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EDITORIAL

RETROSPECT OF THE STRIKE.

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THE Philadelphia bonfire is now merely smoldering; the general strike is called off; what remains, and remains nominally only, is the original strike of the Rapid Transit employes; and that is merely dragging its slow and pathetic length to final extinction—in the regulation style.

In this year of grace 1910, and as though the last thirty years' veritable shower of experience had fallen upon their backs to as little purpose as water falls upon the backs of ducks, thousands of workingmen in Philadelphia were seen to strike an attitude which marked their move Ichabod.

The workingman who recognizes the right of the employer to the plant, and, in the same breath, demands higher wages, kicks himself to pieces. If the employer has such a right, then wage slavery is an inevitable consequence. If the employer has such a right, then the demand, on the part of Labor, for a higher price is as absurd as if a mutton chop in the butcher's stall were to strike for being sold at the market price. If the employer is entitled to "his plant" then Labor is a merchandise with no more "rights" than any other bundle of goods, or lot of cattle on the hoof. The demand for higher wages is permissible only to men who use the demand as a step towards casting off the yoke of wage slavery.

The workingman who would dictate how the employer shall conduct his business, and yet would leave the responsibility with the employer, that workingman pronounces himself an absurdity. No rights without obligations. The Right to dictate how a plant shall be run is permissible only to men who, consciously, are drilling themselves to couple Obligation with Right: to assume the full control, thereby to assume all the Obligations that control implies.

The workingman who rises in revolt against any one employer, and yet seeks to curry favor with any others, looking for support from them with such sentences as

there are “a large number of fair dealing and honest employers of labor,” as the call for a general strike contained,—such workingmen have no more knowledge of what the employing class is than a man, who would seek to extract sunbeams out of cucumbers, has knowledge of the quality of the vegetable, or the composition of sunbeams. Such “fighters” start on the run.

In others words, the workingman who believes in being “practical,” it not being “practical” to see things as they are; the workingman who believes in being “diplomatic,” it being “undiplomatic” to show your teeth in battle; the workingman who believes in “going slow,” it being “going too fast” to get out of the wet; the workingman who does not believe in “high-spun theories,” it being a “high-spun theory” to recognize facts—such a workingman may be living, anatomically speaking, in the 20th Century, spiritually speaking he is living fully two centuries back. He is like a frog in suspended animation caught in a rock—and that rock is the Civic Federationized A.F. of L., which to save from being cracked open by the blows of the Socialist Labor Party, the so-called Socialist party “self-sacrificingly” turned itself into a buffer for, and is now receiving the condign punishment of the “self-sacrifice” by having duly become, what to become such conduct condemned it in advance, “a hissing and a byword to the wage workers of America.”

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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