

TRADES UNIONS AND POLITICS.

Father Yorke Reviews the Situation in San Francisco.

In a recent issue of the Leader, published in San Francisco, Rev. Peter C. Yorke comments at length on the political situation of the Golden Gate City and its bearing on the future prosperity of labor unions. He says in part:

"Notwithstanding the clamor of the candidates, it may be safely asserted that on no election does the cause of unionism depend. Candidates come and candidates go, but the organization of the toilers goes on forever. "At the same time the conditions under which organization is carried on are not always the same. Sometimes they are more difficult than others. It is quite possible that the results of an election, or indeed any other political event, may make the path of the unionists more straight and thorny, and add outside dangers to the dangers a-plenty that always exist within.

"It is easy to discern that there are two kinds of unions. The difference is noticeable in their methods of action within and without their lodges. The one class is staid, self-contained, well disciplined. The other class is giddy, lacks self-repression and is difficult to be governed. The difference between the two classes of unions is almost entirely a difference caused by time. The one class has the years, the other has not.

"The older unions are those who have lasted a good while and have been through many difficulties. The main strength of them is composed of men who were unionists when unionism was not so popular as it is now. They remained with the organization as a matter of principle and would still stay by it even if the old dark days were to return. Their leaders have been tried and the men know who they are. The scars of battle are perpetual reminders to them to make haste slowly. They are not cowards, but they know how serious a matter industrial warfare is.

"The other class of unions are those of later growth. They have come up, as it were, in a night and have not as yet been seasoned or tempered. Their members are not used to unionism and naturally are restive under discipline. Leaving out of question the fair weather birds that flock in prosperity to all unions alike, even those who belong to the new unions for the sake of principle, lack the experience. Hence, often they do things that give their enemies a handle against them; hence, often, they are put in a bad tactical position by bad management; hence, often, through sheer nervous excitement, they rush into courses that the bravest and wisest would hesitate to take.

"Now the old labor unions know very well that trades unionism does not depend on politics. It is an economic question and would go on if there were never a politician. They know well that the strength of the movement comes from the intelligence, courage, discipline and self-sacrifice of the men. Any union that is built on other foundations than these must come to naught. If the trades unionists know their rights, are brave enough to demand them, are willing to sink personal aims and objects for the common good, and have strength of mind to bear hardship for a while, then they must succeed, no matter under what conditions they labor. Hence it is that the older labor leaders and the older unions fight shy of the political situation and are merely looking on, though all are deeply thinking.

"And what gives them the most food for thought is the condition of their brethren in the newer unions. These labor leaders as a class are not narrow or selfish. Their first duty, of course, is to their own craft; but no one knows better than they the truth of the saying that 'the injury of one is the injury of all.' They realize that their own unions are able to survive any change for the worse in general conditions, but they fear the result of a lowering of temperature for the new growths. Then, they know, too, that any appearance of disintegration makes capital bolder and more exacting. Just as self-interest is continually urging the workmen to unite in order to better their conditions, so self-interest is continually urging the employing class to seize every opportunity to cut down expenses by cutting down the wages of the employee.

"What takes the old question out of the realm of theory and makes it so actual now is the undoubted fact that the tide of prosperity has reached its height. No observer of the times fails to see that though we are still at high water, the ebb has commenced. There are a hundred signs to show that the ocean stream is now set off from the shore. Prosperity and distress are as much subject to the natural law as the seasons. They come and go in their appointed times and nothing that men may do can

hinder or halt them. When the day is fine we cannot believe that the storm is brewing, but brewing it is, nevertheless. When the country is prosperous and wages high and work plenty, we imagine it will always be so; but even then the lean years are stirring beneath the waters of the river, and soon they will be on hand to devour the fat.

"It needs no demonstration to prove that the way of the trades unionist is much harder in distress than in prosperity. It is easy enough to be loyal to the union when there is work for all, and it is only a question of the amount of wages. Loyalty is to be measured not by the rewards that come from loyalty, but by the bearing of the disadvantages that arise from loyalty. When two jobs are chasing one unionist, then he gladly pays his dues to his lodge; but when two unionists shall be chasing one job, then will come the temptation and the strain on principle. And precisely because the woods are full of men who have joined the union because of the loaves and fishes, the wiser and more experienced leaders are pondering deeply and gravely. How will the unions fare, in the day of trial? Will they stand the shock or will they go to pieces like a rope of sand?

"In the employers' ranks there is no doubt of the result. Already we hear gloatings on every side. It is seldom business men welcome bad times, but whatever inconveniences may be brought by their advent will be amply compensated in the minds of many San Francisco merchants, by the opportunity of getting even with the unions. Over and above the economic question the San Francisco merchants have stored deep in their minds their last defeat. They have been laying up day by day a new stock of grievances from the real or fancied insults and impudences of the unionists. They have very strongly developed in them a kind of class feeling and they are determined to teach the horny-handed their proper place. The last few years have been to them a constant aggravation, and they are looking for the time when they cannot only talk out, but act with impunity. It is really hard for an ordinary mortal to understand how little difference most of the merchants of San Francisco see between themselves and Almighty God. * * *

MILITARISM GONE MAD.

Outrages Committed Upon Citizens in Name of Law.

The outrages of military law was never before amplified so vividly as in the Cripple Creek strike before the civil authorities succeeded in claiming superiority over the cheap and depraved officers, who are now on trial before a court martial for irregularities committed while serving the state in the strike district.

The following letter was written by Harry J. Richmond, formerly telegraph editor of the Topeka (Kas.) Daily Herald, and at one time publisher of the Rossville News, to the Herald. Mr. Richmond was foreman of the Record, at the time of his arrest, and the letter speaks for itself:

Victor, Colo., Oct. 3, 1903. In order that the situation here may be correctly understood by Kansas readers, and to rectify the absurd and distorted reports sent broadcast by the Associated Press, I will review the trouble exactly as it exists.

The causes leading up to the great strike are generally well understood. It is simply a struggle for eight hours and living wages by union men on one side and the determined opposition of the smelter trust with its millions of capital, backed by the state executive, on the other. The governor, in direct violation of law, has hired out the Colorado national guard to the local Mine Owners' Association for the sole purpose of crushing the strikers and disrupting the Western Federation of Miners. To accomplish this purpose, both state and national constitutions have been trampled under foot by the military despots in charge of the state militia, and outrages have been perpetrated in the name of the state of so shocking a nature as to arouse the indignation of the entire commonwealth.

Liberty is a thing of the past. Worse than martial law exists. Civil courts are openly defied. Women are subjected to gross insults. Little children are forced from the side-

walks at the point of bayonets by drunken soldiers. Peaceable citizens are dragged from their homes at midnight and thrust into filthy guard houses without charge or warrant. Union meetings are interrupted by detachments of cavalry and members are forcibly thrown into the military bull pen. Never did a czar wield more despotic power than is exercised by the commander of the state militia at this place today.

The culmination of a long series of military outrages occurred when a body of over 200 soldiers, armed with riot ammunition, surrounded the office of the Victor Daily Record at midnight and made prisoners of the entire office force, including George E. Kyner, editor and proprietor; W. L. Sweet, circulator; F. W. and C. G. Langdon, linotype operators, and H. J. Richmond, foreman. No charge whatever was preferred against these five men. It was a deliberate plot to suppress a paper for telling the truth about the uniformed hirelings who were guilty of the outrages above mentioned. These prisoners were marched unceremoniously to the bull pen. Armed thugs forced them into a miserable filthy and squalid little tent, absolutely barren of furniture or bedding, where they were told to stay under penalty of having their heads blown off if they appeared an inch outside of the entrance.

The night was bitterly cold and on that frigid mountain side, under the intimidating guard of a horde of armed assassins, the working force of the Victor Herald passed a night of torture equal to anything ever devised by the Spanish inquisitors. I was one of those five men, and I will bear testimony that the treatment accorded us was so inhuman and revolting as to surpass belief by American citizens.

The "bull" tent had just been vacated by a number of drunken soldier prisoners, who had vomited all over the interior. The stench was sickening, but there we were forced to lay, without so much as a gunny-sack to protect us from the cold. Shortly after sunrise we were escorted to the mess table a short distance away. A dozen guards kept us covered with Winchester while two grimy negro cooks dished out a little slop on tin plates and told us to eat. There were no knives, forks or spoons at hand. "Use your fingers," said the head negro, when remonstrance was made.

Beneath the table were a number of wash-boilers and buckets filled with the accumulated garbage of several days and the stench arising therefrom was nauseating enough to insult the gizzard of a buzzard. It is quite needless to state that I had no appetite. I longed to place my feet under one of the tables at the New Oxford.

We returned to the tent hungrier and more distressed than ever. The day was raw and cold and I was chilled to the marrow. Faint and sick I approached the captain of the guard and implored him for God's sake to obtain some blankets for me. My appeal was cut short with an oath from that dignitary.

A little later a murderous looking Gatling gun was drawn up, trained on the prisoners' tent, and we were subjected to the nerve-rendering ordeal of posing as targets. The excitement attending this outrageous intimidation completely unnerved me and, I am now on the verge of nervous prostration.

Attorney Tully Scott, formerly of Kansas, succeeded in getting us liberated through some legal procedure and after unwinding a few miles of military red tape the commanding general turned us over to Sheriff Robertson of Teller county, when for the first time we learned that we were defendants in a libel case. When we were arrested I was not permitted to take my overcoat, but upon being released I was given an army blanket to wrap around myself for protection. I expect momentarily to be rearrested for stealing the blanket.

At the Teller county court house in Cripple Creek we promptly furnished \$13,000 bond and returned at once to the Record office in Victor. Without food or sleep for nearly forty hours, all hands went to work and at 3 o'clock the Record was again on the press.

The charge of libel is fully as absurd and unwarranted as are the high handed actions of the military authorities, and there is no question in my mind but that the state of Colorado will ultimately have some heavy judgments to settle as the result of Governor Peabody's folly. The min-

ers' cause is just and their victory is practically won already.

An Appeal to Organized Labor.

Lawlessness in uniform is rampant in Colorado. Rapid steps are being taken toward the establishment of a military despotism, made possible under the Dick law. Like hired bullies the state troops have been turned over to the Mineowners' Association to do its will against the miners who are striking for their homes and firesides.

Men have been dragged from their beds, officers of the union have been hounded through the districts by the hired Hessians of corrupt power. They are imprisoned without process of law; without having been charged with or having been guilty of aught save opposition to the mineowners' plans to make an industrial hell of the mining region. You who have no desire to see the constitutionally guaranteed right of free speech trampled under foot; who do not wish to see labor unions wiped out of existence and the working class reduced to a condition worse than serfdom, will rally to the support of the Western Federation of Miners in this fight. It is the mine owners against the working class. The mines in Idaho are being closed and the employees are invited to go to Cripple Creek to scab. Men are brought from the East under false pretenses. When they learn the facts and protect against scabbing, they are awed into submission by the soldiery.

The capitalist class are banded together by their material interests. Let the working class be likewise united. Let us stand at the backs of our battling brothers with financial as well as moral support. It is our fight as well as theirs. They are simply in the vanguard of the struggle. Their defeat is ours also. If they were driven from the field it would be our lot to engage in a hand to hand struggle with a victorious enemy.

The atrocities of the Idaho bull-pen must not be repeated on Colorado soil. The miners should have ample funds in this conflict. Let those who love freedom more than dollars come to the rescue at this crisis.—The American Labor Journal.

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