

# Steel Striker Feels 12-hour Day and Corporation Hostility to the Unions Are Potent Methods of Suppression

## Is Convinced Foreigners Were Brought to This Country to Make Unionization Difficult—It Is Only by Understanding the Workings of the Minds of the Men Underneath That a Proper View of the Situation Can Be Had, and a Solution Arrived at for the Problems Affecting the Worker and the Employer—12-Hour Day Allows Laborer No Time for Recreation or Home Life, Giving Him Time Only for Eating and Sleeping and Work.

By RAY STANNARD BAKER.  
Article III.

In this article I wish to show how one great section of American industry looks from below, to the workers, taking the specific situation at Gary, Ind., as the explanatory example. It is only as one tries to understand how the worker feels and thinks—his own actual point of view—that we can get at the problem. In my previous article, I have tried to explain how industry looks from above to the employer.

When I went to Gary to make inquiries about the steel strike I had in mind the 12 demands made by the national leaders when the men walked out on September 22; but I heard only two discussed with any emphasis either by the workers or the management.

First, the 12-hour day. Second, the right to organize and to bargain collectively with the employer.

The 12-hour day is a very real thing in the life of Gary, and I tried in a number of specific cases to find out what it means. Here is the exact daily schedule of a skilled American workman who does 11 hours a day during one week and 13 hours a night during the next. He has his Sunday free, though many men in the steel industry still have the seven-day week; nor does he do the "long-turn" of 24 hours continuous service when the change from day to night work takes place—a practice still persisting in some centers of the steel industry. In order to get cheap rent—for there is a great shortage of housing in Gary—this man lives four miles out from the mill. He must, therefore, in order to be on time, get up early.

**Man Exits Early.**  
4:30 a. m. he arises and gets breakfast.

5:30 he leaves home.

5:55 he reaches the mill.

6:00 he begins work. He is on duty steadily until 5 o'clock in the afternoon. There is no stoppage for the luncheon, but he has time, during waiting periods, to get something to eat. He arrives home at 6 o'clock; soon after he finishes his supper he must go to bed, for at 4:30 in the morning he must be up again.

During the night shift he gets up soon after 3 o'clock in the afternoon, starts work at 5 o'clock, works 13 hours, until 6 in the morning, is home at 7, and in bed before 8. Including the time he takes to go and come from the mill, this man's time is really commandeered for some 14 hours every day.

He has been at this work all his life; he now makes \$7.87 a day. "I don't live," he said, "I just exist; I work and sleep. I don't get any time to see my family. I can go to any entertainment, without taking it out of my sleep; and I am too tired to go to church on Sunday, or to do anything else but lie around."

**How It Strikes a Pole.**

Another striker, a Pole, said to me in broken English:

"They tell us to go to school, learn American. When we get time? Twelve hours a day! What the hell they want!"

Remember, I am trying to show just how it looks from below.

According to Judge Gary's testimony before the senate committee, there are 69,284 men in the United States Steel corporation now working the 12-hour day; and there are many thousands more in the independent companies. A great proportion of these 12-hour men are foreigners, of some 42 nationalities at Gary alone, speaking a babel of tongues and hitherto unorganized and unorganizable.

When I remarked to a group of workers that Judge Gary had told the senate committee that employees of the United States Steel corporation desired a 12-hour day, and even a seven-day week, in order to make more money, I was greeted with a shout of laughter.

"Want it!" said one of them. "We can't help ourselves. The mills run on the two-shift basis and it's either 12 hours or quit. Besides, at the rate of wages per hour paid by the company most of the men could live unless they worked the long hours."

So much for the 12-hour day. The senate committee, in the recent conclusions after investigation, said: "That the laborers in the steel mills had a just complaint relative to the long hours of service on the part of some of them and the right to have that complaint heard by the company."

"We believe where continuous operation is absolutely necessary the men should at least be allowed one day's rest in each week."

**The Demand to Organize.**

The other great complaint, the demand to organize and bargain collectively, is more complicated. It goes down deeper into the roots of the controversy. For, if the workers were granted the eight-hour day and the six-day week, this other demand would not only persist but probably be strengthened. I met one steel employer, who said to me: "If you give an inch, if you let them discover that agitation and organization gets them anything, you've gone. Gary's right."

He spoke of Rockefeller's introduction of the eight-hour day and shop committees in his Colorado plant. "Did it stop the strike?" he asked. "No, they're out with all the others. So are the Cambria mills where they have company unions. Gary's right." There is one independent mill that was scarcely touched by the strike. It has been looked on with some envy in the steel industry. Its superintendent explained to me how he managed his workmen:

"I watch 'em young; treat 'em like 'em old; tell 'em nothing."

This question of unionization—collective bargaining, as Judge Gary called it—is the crux of the matter. He saw it long ago when the corporation was organized, and ever changed in his opinion

or in his policy of opposition. He has never "treated 'em rough"—quite the contrary, as I shall show in other articles—but upon the question of unionization and collective bargaining he has been adamant.

The workers also recognize this as the crux of the problem. I did not find much complaint of wages at Gary, for average wages of all employees since 1914 have increased from \$2.93 a day to \$6.27 per day, a 114 per cent increase. This corresponds roughly with the increase in the cost of living. There are also a considerable number of workmen at Gary, especially of the higher grades, who live at low rentals in company houses or who own their own homes and some who have been assisted by the corporation in buying stock. These men for the most part did not strike at all.

I asked one group of strikers what it was, then, that they wanted. Every one of them had been working in the Gary mills, every one of them spoke English well—two were of pure American stock, one was of Dutch ancestry, two Irish, one English, two Serbian, three Polish.

**"Striking for Freedom."**  
Since I am trying to show exactly how the strike looks from below, I am going to put down exactly the answer I got:

"We are striking for freedom."

"What do you mean by freedom?" I asked.

"Well, the right to have our organizations, the right to employ representatives to act for us, just as the Steel corporation does, and the right to bargain collectively with the employers for our labor."

I found this group of men very intelligent. They told me that it had been the settled policy of the Steel corporation from the beginning to fight unionism, and one of them handed me a publication containing a copy of a resolution passed by the Steel corporation on June 17, 1901—six weeks after its organization (which I have since verified; it appears in the report of the attorney general, United States Bureau of Labor), as follows:

"That we are unalterably opposed to any extension of union labor, and advise subsidiary companies to take firm position when these questions come up, and say that they are not going to employ any men who were discharged for belonging to unions, the strikers not only assert here at Gary, but witnesses from the Pennsylvania mills asserted before the senate committee that many such discharges had been made.

"Oh, the foreman doesn't say. 'You're a union man, get out.' But every movement, every whisper in the mill is known. If we have a meeting, we know there is a spy inside, or else the foreman or other officials, come and stand outside the hall, and watch the men go in. A man try to get the work together, try to organize, and some day he'll get his pink slip because he's had an accident, or for one of a hundred small excuses."

Whatever may be the instructions from Judge Gary, this is what the strikers everywhere in the steel districts believe. Indeed, the second demand of the 12 that they made when they struck reads thus:

"Reinstatement of men discharged for union activities with pay for time lost."

**Foreigners and Unionism.**

Another thing they believe, is that foreigners of so many nationalities, who are now accused of causing most of the trouble, were deliberately brought in by the employers in order to make organization impossible. The difficulties in the way of unionizing ignorant men speaking 20 or 30 different languages are, of course, almost insurmountable. "But of course they do—but look at this advertisement."

And they handed me a copy of an advertisement in the Pittsburgh Gazette-Times of July 14, 1909 (which I also verified).

"Wanted—Sixty tip-house men, tappers, catchers and helpers to work in open shops; Syrians, Poles and Roumanians preferred; steady employment and good wages to men willing to work; \$3.00 paid and no fees charged for this work."

There are many other minor complaints—so the strikers argue—that can only be met when the workers are organized, just as the various mills are organized, in one body, and can meet the employers upon equal terms. There are examples of petty graft by foremen upon ignorant workmen, men are laid off without explanation or excuse, the plants are closed down without warning, and the loss falls upon the workers (13 per cent of the possible working time is thus lost every year to the employees).

This state of mind at Gary, and elsewhere in the steel industry, has resulted in vast losses to every one concerned. Though the mills are operating again, there are many strikers still out and still agitating, soldiers are still on guard. A considerable number of foreigners have drawn their money from the postal savings bank, sold their Liberty bonds, and gone home to Europe, thus further reducing and disorganizing the labor supply. Some of the skilled men have left for other industries. Two electricians, for example, whom I met, had easily found work at the union scale of a dollar an hour in Chicago; more than they had received in the Gary mills. The mills are running inefficiently, with many inexperienced men, and the whole morale is low; and this at a moment when the world never needed steel products as it does now.

**Power of Corporation.**

I asked why it was, then, if this was a strike for freedom, that so many men had gone back.

"That's easy enough to answer. In the first place the power and watchfulness of the managers was such that we never could form a very strong union. How can you get ignorant Hungarians, Italians, negroes and Mexicans together and teach them the value of organization when the dread of the boss is always over them? And no sooner does the strike start than the military comes in and prevents picketing and prevents any large meetings. Many of these foreigners are easily frightened by soldiers; they've had experience at home. On the other hand, the most intelligent men, who ought to be leaders, hold high-paid places or are buying company houses, or are getting bonuses, or are working for pensions. They know that if they go out they lose everything. Since this strike the company has done its best to stir up racial and national feeling between the skilled American workers and the negroes and foreigners. It's their eye to keep us apart and disorganized. So it has got to be a movement largely made up of the unskilled laborers, and they are foreigners. And there you are. Oh, they know their business—the Steel Corporation! And that's what has made wild radicals of some of the foreigners; they don't see any other way out except secret organizations and revolution."

Another thing these workers believe—and believe everywhere in the steel districts, as shown by the senate investigation—is that the government is somehow against them; the government meaning to many of the foreigners—the local police. I am not entering into the question of whether they are right or wrong, but trying to get down what they actually believe or feel, for it is not upon what they ought to believe and feel that they act, but upon what they do believe and feel. Well, they believe that the officials and constabulary are controlled by the steel companies. In Pennsylvania there is every evidence of suppression and even violent suppression, by the constabulary. Much testimony was given before the senate committee to show that there is no such thing in some of the steel towns as free speech or free assemblage. The companies assert that this control is necessary to preserve order and protect property; but from below, to the strikers, it looks like oppression.

**Believe Themselves Suppressed.**

Many of the officials in steel towns are employees of steel companies. Even in Gary, where the control has been less rigorous than in Pennsylvania, I heard much of the same kind of complaint. Whether the strikers are right or wrong, no honest inquirer can avoid the impression that they feel themselves suppressed. Much is done for them by the Steel corporation; but of themselves, either by political or social organization, they feel they are allowed to have no say about

the vital conditions under which they work and live.

"But," I argued, "Judge Gary said to the senate committee that any worker or group of workers could make a complaint and get it remedied; that all superintendents were especially instructed upon this point."

I am going to put down the exact answers I got.

"Say, Mister, you weren't born yesterday, were you? What chance do you suppose one 'hunkie' or a bunch of 'hunkies' would have getting to Judge Gary with a complaint, or even getting to the head men of the Illinois Steel company? And what do you suppose would happen if they complained very often over the head of their foremen? Here's the pink slip for you guys."

**Minor Complaints.**

There are many other minor complaints—so the strikers argue—that can only be met when the workers are organized, just as the various mills are organized, in one body, and can meet the employers upon equal terms. There are examples of petty graft by foremen upon ignorant workmen, men are laid off without explanation or excuse, the plants are closed down without warning, and the loss falls upon the workers (13 per cent of the possible working time is thus lost every year to the employees).

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# Exhume Bodies of Eight Members of Holladay Family

Harrison, N. Y., Jan. 3.—The bodies of eight members of the family of Benjamin Holladay, who many years ago was known from coast to coast for his great wealth and the lavish manner in which he spent it, have been removed from the crypt under the little stone chapel at Ophir farm, in Purchase, where they had been for years, and placed in a vault at St. Mary's cemetery in Rye. The vault was constructed at the expense and under the direction of Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, widow of the American ambassador to the court

of St. James, who now owns Ophir farm. Mrs. Reid's action was prompted by the fact that many private cemeteries in Westchester county have been obliterated through changes in ownership of the estates upon which they existed and the desire to prevent such a contingency in the case of the Holladay family.

Benjamin Holladay, who made his fortune through ownership of the Ophir silver mine in Nevada, died in Portland, Ore., 30 years ago. Most of his once great fortune had gone by that time.

The bodies removed today include his, that of his wife and Jennie Lind Mary Holladay, Countess A. De Pourtales Gorgier; Pauline Cassandra De Bussiere, wife of Baron De Bussiere of Paris; Madge Holladay, Joseph C. Holladay and an unidentified infant. They had

died in widely separated parts of the world, ranging from San Francisco to Hongkong and Kentucky to Paris.

**France Grants Right to Remove 20,000 U. S. Dead.**  
Paris, Jan. 3.—The French government has granted permission for the removal of the bodies of 20,000 American soldiers buried in France to the United States. The bodies to be removed are those buried in cemeteries outside of the zone of the armies and do not include those gathered in big American cemeteries in the army zone.

**15 Lighthouse Keepers Saved From Starving.**  
Quebec, Jan. 3.—Fifteen persons employed at the government stations

on Belle Isle, who were threatened with starvation by the foundering of the government steamer Aramoore, loaded with winter supplies, a few weeks ago, have been rescued by the Newfoundland steamer Seal, according to a wireless message received here. The message said: "All hands successfully taken off Belle Isle and now safe on board the steamer Seal, bound for Newfoundland."

**Germans Export Live Stock In Contravention of Treaty.**

Paris, Jan. 3.—(French Wireless Service).—Germany is exporting horses and cattle extensively to neutral countries in contravention of the terms of the peace treaty, it is reported in dispatches from Brussels. The matter is being investigated by the reparations committee.

# January Clearance Sales

In all departments of this big Cash Store are bringing crowds of enthusiastic buyers—All winter stocks are marked at cash prices which means quick clearance for us and big Savings to our customers.

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**56-inch All-Wool Coatings, your choice of all winter coatings; have been selling up to \$7.50 \$2.98**

**56-inch All-Wool Plaids, plenty of green and blue and other various bright and dark combinations. They would be a bargain at \$5 yard and will not last long at the special Cash Price of \$2.50**

**42-inch All-Wool Epingle Poplin, are scarce everywhere else, but we have plenty in all colors, they are selling regular for \$3.00. Special Clearing Sale Price, at \$2.48**

**42-inch Novelty Checks and Plaids in wool mixtures, in green and blue and best color combinations. Worth regularly at \$1.00. Clearing Sale Price... 50c**

**40 and 44-inch All-Wool Dress Goods, such as French serges and taffetas, in all colors. Plenty by navy. 50 pieces in the lot. Clearing Sale Price... \$1.98**

**50-inch All-Wool Chiffon Broadcloth, in the fine rich permanent silk lustre, in all the new wanted shades. They would be a bargain at \$5.00 yard. Special Clearing Sale Price, at \$3.98**

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**Elegant Silks In Most Wanted Weaves and Colorings Greatly Reduced**

**4.00 Embroidered Crepe de Chine, 40-inch... \$3.75**

**5.50 Panna Satin, 40-inch... \$4.98**

**4.00 Printed Georgette, 40-inch... \$3.75**

**3.25 Plain Georgette, 40-inch... \$2.98**

**4.00 Foulard, 40-inch... \$3.75**

**4.00 Satin Majestic, 36-inch... \$3.50**

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**5.50 Panna Satin, 40-inch... \$4.98**

**4.00 Printed Georgette, 40-inch... \$3.75**

**3.25 Plain Georgette, 40-inch... \$2.98**

**4.00 Foulard, 40-inch... \$3.75**

**4.00 Satin Majestic, 36-inch... \$3.50**

**4.00 Satin Goetz, 36-inch... \$3.50**

**3.00 Satin de Chine, 36-inch... \$2.50**

**2.50 Satin Messalin, 36-inch... \$1.98**

**2.50 Satin Stripe Poplin, 36-inch... \$1.98**

**2.50 Satin Stripe Taffeta, 36-inch... \$1.79**

**1.50 Plain Poplin, 36-inch... 98c**

**1.25 Velvetene, 22-inch... 98c**

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**56-inch All-Wool Coatings, your choice of all winter coatings; have been selling up to \$7.50 \$2.98**

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18-lb sack best high-grade Diamond H. Flour... \$3.15  
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48-lb sack our famous Health Flour... \$3.25  
The best No. 1 hand-picked Navy Beans, per lb... 10c  
The best Rolled White Breakfast Oatmeal, per lb... 5c  
The best Domestic Macaroni Spaghetti or Egg Noodles, per 5-lb... 7c  
Kamo assorted Soups, can... 9c  
Gallon can Golden Table Syrup for... 85c  
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