

**The 4th of July, 1913, in Ipswich, Massachusetts, from my research in the notebooks of Lucien Price (1883-1964), by Charles Kaufman**

"Man's need growing into man's greed, and, at length, into tyranny and oppression." In 1913, Lucien Price, 30 years old, is a journalist with Boston Evening Transcript. July 4 of this year, he goes by train to nearby Ipswich to witness how the "New England town" observes the national holiday during the labor strike at the Ipswich Mills. This is shortly after gunfire by the police in Ipswich had killed a 27-year-old Polish millworker, Nicholetta Paudelopoulou, and wounded a number of others. The millworkers of Ipswich would gain nothing from this strike.

With his typically dry, ironic wit, (for example, calling Irving Berlin's ragtime song, "Everybody's doin' it," a "national air"), Price describes the July Fourth town parade, meets with strike leaders, among them Carroll Pingree, who would ultimately serve three months in jail, and attempts to get two local clergymen interested in starting an "arbitration committee," (without success).

Price notes that the "constabulary" of Ipswich has been augmented with police from Lawrence, Massachusetts, who have gained experience through the infamous millworker strike of 1912, the "Bread and Roses" strike, which Price has also covered for the Transcript.

Concluding the notebook entry, Price describes the climax of an anti-strike oration, given on the town green by eight-term congressman Augustus Peabody Gardner, that fails to inspire the apathetic crowd. There is frequently somewhat of a propagandistic aspect to Price's writing, reflecting his personal views, ideals and even lifestyle. For example, here we learn about the white teeth of the strike leader and the pot belly of the local clergyman. And, as a reporting journalist, his memory for details is not always accurate; much has to be crosschecked and verified:

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Friday, the Fourth of July [1913]:

I had resolved to journey to Ipswich to observe the edifying sight of an historic New England town celebrating the national holiday while the syndicalists were conducting a strike. As a rebuke to syndicalism, the town had organized a parade.

A roll in the surf, a breakfast, and an early boat to the city. In the harbor the steamships, the revenue cutter and the battleships fluttered their particolored bunting. Crowds of holiday trippers swarmed the great terminal station. At villages along the North Shore, bands were braying "Everybody's doin' it" and other national airs. The fields were green, the sky turquoise blue under the brilliant glow of golden sunshine. Gleams of the sea, deep blue, were given to the view by glimpses.

A police officer, wearing on his badge the ominous word "Lawrence," answered my query after the strike headquarters with surly reluctance. Ipswich was befurbeled with bunting. The old white mansion houses were smothered in it. Greeks and Poles, mill operatives, wore rosetti flags at button-holes. The crowd seemed to be (by families) foreigners, mill-hands, grand army veterans, and the local,

American-born middle class. Anyone not knowing the undercurrents would have supposed it the customary celebration of the Fourth, which is of interest mainly to the middle class who cannot afford more expensive and less tedious forms of amusement—in motor boats and motor cars.

The parade was thumping along High Street: a rank of the haughty Irish policemen; town notables appearing to disadvantage in the saddle; veterans carrying small flags with pathetic stateliness; boy scouts in brown khaki led by a man who looked (it seemed to me on an instantaneous flash) as though he had not outgrown a regrettable phase of boyhood; the Sycamore Lodge of High Cockolarum in full regalia: metal fillets bound around temples, tights,—or gilt-spangled yellow togas beneath which protruded shoes and trousers of the contemporary world; loyal businessmen of Ipswich, (who derive their income from the wages of operatives), carrying huge flags blanket-fashion; and a straggling of what looked like local incompetents. The band played Annie Laurie at march time, and Harvard football songs.

I watched the parade, now shaken with derisive laughter, now earnestly. When it was ended, by telephone I wrung very reluctant consent of an ex-judge, who was to make the afternoon oration, for a conference when [the strike] should be ended. He shrank from discussion of the strike with a newspaperman, but dreaded still more to incur the possible enmity of a powerful journal.

Next I sought the Congregational minister, F. H. Baker, in a stately old house facing the monument “to our patriot dead” on the town green. At the apparition of him in the doorway I recoiled, supposing myself in the wrong house. If he had said he was the village barkeeper I would have believed him: or the livery stable proprietor. Untidy, sullen of eye, sensual-mouthed, pot-bellied, unkempt, lazy, and ungrammatical. His remedy was to clap the I. W. W. leaders in jail and keep them there. If he preached justice to the alien poor for 25 years, he said, his parishioners would do nothing. I gave him what little assistance was necessary to enable him to damn himself out of his own mouth. He was slightly more useless as a moral leader than the Congregational clergyman at Nantucket. I had gone into the parsonage with notions of starting an arbitration committee. I came out with none.

In a metal-boarded backroom of a Polish coffee house the strike leaders were diligently at work folding circulars to mail to the radical press. The young Polish girls worked at a table, the envelopes stacked high in front of them. Two iron-framed, marble-topped tables had been brought in from the coffee rooms as typewriter stands. At one of them, hammering on a manifold of carbon sheets in his machine sat Biscay, from his looks, a German Jew—clear, steady blue eyes, broad forehead, from which his black hair, slightly curling, had begun to recede; a body rugged from hard work, and a mouth firm, and a bit hard, from his long struggle with the “legal” rights of the propertied.

At the other table, sleeves rolled up to elbows, was a lank, powerfully-built Scot, Carroll Pingree. His mellow baritone would, it was easy to guess, be potent in swaying a crowd. His eye was lit with glints of humor; he sat sprawled, arms folded on chest. He listened more than he spoke. When he did it was a boom of artillery.

These two were the most hated and feared men in Ipswich—because they believe in something—by a class which believes in nothing. Biscay has been in jail on trumped-up charges all the way from here to the Pacific coast. He has out-maneuvered the old labor organization by a generalship which exacts their wrathful envy. He considers jail duty as a part of his routine. It has embittered him against society, but only strengthened his purpose. He knows that to put him under lock only creates two more leaders to fill his place. Pingree has led the Lowell strikes. The spiritual things of syndicalism sway him less than the joy of strife, the zest of outwitting government and constabulary, and the thrills of swaying a multitude and being denounced by the press.

These two determined men were leading a fight on the side of liberty. The Rt. Rev. William Lawrence, Bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts, a stockholder of the mill in which the strike is declared, had, a week earlier, sailed for Europe in company with an official of the Shoe Machinery Trust which was lately under federal indictment. It was being remarked in Ipswich that the prelate had chosen an opportune time to depart.

The third member of the strike committee was a big, jolly, handsome Pole, bright of eye, broad of forehead, and continually enlivening his speech with a laugh that flashed his sound, white teeth. He was jocularly bitter at the police and mocked the courts.

The usual blunders of the town officials were in progress: police reserves from Lawrence, the most-hated constabulary in New England; a judge who declared that even if the shot which killed the woman was fired by a policeman, the strike leaders were morally responsible; and that “there can be no such thing as peaceful picketing.” A score of workers were thrown in jail charged with murder or riot. A dozen more were in the hospital from the revolvers and clubs of the police. Among the stock holders is a judge of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, Caleb Loring. Hence the judicial severity,

To curb the strike the town had promptly and cheerfully repudiated the civil rights for which the race has struggled in the past four centuries: the right to assemble, the right of free speech. The Poles were forbidden to meet in their own society hall. When the Greek priest offered his churchyard, the town passed an ordinance forbidding assemblage in any plot of ground ten feet from a highway, and dragged a speaker out of the churchyard to arrest. Reporters for the radical press were excluded from the courtroom during the trial of strikers. Everywhere is this reckless disregard of liberty when it comes into conflict with established authority.

We talked of the prospects. Biscay was sure of winning. He said that when Herman was rearrested on complaint of the man who furnished his bail (this man having been intimidated by the town authorities), the strikers, withdrawing savings to the total of \$1200 embarrassed the postal savings department of the post office, which was obliged to telegraph to Washington for an extension. (It was the business of these immigrants which raised the Ipswich post to second class.)

Behind the house flowed the little sun-kissed river between leaning willows, smooth, deep, and full. It was this creature of blessing and beauty which had, originally, caused the mill to be built: man's need

growing into man's greed, and, at length, into tyranny and oppression. The river was the one note of peace in the scene. The rest, the silent, busy girls, the stern men, the tables, the circulars, were war. At noon in the inn beside the church green, where a bunting-draped rostrum awaited the speakers of the afternoon, I ate a solitary luncheon among a few sour-visaged elderlies who were dragging out a tedious leisure of old age unsweetened by larger than personal interests. Two old women, leathery-skinned, exchanged notes on their sleep and digestions. Otherwise the waitresses came and went in silence. On the walls were steel engravings of violent scenes from Elizabethan drama wherein passion was denoted by physical contortion.

The luncheon cost a dollar which was double its value. It was paid with a wry grimace.

In the sweltering afternoon I walked across the quiet town, over the stone arches of the pre-Revolutionary bridge; past the old hostelry of stage coaching days when this was the turnpike to Newburyport; past gambrel-roofed houses of colonial date, swaddled in rich foliage and brown with gardens of old-fashioned flowers. Their lawns were smooth; their fan-lighted doors gleamed with the burnished brass of knocker, number, key-collar, latch and nameplate. Across the silent stream, glistening to the sun, stood the empty mills, gaunt and sullen. Over them, high against the burning blue, shook and streamed in bitter mockery—the national colors.

The younger clergyman was in a book-lined study furnished in mission oak. It was a large house for two people and so young a man. It was he who had taken photographs of the housing, exhibited them on a screen in his church, to discover that his parishioners owned the property. They cleaned up. He fought to meet a town ordinance regulating tenements. It was overwhelmingly defeated.

He was bitter against the I. W. W. and imparted that the leaders were carnally-minded. I inquired how so. It appeared that he talked with them, they not knowing who he was and talked freely of women and their views of them. As it happened that he himself shows, embarrassingly to a stranger, the depletion of too frequent intercourse, and the I. W. W. Leaders naturally inferred that they were talking to someone who shared their tastes, it was not, I concluded, a bad joke. He immediately shares the impression that marriage sanctifies excess.

Yet all this is neither here nor there, for he is one of the few intelligent clergy, willing and able to fight, and pretty clear-headed withal. And he treated me with the utmost courtesy, even walking, through the intense heat of the afternoon, back to the mill with me and to the station.

It had been my most profitable celebration of the Fourth. I had seen something, and, what is more, I had understood it. To one ignorant of the undercurrents there would have been nothing unusual in the whole ceremony. Even at the rostrum on the town green at which the minister and I paused a moment to hear Gussie Gardiner's peroration, the Essex congressman's pedagogue severity on the "lawless apostles of labor revolt," pointed as they were meant to be, were being received by the crowd stolidly sullen, if not wholly indifferent. If anything, they listened like school children to a scolding which they chose to consider not intended for them. And the Congressman, in his conventional coat of black

broadcloth, was sweating profusely as he droned in the professional singsong of legislative halls,—a style wholly unsuited to his audience who derived from it an impression that the speech was largely perfunctory. Outwardly there was nothing to indicate that the occasion was extraordinary. But the undercurrents were running deep and swift.

[Lucien Price Notebooks and Correspondence (MS Am 2033). Houghton Library, Harvard University]