organizations do not take action similar to that of your order."

According to the Interchurch Commission the attitude of the Government towards the struggle of the workers against the 12-Hour Day could be summed up in these words: "Civil peace could be preserved only by interference with the existence of ordinary civil liberties on the part of a large proportion of the population."

How deadly effective a strike-breaking policy this practice of the Government is, is proven by the following estimate of the Senate Committee:

"This denial of free speech and assemblage had an undeniable influence on the strike. In Duquesne, for example, where meetings were prohibited, approximately 5 per cent of the men were reported to be organized. In Cleveland and Lackawanna, where the men were allowed to meet, approximately 80 per cent were reported to be organized, and the mills practically closed down when the strike was called."

No worker should or can take seriously Harding's last plea in behalf of the abolition of the 12-Hour Day. The very reply of Gary accepting the President's plan to institute the 8-Hour Day "when there is a surplus of labor available" unmasks the joint hypocrisy and fraud of the promises of the Chief Executive of the country and the Chief Executive of the Steel Trust. On this basis, the President has actually not gone one bit further than the Iron and Steel Institute. Harding has only lightened his burden of apologies for the coming campaign and saved the Republican Party the Steel campaign contributions.

Three Proletarian Writers Praise

"The Government-Strikebreaker"

By JAY LOVESTONE

UPTON SINCLAIR

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write as follows after reading a copy of this new, bold book on the working class struggle in America.

"It is one of those books which brings to mind the ancient formula, 'I would like to be able to distribute a million copies.' It is a most useful collection of the facts of the use by the capitalist class of the forces of government, in place of their own hired strike-breaking agencies. I will help to pass the word on to the leaders of labor in this country that here is a mine of information which they should possess and pass on to the workers."—Upton Sinclair.

"I am very much pleased with 'The Government-Strikebreaker' and consider it a distinctive contribution to American labor literature."—William F. Dunne, Editor, Butte, Mont., Bulletin.

"I have read 'The Government-Strikebreaker' with more than a keen interest. I wish I were in a position to place a copy in the hands of every American worker, but since I am not I will ask you to send me five copies for which I will send check."—Duncan McDonald, Editor, Illinois Industrial Review.

Men who lead the American working class and workers who do their own thinking and draw their own conclusions appreciate this book, this mine of authoritative information on the government of the U. S. A. and its official and unofficial actions during the most critical labor situation of a decade.

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