

The High Cost of Living

Capitalists About to Solve the Whole Problem

At last we may begin to breathe easy. No need now to worry unduly about where the next meal is to come from. The mighty arm of the government has been stretched forth, and is already busy "jamming down the high cost of living." An Associated Press dispatch says that President Wilson himself, on August 4, "had no engagements for the forenoon and was understood to be devoting his attention to the high cost of living problem." Isn't that lovely?

"Governors, mayors, and grand juries," we are told, "are ordering searching probes." Attorney General Palmer's Committee is going to hear the report of a sub-committee, and "The President will await the report of Palmer's committee. His recommendation, which will follow this report, will probably take the form of a message to Congress." In fact, Uncle Sam is heading a regular "drive for cheaper food," which will end once and for all the grim spectre that confronts everybody.

Why This Sudden Concern About the Cost of Living?

There are some questions that come to us, as we ponder on this campaign. Hitherto government "investigation" has been directed toward Bolshevik agitators, advocates of free speech, and similar undesirables. Now there is sudden regard among our capitalists for the poor wage-slave, and an overpowering desire on their part to lessen his cost of living. Our familiarity with capitalist ethics leads us to suspect that some ulterior motive is back of all this loving care that is so unexpectedly being bestowed upon us.

As a matter of fact, this subject of the high cost of living

A Lesson from Russia

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besides waging a defensive warfare against the armies of German and Allied Imperialists, the industries left in chaos by the Czar's government are being rapidly reorganized upon an efficient basis, despite the deliberate attempts at disorganization on the part of the remnants of the capitalist class within Russia.

Nicolai Lenine in an article appearing in the Russian paper "Pravda," in May, 1918, and later translated into English under the title "Soviets at Work," emphasizes the necessity for efficient organization of industry.

Lenine, in a brief summary of the movement that culminated in victory for the Bolsheviks, declares the **first problem** consisted in convincing the **majority of the population** that its program and policies were correct. The **second problem** of the Bolsheviks was the **conquest of political power** and the suppression of the resistance of the exploiters. After commenting on the various elements endeavoring to destroy soviet power, he expresses confidence that the problem of the resistance of the exploiters is solved.

On the problem of organization we will quote the words of Lenine:

"We are now confronted by the third problem, which is the most urgent and which characterizes the present period: To organize the management of Russia. Of course, we had to deal with this problem and have been at it ever since November 7, 1917. But, heretofore, as long as the resistance of the exploiters manifested itself in open civil warfare, the problem of management could not become the principal, the central problem."

"At present it has become the central problem. We, the Bolshevik party, have convinced Russia. We have won Russia from the rich for the poor, from the exploiters for the toilers. And now it is up to us to manage Russia. The special difficulty of the present period consists in comprehending the peculiarities of the transition from the principal problem of convincing the people and suppressing the exploiters by force to the new principal problem of management."

Instead of urging anarchy and bloodshed, as charged by the American capitalist press, Lenin admonishes the Russian workers thusly:

"Keep accurate and conscientious accounts, conduct business economically, do not loaf, do not steal, maintain strict discipline at work—these slogans, which were justly ridiculed by revolutionary proletarians when they were used by the bourgeoisie to assure their domination as a class of exploiters have now, after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, become urgent and fundamental slogans. And the practical realization of these slogans by the toiling masses, is, on the one hand, the sole condition for the salvation of the country, which has been shattered by the imperialistic war and by the imperialists (headed by Kerensky); and, on the other, the practical realization of these slogans by the Soviet power, with its own methods, and on the basis of its own laws, is necessary and sufficient for the final victory of Socialism."

The reason the ruling class of the world is infuriated at the success of the Russian Bolsheviks is because in that country the workers are organizing a new society based upon the prin-

has already come to a head in several European countries, with serious results to the governments concerned. In Italy it seemed for a time as though Soviet rule might be established, and the government fell all over itself in the effort to supply cheaper food and punish the "profiteers." In Liverpool two days of rioting and looting, with strikes throughout the rest of England, call emphatic attention to **danger** from this problem—**danger to Capitalism**. Now this discontent might spread to America. Is that the reason Yankee Capitalism bestirs itself?

A Comparison and a Prophecy

The government of England, too, has been "investigating" the H. C. of L., and "campaigning" against it, yet prices there continue soaring skyward. "Life is becoming almost too costly to live," says a great London newspaper. Prices have "officially" increased 113 %, but in reality about 250 %. And all this in spite of the fact that the British government is paying "subsidies" of \$900,000,000 yearly to bribe food dealers to sell their goods to the cheaper markets at home. Millers and bakers alone receive \$250,000,000 from the public treasury in this way.

Will the American government have any better success? We doubt it. Furthermore, we predict continued and increased profiteering, and a continued and increased cost of living. There is no solution to this problem within the confines of the capitalist system.

To capitalists we have, therefore, no suggestion to make. The dilemma is up to them. But to the workers we say, Why not try the plan used in Soviet Russia?

principles enunciated in the Communist Manifesto, written by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in 1848. In that manifesto the founders of modern socialism declared: "THE FIRST STEP IN THE REVOLUTION BY THE WORKING CLASS IS TO RAISE THE PROLETARIAT TO THE POSITION OF RULING CLASS." The working class will then use its political supremacy to wrest all control of industry from the hands of the capitalist class.

In its struggle to prejudice the minds of the workers of America against revolutionary Russia the capitalist class knows it is fighting a losing battle. With the desperation which comes with that realization this ruling class sinks into idiocy and instead of intelligently defending itself places more weapons in the hands of its mortal enemy.

If the cartoon were reversed it would be nearer the actual facts, for the same ruling class that vilifies the Bolsheviks clasps in brotherly embrace the gory hands of Mannerheim, the butcher of Finland, and gives aid to the Czarist admiral, Kolchak, of Siberia. The newspapers that ask the American worker to believe their lies about Russian brutality eulogized the industrial tyrants of America when workers were slaughtered in West Virginia and Calumet, Mich., in 1913; and when the hirelings of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. burned alive women and children at Ludlow, Colo., April 20, 1914. Nowhere in revolutionary Russia or any other part of the civilized world have thugs and gun-men burned helpless women and children; that is the distinct contribution of American capitalism to industrial history. This ruling class is merely resorting to the Jesuit tactic of accusing its enemies of the crimes it has been guilty of.

The intelligent worker will investigate the history of the Russian revolution, the theory and tactics which made possible its triumph, and with an understanding of the mission to which history has called him will join "the regular march of the iron battalions of the proletariat" for the purpose of destroying capitalism.

A Chicago preacher favors segregation of the blacks "for their own good as well as for the good of the whites." What text did you quote, Parson?

"The Bolshevik demands the privilege of ranting seditiously, traitorously, of urging pillage, murder, rape, abolition of marriage ties, the commonization of women, anything everything that happens for the moment to excite his unrestrained brain."—This gem is from *The Forelock*, a "patriot" weekly, published in Detroit.