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Civilization Will Live While Barbarism Is Drowning In Its Own Blood

One must be careful about taking people at their word or judging too hastily by appearances. Because he is incisive in his criticism of clerical and political parasites; because he professes a belief in self-government and poses as an individualist; above all, because he assures his readers that he is always eager to get at the facts, have had words of praise for E. W. Howe and his monthly. I take it all back after reading J's September number, it being self-evident to me that Howe does not think except on lines that suit his inclinations; does not want to think on any other lines; has no regard for thinkers, and has no intention whatever of opening his eyes or ears to facts. Naturally I do not discuss such a man or his writing for their own worth, but simply use him as a peg on which to hang a few things to which I wish to call attention.

Recently I wrote for this paper what might be properly called, I think, a scientific article, for I gave, necessarily in a condensed form, the industrial figures compiled by Dr. Scott Nearing, professor of economics in the University of Pennsylvania. I have not the article by me, but my recollection is that they were furnished at one of those government enquiries of which we have so many which accomplish nothing. At any rate similar figures had formed the bases of articles in the "San Francisco Bulletin" and I heard them substantiated and set out in most convincing array by Dr. Parker, who is the professor of economics at the California State University. I could re-inforce them, if needed, from many other sources, and their gist is that—to quote my own summing-up, which Mr. Howe reproduces—"we find ourselves caught today in a rigidly-organized industrial system which makes the odds against rising out of wage slavery some three thousand to one." To this Mr. Howe replies: "The facts are as follows (and note how they differ from Dr. Nearing's statement): Every young man who works for wages, instead of one in three thousand, escapes from wage slavery, or becomes an employer, providing he applies himself to his work with reasonable diligence, and has an ambition to become reasonably efficient." To which he adds, in the following paragraph, that "the greatest liars the world has ever known are lately calling themselves truth tellers." The natural inference is that the professors named and I myself are liars.

That rests, it will be observed, entirely on Howe's say-so, and I don't think a man need be a statistic sharp to understand that the say-so is worth less than nothing. Our argument is that in this country, as in Europe, we have developed a system under which the enormous majority of our citizens are doomed, irrevocably, to wage slavery. The statisticians referred to take the leading industries of the country one by one and show that they are operated today on an enormous scale by enormous industrial armies. In which, by the nature of the operations, it is almost as difficult for a private to rise from the ranks as it is for an ordinary soldier in Europe to become a commissioned officer. The figures are easily ascertained. The numbers of men employed by such concerns as the Steel Trust, for example, are all to hand, and it is a simple matter to find out how small a percentage of those employees are superintendents and how immense a majority must necessarily be unskilled laborers, because most of the work does not call for skill.

Life struggles with extraordinary tenacity, and it is a perpetual wonder how so large a percentage of our people manage to get into some small business and eke out an existence. But, as compared with the vast indus-

trial armies by which our mining and manufacturing are carried on, the number of these people is insignificant, and the fact is that their businesses are largely parasitic and held by a most precarious tenure, for what they still do on a small scale is done much better by larger rivals who, having capital, enjoy better purchasing and distributive advantages. I do not believe that any economist of reputation will deny that we have now developed a huge wage-earning class whose status is fixed, and I suspect that you could find some who would maintain that it is even more fixed than in Europe, for our tendency is to operate on a larger scale. Now, that is a most important fact, for it supplies with the key to existing discontent and shows us the genesis and inevitability of the labor movement. I am sure it is not to be sneered away with the simple affirmation that liars are plentiful, and I am quite sure that a man has no right to pose as a lover of truth, and to appeal for subscribers on that understanding, while being unwilling to investigate the facts. But Howe's paper is full of these barren affirmations, as, for example, that "old Rockefeller does not rob you half as much as your Congressman robs you." I myself hate politicians, but I expect that Howe would have hard work in making out even a plausible defense of that position.

If a man works very hard, and makes himself a useless citizen for years by never spending a cent except on bare necessities, he may become independent by agriculture. I live in just such a community and am familiar with how the thing is managed. The Portuguese come to this district without money, and hire themselves out to ranch work. For from five to seven years they toil to save a thousand dollars. They spend nothing, rob themselves of all the enjoyment to which civilization should entitle them, and are, in my opinion, simply beasts of burden. At the end of that time they are in a position to buy an acre of land, which is priced hereabouts at \$700 to \$1000 an acre, and they hand over to some real estate monopolist the savings of all their years of toil; beginning life once more without capital but with a little plot of land from which, by never-tiring industry, they make a living. In other words, for years they put themselves in slavery to the land monopolist, the idler to whom they hand over all their wages. During that period they cheat themselves of life and are useless save for the production of a certain amount of wealth for the men who steal from them. That is a servitude to which high-spirited men of the superior class or race will not willingly stoop, for the very essence of the superior is that it demand the possibility of leading the superior life for which its nature clamors. It is well that it should be so, for, without that nobler instinct, mankind would remain forever in the bog of unintellectual, physical toil.

The man who is satisfied with a society so constituted is a man I do not envy, and Howe labels himself that sort of man. His attention has been called to Henry George as a writer who tried to rectify injustice, and he replies: "I have read enough of his writings to know that they do not interest me, and that they are not important. What did Henry George amount to? Had he invented a better safety match, a better plow, a better harvester; had his thinking taken a practical turn—had he been a practical worker instead of theorist—I would cheerfully pay him tribute." He adds that Henry George "always declared himself more Anarchist than Socialist; and there was never an Anarchist whose example was worth imitating, or whose teaching was worthy of acceptance." Incidentally I may add that he expresses surprise that I write like a gentleman, and he is astonished that I am not ashamed to appear on the same page with Anselmo L. Figueroa, who is pleading for money to help the Texas prisoners. Naturally he does not know Figueroa, or the Magons, or anything about the pedigree and careers of the great Anarchist writers. Half an hour spent over the Encyclopaedia Britannica or such a book as Eitzbachers' would set him right on that head, but he is content with the slap-dash reflection that "I can never get rid of the notion that Anarchy is like Drunkenness: not the slightest excuse for it." He then explains that, according to his intuition, Anarchy is simply disorder, and one cannot help wondering what he thinks of Archy, or Rule, as it is

working itself out today in Europe.

Safety matches! Bryant and May invented a splendid safety match and made huge fortunes. If ever workers were mistreated those workers were the women and little children used to build up those fortunes. McCormick invented the reaper, and the maltreatment of McCormick's employees led to the Haymarket tragedy. The last fifty years have produced a gigantic revolution in production; but above all, they have produced bitter, burning discontent; discontent that will not down; discontent that has its indestructible roots in the consciousness that this revolution has enured solely to the material wealth (I carefully avoid using the word "prosperity") of monopolists and has been injurious to the mass. I am not blaming the practical man, whom Howe worships. I insist, on the contrary, that he did more than his share when he added his inventions to what should be the common wealth. If I believed in blaming I should blame the mass for being so slothful as not to think out methods by which those inventions might profit them, and so cowardly as not to insist on sharing fully in which should have been the universal benefit. But blame is useless. Men are what they are; very imperfect animals, with all their past inertia still hanging heavily upon them. What is absolutely certain is that there is still incalculable poverty and suffering, and that discontent will not down until such poverty and suffering, felt instinctively to be entirely without excuse, vanish for ever. So-called practical men, who deal in the comparatively simple matter of sticks and stones, have not solved the problem. For what we need the higher intellectual labor that knows how to deal with the incomparably more retractive and difficult material—Hans.

Howe has no use for the thinker, along those higher lines. He tells us that he knew a disagreeable man who was a very capable business man and built houses, thereby giving others employment. He says: "I could get more out of him in half an hour than I could get out of Thoreau, Emerson, John Stuart Mill, Henry George, Adam Smith, and any other of the dreamers, in a life time." His idea is that the men named were impractical and had no influence on affairs. I am incapable of imagining a more unfortunate selection than that which he has made. Emerson and Thoreau were great forces for the overthrow of chattel slavery, which altered the entire material history of the United States. Mill, apart from vast contributions on political economy, which straightened out men's thought as to the existing methods of producing and distributing wealth, was the author of a work on "Liberty" which has affected most profoundly all English statesmanship. I do not hesitate to say that it went far toward making Great Britain the champion of small nationalities, which is precisely what has brought her into clash with Germany. And I may add that if Howe had read and digested that work it would, I hope, be impossible for him to be urging the suppression of free speech, or advocating that gross interference with personal liberty which takes the stupidly-fanatical form of Prohibition.

That Henry George set hundreds of thousands thinking on land monopoly is indisputable. Many before him had written on that subject, but he certainly exercised great influence; and as that influence has promoted serious upheavals in Ireland, Mexico and other countries; as it has forced the powerful British government to action of a most costly, though indecisive, character in Ireland; as all this, and much more which I cannot here detail, has sprung directly from the agitation led by Henry George, his life is but another proof that the thinker sets the wheels of action going and moulds the world. But of all the names selected by Howe for contempt that of Adam Smith seems to me the most unfortunate. What this Scotch professor and student did was to convert England to free trade, thereby giving her the mastery of the seas and creating for her an international commerce which has called into existence the greatest empire history has known. If ever a life produced practical results on a colossal scale it was that of Adam Smith. I stand to say that as a commercial asset he was worth more to England than all the building contractors of the past century. I think the same of Shakespeare; another dreamer to whose virile thought the English-speaking peoples owe a debt they never can

repay. We wallow in the dirt because we do not think, and because, not thinking, we cannot dare. Without the preliminary, and strictly individual, discipline of thought, which arms itself with knowledge, there can be no daring; for he who is uncertain in his thought will always falter. The whole revolutionary movement today is in that pitiable plight. It cannot advance, for it has not mapped out its course; decided what it wants and how it means to get it. It is lost in big words which only confuse it; in vague theories of democracy which it has not troubled to analyze; in a thousand tangles which straightforward discussion would clear up instantly. But it cannot get discussion of that kind. It is pulled hither and thither by partisans who have axes to grind and dread the truth. It feeds on partisan newspapers, and, in my opinion, its own newspapers are, as a whole, far more untruthful and less intelligent than is the capitalist press. It is at the mercy of what the I. W. W.'s call pie artists, and Christ uttered an eternal truth when he said that in emergencies the hireling fleeth precisely because he is a hireling. When it begins to turn against these mercenary leaders and blinding leaders of the blind, it may begin to quicken into life.

I was fed as a boy on the writers Howe has singled out for ridicule. I was taught that life was meaningless unless one used it for the general welfare and advancement of one's species. In an experience that now covers more than thirty-five years and several countries I have found few really in dead earnest, and therefore self-sacrificing, except the Anarchists. For many of them I have a personal admiration that can never fade, and, writing at an hour when arbitrary rule is slaughtering once more its millions, I say that the Anarchists, in their conception of a society based on equality of opportunity and regulating itself by mutual agreement, have got hold of an idea that will triumph as surely as civilization must triumph over that barbarism whose proper name is animal stupidity. The stars in the courses are fighting for that triumph, and the rule of man by man is setting in that sea of blood which is its proper self-created tomb.

WM. C. OWEN.

Treated As Pariahs

Nearly all the information respecting the Phoenix arrests available to the editor of this section has come through private letters, and they present a very different view from that set out in the local papers. For example, we are assured that Rivera, who is represented as being an intelligent and educated man, has been devoting his time for long past to the economic organization of the Mexican workers, that they may give themselves that mutual protection which certainly they need most badly. As for Gaitan, it is pointed out that his interests have lain solely in the struggle in Mexico, his one anxiety being that the workers there should regain possession of their lands. For this exclusiveness he has been attacked most bitterly.

Our correspondence further suggests that much of the trouble has had its rise in what is known as the "Eighty per cent" bill, which organized labor, with a racial narrow-mindedness which is suicidal, is endeavoring to get passed. The bill actually demands that eighty per cent of the labor employed in Arizona mines must be that of American citizens, and the Barber Asphalt Company, which is engaged in paving the streets of Phoenix, was compelled recently to discharge ninety per cent of its force—the number of those so discharged mounting into the hundreds—because the city ordinances provide that work done for the city must be done by citizens.

Frightful economic fallacies underlie all such legislation, which leads to the drawing of racial lines and the building up of unscrupulous political machines that eat up the very workers who put through such childish and coldly-selfish measures. And it is obvious that one of the first results of all such legislation is the creation of an aristocracy of labor, which looks down, with all the contempt of barbaric ignorance, on those of its fellow-workers whom it considers below the pale. The Mexicans are being so treated in Arizona and the South. They should not stand it and they do not, especially at this time when they are conscious of having put up a fight for the universal eman-

cipation of labor such as the so-called white workers, as yet, have not even thought of daring to make.

Bitter racial feeling is being manufactured most deliberately, and organized labor, which seldom seems capable of seeing beyond its nose, is lending itself to that infamous work. Such work always means trouble, always means fight and can mean nothing else. The politicians, who live on trouble, know that well, and organized labor is simply playing into their hands.

It is evident that the Phoenix arrests need close investigation and it is to the true interests of Labor to see to it that no snap judgment is taken.

OUR COMRADES IN TEXAS

Two other of our comrades have been brought to trial and, as expected because of the short time that the defense has been allowed to prepare these cases for trial, they have been found "guilty" and sentenced, comrade Luz Mendoza to five years to the penitentiary and comrade L. R. Ortiz to fifteen years.

These sentences are nothing but an outrage to justice, for it should be remembered that the Deputy Sheriff Candelario Ortiz, whose killing is charged to our comrades, was killed by J. Guerra, when Ortiz attempted to assassinate Guerra, and that the rest of the comrades did not know anything about it till next morning. It is assured that the same Buck—the Sheriff that now is in fact the only witness against our comrades—did not actually see how Ortiz was killed; but of course, they say, he has to lie in the witness stand, to revenge the death of his dog Ortiz, and to please his masters, who want the lives of Rangel et al. for being class conscious men.

Anyway, these cases have to be taken to the Court of Appeals, and while they are passed upon by that Superior Court, we must find time to agitate in behalf of these men whose only crime was to be on their way to Mexico to fight for the freedom of the Mexican people.

Two things are of vital importance for the defense of comrades Rangel, Cline and companions, to give a wide publicity to their case and to gather up funds enough for legal defense.

The lives of four of those unfortunate comrades are at the stake,—do not forget it,—and, therefore, do, comrades, all your best to have these honest men free and to save them from the gallows.

Organize a series of Rangel-Cline meetings, and, besides, do not fail to contribute liberally for their defense, sending all funds to the Financial Secretary of the Defense Committee, Victor Cravello, Room 108, Labor Temple, Los Angeles, Cal.

ENRIQUE FLORES MAGON.

RECEIPTS OF RANGEL-CLINE DEFENSE COMMITTEE.

(Continued from issue No. 200.)

S. P. Minneapolis, Minn. \$1.25; J. B. 219 I. W. W., Oakland, La. \$5.75; Frank J. Gussette, Berkeley, Calif. \$1; S. P. Lettich, Box, Roxbury, Boston, Mass. \$1; B. A. Union \$1; Dubuque, Iowa \$2; A. K. & S. K. \$1; W. Lynn, Mass. \$2; I. A. of B. & S. I. Workers 128, Canby, Oreg. \$2; A. K. & S. K. \$2.71, Stoughton, Mass. \$1.50; City Central Com. I. W. W., Seattle, Wash. \$40; J. M. U. 16, Louisville, Ky. \$1; A. K. & S. K. \$2.22, Terre Haute, Ind. \$1; Pattern Makers Assn., San Francisco, \$1.50; I. W. W. 73, Stockton, Calif. \$2.15; S. P. Kingsbury, Calif. \$1; B. of Communist Workers, Los Angeles, \$10; Jaime Vidal, San Francisco, \$3; Jay Fox, San Francisco, \$56; L. Gonzalez, per Magon, San Francisco, \$1; W. F. M. 238, Wharton, N. J. \$2; Metal Polishers 68, Cincinnati, O. \$1; Metal Polishers 72, Cincinnati, O. \$2; I. B. E. W. 477, San Bernardino, Calif. \$2; W. D. Guernsey, Land and Liberty, Hayward, Calif. \$10; Blue Valley Lodge 2, Kansas City, Mo. \$3; Alex Fraser, Spring Valley, N. Y. \$1; A. K. & S. K. \$2.31, Atlanta, Ga. \$56; S. P. Caman, N. J. \$2; Moulders' Union, 456, Grove City, Pa. \$2; Saw Mill Workers 45, Kelso, Wash. \$3; Jerome Miller, Shawnee, Okla. \$1; S. P. Club, Athol, Mass. \$50; L. P. Larson, Granville, Ill. \$1; S. P. Forest Hill, Okla. 700; I. A. T. S. E. 159, Portland, Ore. \$1; S. P. Shawnee, Okla. \$1.16; J. A. Brothers, Greenville, S. C. \$1; I. A. Newman, Birmingham, Ala. \$1; Molders' Union 7, Jersey City, N. J. \$2; A. K. & S. K. \$2; Newark, N. J. \$2; Bridge & Iron Workers 1, Chicago, Ill. \$2; Mattie Lee, Chilton, Okla. \$1; Jno. McKillough, Waco, Tex. \$1; South Shive S. P. Detroit, Mich. \$3; I. W. W. 1, I. W. W. 1, Des Moines, Iowa, \$3.50; Local 38, 12, I. L. Seattle, Wash. \$2; Dan Peterson, Everett, Wash. \$3; Typographical Union 40, Denver, Colo. \$10; John C. Sprague, I. W. W. 85, Chicago, Ill. \$1; I. B. E. W. 10, Toledo, O. \$1; W. H. Kenner, Ardmore, Okla. \$2; Pat Grace, Bridge, Mont. \$1; Robinson, Tex. \$1; \$1.50; N. T. W. \$1; S. P. \$1; \$25; Philadelphia, Pa. \$2.50; Sheet Metal Workers 10, Philadelphia, Pa. \$1; I. W. W. 380, Singer, La. \$1.50; I. B. E. W. 201, Petersburg, Ont. \$2; (To be continued.)

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