

Expose of American Coolie System of Labor Shows How 12-Hour Day Degrades Workers

By JAY LOVESTONE

Author of "The Government—STRIKEBREAKER"

In the production of steel American capitalism has shown its ugliest brutality. This industry epitomizes the depths of degradation to which workers can be forced under the rule of the employing class.

"The United States has the largest, richest and most conveniently located deposits of iron ore, copper, lead and zinc in the world, and coal for their reduction." Besides, "A comparison of

(Continued on Page Three)

Clothes of Steel Workers Catch Fire as They Toil before Blast Furnaces

(Continued from Page One)

English and American government statistics shows that the average American wage earner produces from two to three times more output in money value than the English wage-earner, and uses from two to three times more horse power." According to a study of the three-shift system in the production of steel made by the International Labor Office of the League of Nations the United States is the only great steel producing country in the world where the 12-hour working day prevails. Not only Europe, but even Canada, South Africa, Japan and India run most of their steel mills on a three-shift basis. The great Tata mills in India have adopted the Eight-Hour Day. Only in China where there isn't much steel produced do we find the two-shift system.

And the sub-committee of the Federated American Engineering Societies, whom Harding called "our foremost organization of American industrial skill," after an intensive study has found that: "The principle of the 12-hour shift is a survival of the time when it was the custom to work men long hours, and when the mechanical side of the iron and steel industry was less perfectly developed, so that periods of an enforced idleness of the mill and the men occurred much more frequently than at present."

In the diary of a furnace worker, Charles Rumford Walker, who was a first lieutenant in the American Army, we find this condition vividly described.

Said a Scotch melter to Walker: "Now in the old country, a man can have a bit of fun. Picnics, a little singing and rinking, and the like. What can a man do here? We work eight hours in Scotland. They do work eight hours in France, in Italy and Germany—all the steel mills work eight hours, except in this bloody-free country... I'll tell you there will come a time when Gary and all the other big fellers will have to work it themselves—no one else will."

How Steel Trust Reduces Hours

As early as 1912 the stockholders of the Steel Corporation voted against the 12-hour day in principle. One of the principal demands of the strikers in 1919 was the abolition of the two-shift system. So great has been the demand for the introduction of an Eight-Hour Day in steel mills that even Gary has repeatedly promised to look into the matter.

On May 18, 1922, President Harding wired and entertained 40 or 50 of the leading steel barons at a White House Dinner. It was at this royal dinner that Gary, the Chief Executive of the United States Steel Corporation yielded to Harding, the Chief Executive of the United States Government, and appointed a committee of the American Iron and Steel Institute to investigate the practicability of running the whole industry on a three-shift basis.

As many expected, this Committee found it impracticable to introduce the Eight-Hour Day at present. This Committee was simply pursuing the same tactics and manoeuvres that Gary has been for over a decade.

Testifying before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, investigating the 1919 Steel Strike, Gary had the brazen effrontery to say that the Steel Corporation was "reducing these hours from year to year."

As a matter of fact the hours of labor in the steel industry have been increasing and increasing steadily. In 1910 the Blast Furnace men worked 78.7 hours per week and the Open Hearth Men 75.3 hours. In 1919 they worked 82.1 hours and 76.4 hours per week respectively on an average.

And in its investigation of the Great Steel Strike the Commission of Inquiry of the Interchurch World Movement proved beyond the faintest shadow of a doubt that "In the past decade the United States Steel Corporation has increased the percentage of its employees subject to the 12-Hour Day."

This Report shows that the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics has found that in 57 of the 79 occupations of the steel industry the weekly hours of labor increased from

Foster, Manley and Others Urge Support of 'The Worker' Fight Against 12-Hour Day

The campaign of "The Worker" is receiving the support of all militants throughout the entire labor movement, no matter in what industry. Some of the views expressed and the endorsements given are as follows:

FOSTER HITS INCOMPETENCE OF GOMPERS' BUREAUCRACY

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER, Secretary, Organization Committee, 1919 Steel Strike, now Secretary, Trade Union Educational League.—The 12-hour day is a monument, not particularly to the heartlessness of Judge E. H. Gary, but to the stupidity and incompetence of the Gompers' bureaucracy, which has continuously stood in the way of the organization of the steel workers. The unanimous vote of the Iron and Steel Institute, in New York City, declaring for the continuance of the 12-hour day in the steel mills, should be a challenge to all labor to help the steel workers organize their forces. All possible support should be given "The Worker" in its campaign, not only to unmask the evils in the steel industry and reply to the Gary arguments for the long day, but also to develop organization sentiment among these most oppressed of American workers. The "right to organize" and the shorter workday were the two big demands of the four-months' strike of the steel workers in 1919. These will be living demands until they have been won.

STEEL INDUSTRY RICHEST IN THE WORLD

ALEXANDER HOWAT, Former President, Kansas Coal Miners.—The fight against the 12-hour day ought to be carried on through the whole labor movement. The steel industry is the richest in the world, but Gary and his fellow-profits hypocritically claim they are not able to wipe out the long day. No worker, more than the steel workers, are entitled to the shorter workday. All coal miners should support the campaign of "THE WORKER" against the 12-hour day, if for no other reason than that it will be much harder to establish the six-hour day in the coal mines, if the 12-hour day prevails in the steel mills.

LET ALL WORKERS HELP

THOMAS MYERS COUGH, Secretary-Treasurer, International Progressive Miners' Conference.—Surely all coal miners, as well as workers in all other industries, should get behind "THE WORKER" in its campaign for the abolition of the 12-hour day in the steel industry.

WORKERS MUST DEPEND ON THEIR OWN PRESS

JOSEPH MANLEY, Organizer, 1919 Steel Strike, now Eastern Organizer, Trade Union Educational League.—Not only every steel worker, but every man, woman and child who labors, should support the attack of "The Worker" on the 12-hour day in the steel mills. Judge Gary got his case before the nation thru the capitalist press. We must all support our press to get the fight for labor, for the "right to organize" and the shorter workday in the steel mills, properly presented to all American workers.

MUSSOLINI AMBASSADOR HERE APPLAUDS GARY.

ANTONIO PRESI, Editor, "Alba Nuova," Italian Weekly.—Our Italian weekly, "Alba Nuova" (The New Dawn), is glad to co-operate with "The Worker" in its attack on Gary's 12-hour day. Workers of other nationalities will be interested in knowing that the Italian Fascist ambassador to this country, Prince Gelasio Caetani, was not only present at the gathering of the Steel and Iron Institute, at the Hotel Commodore, where Gary proclaimed the continuance of the 12-hour day, but that he applauded Gary's remarks and made a speech of his own, denouncing the Communists of the United States, and the American Communist press in the Italian language. We have an anti-12-hour day broadside in the current issue of our paper, containing an open letter addressed to Prince Caetani. A copy of this "open letter" has been mailed to him at Washington, and Italian workers in this country will be very much interested in what kind of a reply he will make.

HARDY SAYS GARY'S STATEMENTS ARE LIES.

GEORGE HARDY, Veteran of the International Labor Movement.—Let all who toil join "The Worker" in its fight on the 12-hour day, because the long-day in the steel industry brings increased competition in the whole labor market. It reduces wages even for the 12-hour day. It is the growing desire for organization, under the slogan of "Organize the Unorganized," that Gary and his fellow-steel magnates are chiefly concerned in combatting. Gary's statement that the workers themselves are in favor of facing the heat of the steel trust blast furnaces more than eight hours each day is a lie in the face of the demands made in past struggles. The right to organize and the shorter workday is the first step toward workers' emancipation.

a few minutes up to 14 hours in 1919 as compared to 1914.

Show Great Extent of 12-Hour Day

In a report of the U. S. Department of Labor, published May 24, 1922, we are given the latest facts and figures about the extent to which the steel workers are enslaved 12 hours. These figures, indicating the proportion of the following classes of men working on the two-shift system, are for the year 1920:

Blast Furnace men.....	63%
Bessemer Mills.....	75%
Open Hearth Mills.....	50%
Puddling Mills.....	20%
Blooming Mills.....	60%
Rail Mills.....	60%
Bar Mills.....	50%
Sheet and Tin Plate.....	10%

Less than 25 per cent of the steel workers are allowed to work under 60 hours a week "altho in most industries 60 hours was regarded as the maximum working week" over a decade ago. About half of those working 12 hours a day work seven days a week.

It has been pointed out in Bulletin No. 265, of the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, that the per cent of men averaging 12 hours a day in the steel industry is over twice that of those in the chemical, nearly five times of those in the anthracite fields, eight times those in the rubber industry and almost 25 times those working 12 hours a day in the bituminous coal mines.

Even according to Mr. Gary's own testimony, before the Senate Com-

mittee, that 69,000 men are employed 12 hours a day, it would follow that the daily lives of over 350,000 men and women are affected by the 12-hour day. But Mr. Gary gave us a rather low estimate of 36 per cent of his employees working 12 hours a day. On the basis of a minimum of 50 per cent being subject to the 12-hour working day, it would be far more accurate to say that over 500,000 men, women and children are suffering from all the iniquities and degradations inherent in this brutalizing working day.

What 12-Hour Day Means to Worker

What is the 12-hour day really like? What does it mean to the worker?

In his diary as a furnace worker, Lieut. Walker gives us the following picture: "It's hot—temperature, 150 or 160 when you throw your shovel in—and lively work for back and legs. Everybody douches his face and hands with water to cool off, and sits down for 20 minutes. Making back-wall has affinities with stoking. Only it's hotter while it lasts. The day is made up of jobs like these—shovelling manganese at tap-time, 'making bottom', bringing up mud and dolomite in wheelbarrows for fixing the spout-hauling fallen bricks out of the furnace.

"They vary in arduousness: all would be marked 'heavy work' in job specifications. They are all 'hard-handed' jobs, and some of them done in high heat. Between run intervals from a few minutes to two or three hours. From some of the jobs it is imperative to catch your breath for a spell. Sledging a hard spout, making hot back-wall, knocking a gang out temporarily for 15 or 20 minutes: no man could do these things steadily without interruption.

"And none of the spells, it should be noticed, are 'your own time'! You are under strain for 12 hours. Nerves and will are the Company's; the whole shift—whether the muscles in your hands and feet move or are still. And the existence of the long day makes possible unrelieved labor, hard and hot, the whole turn of 14 hours, if there is need for it."

Similar pictures are given in the diaries written by American Carnegie Steel workers. We submit the following comments extracted from these diaries by the Inter-Church Commission:

"Hours on night-shift begin at 5:30; work for 12 hours during the night except Saturday, when it is 17 hours, until Sunday noon, with one hour out for breakfast; the following Monday ten hours; total from 5:30 Monday to 5:30 Monday, 87 hours, the normal week.

"The Carnegie steel worker works

87 hours out of 168 hours in the week. Of the remaining 81 he sleeps seven hours per day; total 49 hours. He eats in another 14; walks or travels in the street car four hours; dresses, shaves, tends furnace, undresses, etc., seven hours. His one reaction is—What the Hell!—the universal text accompanying the 12-hour day."

Job of the Third Helper: "The third helper fills large bags with coal to throw into the ladle at tap time; easy to burn your face off. Helps drill a 'bad' hole at tap time, work of the most exhausting kind, also must shovel dolomite into ladle molten steel. This is the hottest job and certainly the most exposed to minor burns. Temperatures around 180 degrees, but it takes only four or five minutes. Nearly every tap-time leaves three or four burns on the neck, face, hands or legs. It is usually necessary to extinguish little fires in your clothing. Altogether not so bad as heavier lifting parts of the furnace job which are more hateful, together with the monotonous exposures."

A Stove Gang Worker: "Hardest job is 'poking her out', ramming out the flue dust in checker work at top of stove. Large pieces of canvas tied over feet and legs to keep heat from coming up the legs; two pairs of gloves needed, handkerchiefs cover all head except the eyes. Three minutes to 10 minutes at a turn are the limit for time in the chamber at top of stove; very hard to breathe."

Job of Stove Helper: "Learner's tender job following stove tender; manipulates large, clumsy valves, operations if performed in wrong order, stove tender will break his stove and kill himself. Unless tremendous pressure is first 'blown off' the opening of another valve will blow the opener into bits. Hours: day shift, 10 hours; night 13 hours."

This is the way Gary translates his Christianity into the every day lives of the workers. This is Gary's GOLDEN RULE for the Steel Workers.

Many Casualties of the 12-Hour Day

Not all workers are able to stand Gary's RULE OF GOLD AND RUIN. Says the Federated American Engineering Societies report: "In some department of the iron and steel industry 12 hours work has been found too long for the men, and it was customary to have 'spell hands' to relieve them at intervals."

And Lieut. Walker further shows that: "Even the strongest of the Czech-Slovaks, Serbs and Croates, who work in the American Steel Furnaces, cannot keep it up (the 84-hour week), year after year, without substantial physical injury."

Mr. Walker went on to say: "Another feature that impresses when you actually work under the system is the sleep you get is troubled, at best. You are compelled to go to bed one week by day, the next by night. By about Friday, I found my body getting itself adjusted to day sleep; but the change, of course, was due again Monday... The body will adjust itself to continued day-sleeping. I know: but apparently not to the weekly shifts, from day sleep to night sleep, customary in steel."

The investigations made for the United States Public Health Service by such experts as Josephine Goldmark and Mary V. Hopkins prove conclusively that fatigue caused by overwork is greatly responsible for accidents among workers. In their investigation of the accident records of an 8- and 10-hour day plant these experts found that in the 8-hour factory there were considerably fewer accidents.

And in his address delivered May 17, 1912, at the annual banquet of the American Iron and Steel Institute, Dr. Thomas Darlington, then the secretary of the Welfare Committee of the Institute, said: "Taking of the principal (steel) towns visited by the Institute, excluding the large cities, the death rates averaged 19 per 1000—easily double of what it should be and at least one-third more than the rate of some cities of larger size."

The death rate for the entire registration area was 14.1 per 1000. For the same year B. S. Warren, Surgeon, and Edgar Sydenstricker, of the U. S. Public Health Service, found the following death rates in typical steel towns:

Johnstown, Pa.....	16.9
Shenandoah, Pa.....	18.9
McKees Rocks, Pa.....	16.9
Braddock, Pa.....	23.2

Their report, Public Health Bulletin No. 76, goes on to say that: "As it is generally recognized that mortality returns in localities of this type are more or less incomplete, it is safe to say that the rates cited are lower than more thorough and complete vital statistics would show."

In the year 1916-1917, while the U. S. Steel Corporation was making a net profit of \$888,931,511, the workers paid in killed and wounded 80,427. For the period 1913-1919, the steel workers earned, in total undivided surplus alone, \$2,239,986,569.84 for Gary's corporation at the expense of 198,383 disabled, crippled and killed. In the decade 1910-1919, according to Bulletin No. 298, of the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the steel workers suffered the following casualties: Killed, 3255; permanently disabled, 9,549; temporarily disabled, 412,837. Thus there were a total of 425,686 workers disabled, crippled and killed in ten years while piling up billions of dollars in dividends and undivided surpluses.

Let Steel Mills Speak!

The letters are beginning to pour in from the steel workers. The steel mills are beginning to speak. By the time this issue of "The Worker" reaches our readers, the flood should have taken on the proportion of an avalanche. The voice from the steel mills must be heard.

We will begin publishing some of these letters in the next week's issue of "The Worker." But we want to get more letters. Read this week's installment of the exposure of the 12-hour day. Perhaps you have something to add. How is the 12-hour day injurious, physically, mentally and morally to the steel workers? We want you to answer that for yourself. Write down your answer. Send it in.

We will not use your names, workers in the Steel Mills. But we do want your stories. Send them to "The Worker," 799 Broadway, New York City, no matter what your nationality, no matter in what language you write. We will have your letters translated. But if it is easier for you and your message to any of the publications co-operating with "The Worker" in the campaign, here is a partial list:

Spravednost (Czech-Slovakian), 1825 S. Loomis St., Chicago.
Kestepain (Finnish), 34 Belmont St., Worcester, Mass.
Tyomies (Finnish), Box 553, Superior, Wis.
Volkszeitung (German), 15 Spruce St., New York City.
Elbre (Hungarian), 33 First St., New York City.
Alba Nuova (Italian), 80 E. 11th St., New York City.
The Slovenian (Jugo Slav), 383 First Ave., Milwaukee, Wis.
Detseptarea (Rumanian), P. O. Box 55, Detroit, Mich.
Novy Mir (Russian), 208 E. 12th St., New York City.
Rovnost Ludo (Jugo Slav), 1510 W. 13th St., New York City.
Ukrainian Daily News (Ukrainian), 502 E. 11th St., New York City.
Laisve (Lithuanian), 455 Grand St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Glos Robotniczy (Polish), 1689 Michigan Ave., Detroit, Mich.
Uus Ilm (Estonian), 1787 First Ave., New York City.
Voice of the Worker (Greek), 685 Sixth Ave., New York City.

Steel workers! This is your fight! Get into it!

The Overworked Suffer Most

It is especially interesting to note the correlation between the accident frequency rates and the length of working hours. Bulletin No. 289 shows that 29 per cent of the blast furnace men, 17 per cent of the open hearth men and 12 per cent of those employed in the Bessemer Mills were working 84 hours per week in 1920. The number of accidents is directly dependent on the length of the working hours and the common laborers who suffer the most from the 12-Hour Working Day are those who pay the highest price in physical injuries. This truth is thus forcefully brought home by Mr. Lucian W. Chaney who directed this investigation:

"Common labor occupies in these mills the same position in respect to frequency of accidents that has been noted before. The frequency rate is 220.5 cases per 1,000,000 hours' exposure as against 57.6 cases for miscellaneous occupations. This unfortunate preeminence of the common laborer is found in each of the cause groups in which it was possible to isolate such workers."

The Steel Trust has been working overtime boasting of safety devices and welfare work. The emptiness of these boasts and the fraud of this propaganda are made plain by the 1918 report of the "Compensable" accidents for the State of Pennsylvania which shows that of the total number of accidents the metals and metal-products industries constituted 31.78 per cent. Thus the accident rate among steel workers was exceeded only by that of the mine and quarries which were 33.12 per cent of the quota.

At the hearings of the Senate Committee, a worker put this situation in the following light:

THE CHAIRMAN: "What mill are you in?"

MR. COLSON: "The bloom mill at the steel works at Donora, Pa., and so far as safety conditions up there are concerned, a man has no chance, because if he ever slips, his hands are greasy, and there is no rail, and there is no chance for your life, unless you jump out of the window and kill yourself."

Yet, Gary had the gall to tell the Senate Committee that there was little hazard and difficulty in the occupations of the Steel Industry. Before this Committee Gary spoke of pushing buttons to open doors as an example of the ease characterizing the labor of a steelworker, but Gary's own practice of refusing to hire workers after they have reached the age of forty gives the lie to such advertising on his part. "Old age at forty," that's what it is to the steelworkers coining their blood into fabulous dividends for the handful financial lords and industrial tyrants of Wall Street.

The 12-Hour Day Chains The Worker To Ignorance

The effect of fatigue on the intellect of the worker is most detrimental. In "Fatigue and Efficiency" Josephine Goldmark quotes the following from the Report of the N. Y. State Factory Inspector:

"Long hours of hard manual labor destroy the mental appetite in almost every instance. The man is unfitted for reading or study—he is physically tired and his intellect is inactive. The drain upon his vitality has been continuous and heavy, and he most needs sleep in order to recuperate. This continues indefinitely—each succeeding day being but a repetition of the former."

And in his diary, Lieut. Walker showed:

"That the complaint was not so much that there wasn't some bit of an evening before you, but that there was no untired time when you were good for anything—work or play. When you had sat about for perhaps an hour after supper, you recovered enough to crave recreation. A movie was the very peak to which you could stir yourself. There were men who went further. I know a young Croat in Pittsburgh who attended night-school after the 12-hour day. But he is the only one of all the steelworkers I met who attempted such heroism. And he had to stop after a few weeks."

Testifying before the Senate Committee, Father Kazinski very ably exposed the damaging effect of the two-

worker was made in 1917 by the British Ministry of Munitions. In its report: "Industrial Efficiency and Fatigue" dealing with the health of munition workers, the investors plainly say: "The shorter the time for which they, the workers, are shut up in the factories the better their chances of health and happiness."

In conclusion, let us again turn to the eloquent plea of Father Kazinski before the Senate Committee investigating the Steel Strike:

"The men are worked from 10 to 13 hours a day. The conditions under which they are living are bad for America. The housing conditions are terrible. The work conditions, the hours of work, are absolutely impossible, and I think that it tends to make the men become disgusted with the country, and they will say, 'Well, let us go back to the old country; perhaps it is going to be better than it is for us here!' There is no hope for them bettering their conditions for they work from the time the whistle begins to blow in the morning until they are whistled out at six o'clock in the evening."

Another Article next week.

Koo-Koos Defy New State Law

That aggregation of bigots and degenerates calling itself the Ku Klux Klan, trying to enforce the insane criminality upon the United States, has openly come out in defiance of the law of the state of New York. Thru some method of reasoning, comprehensible only to their perverted minds, this crew, while professing to uphold the traditional and sacred institutions of "Americanism" openly advocates law-breaking and the right to organize a secret, conspiratorial society for the purpose of imposing their will by force on the rest of the population.

A new state law requires all oath-bound organizations to file their membership lists with the secretary of state. The grand chief Hell-Cat of the Koo-Koos, hurls defiance at the state and loudly proclaims his lawlessness.

The question that arises in the minds of Communists is: Will the State of New York tolerate this defiance or will it throw the Koo-Koos in jail wholesale?

It will be interesting to observe the action of the state authorities when the next night-gown parade of these half-baked is staged.

Tyranny in the Labor Movement

From the Contra Costa County (Calif.) Labor Journal, at Richmond, Calif.

We feel ourselves obliged to come out flatly against the position taken by Samuel Gompers with reference to the Seattle Central Labor Council. We oppose all dual union movements and believe that thru the American Federation of Labor alone will the workers be led out of economic bondage. We would do all that we can to promote harmony within the ranks of the A. F. of L.

But when Brother Gompers orders a central labor body to renounce its opinions on such vital questions as the recognition of Russia and independent political action for labor—simply because these opinions do not coincide with those of Brother Gompers and the Executive Council—it is high time to object, and we believe that the readers of this paper will join us in protest.

We agree with Wallace Watson, editor of the Bakersfield Labor Journal:

"Brother Gompers is so proud of his non-partisan alliance, which has produced a sack of spuds to the acre that he will not tolerate that which the progressive labor unions of other countries have adopted with success. With central labor councils all over the country and several international voting for a labor party, it looks as though Sam were inviting trouble and disruption..."

To all of which we give a hearty amen. Freedom of speech within the American Federation of Labor is as essential as freedom of speech in the country at large. If the Seattle laborites want Russia recognized, just as the International Association of Machinists wants that government

recognized, then they should have the privilege of convincing the remainder of the labor movement of the wisdom of their policy. If they think that our only salvation is thru a labor party it should be no crime for them to advocate it. Only by free interplay of opinion within our ranks can the American Federation of Labor be kept a flexible body—steadily moving forward. To excommunicate large sections that hold heterodox opinions means disruption. It means more adherents for the I. W. W. and other dual union movements. It means a weakened Federation. And in these times when the open-shoppers are preparing a terrific offensive against the labor movement, we can ill afford a campaign of heresy-hunting.

It is far better to let the radicals and conservatives clash in controversy, and out of the welter of conflicting opinion will come that residuum of truth which all honest men are seeking.

YOUR REPLY TO GARY!

Tens of thousands of steel toilers read "The Worker" last week, who had never seen a copy of the paper before. The free distribution of these "Workers" was absolutely necessary to interest those who labor in the steel mills, to let them know of the fight "The Worker" was making in their behalf.

But it is impossible for "The Worker" to continue sending out this great number of copies free each week. The financial burden is too great. We want the steel toilers to be regular readers of "The Worker," and we want those who are now our readers to help us get them into the rapidly increasing "Worker" family.

For this reason we are making a special offer, THIS WEEK, of "The Worker"—15 WEEKS FOR 50 CENTS—and we will include the workers in all industries, every one of whom, as we have pointed out, is threatened by the continued rule of the 12-Hour Day in the Steel Industry. Here is a Sub-Blank all ready to be cut out and circulated among your fellow-workers.

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