

The Communist

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Union Revolts

THE Chicago District Council of the Federated Railroad Shop Crafts (railway shopmen) issued a call for an "unauthorized" convention to protest against the miserable compromise of the union officials in accepting the 4c increase in wages. The convention met in Chicago September 25 to express its protest and devise means for action.

Some months ago, the railway shopmen made demands for a substantial increase in wages. The union workers were determined to get the increase by means of a strike. Negotiations were held; President Wilson issued a declaration against the strike, in spite of which large groups of the workers quit their jobs; but the "international" officers of the union compromised, accepted the miserable 4c increase, ordered the suspension of the strike and broke the strike of the men who had acted in spite of orders to the contrary.

This treacherous compromise and betrayal aroused the resentment of the workers in the unions. The men were sullen and resentment flared up against the international officers. This crystallized itself in the call for a convention issued by the Chicago District Council. L. M. Hawver, president of the Council, and J. D. Saunders, secretary, were ordered suspended from the unions of which they are members; but the local unions refused to comply and have been threatened with the revocation of their charters.

The direct acts of this convention are the least important; the vital thing is this revolt against the old union officials, this mass upsurge of union men which, while limited in scope and not yet conscious of larger means and purposes, is of the utmost importance in the movement to rally the American workers for Industrial Unionism and Communist action.

Since the armistice, and under the prevailing conditions of the collapse of Capitalism and the general revolutionary ideology, the American workers have instinctively developed the tendency toward more aggressive and conscious industrial action. This tendency has been sabotaged by the union bureaucracy: in strike after strike, such as the Seattle general strike, the railway shopmen controversy, the proposed general strike in Boston, and now the Steel Strike, the union officials dampen the enthusiasm of the workers, crush the impulse toward larger, aggressive action. The workers have sensed the spirit of the new proletarian struggle, while the union officials still cling to the tactics of the Old Stone Age in the labor movement.

These conditions are producing an intense revolt of the workers in the old unions. They are disgusted with their officials, they sense the limitations of the old unionism and the old tactics; while more and more union officials are uniting with the employers and the state to prevent a revolutionary upflare in the unions

particularly and among the proletariat generally.

This tendency of mass revolt in the unions is one of the most vital of contemporary developments. It is an expression of the growing revolt of the workers, together with the demoralization of the old unionism. Out of this tendency may come great things; and it is a task of the Communist Party to avail itself of this tendency for developing Industrial Unionism and Communist action.

Center of Reaction

INDULGENCE in gracious verbiage has deceived many persons, unconscious of the material forces determining events, that President Wilson was a "friend" of Russia. The United States Government has repeatedly announced the withdrawal of American troops from Russia; but this withdrawal has never materialized, the Government of Wilson furnishing money and munitions to Kolchak & Co.

Now it appears that not only are the American troops not to be withdrawn, but that there has been a campaign to enlist troops for service in Russia, and, this campaign having fizzled, conscripted men are to be used. Furthermore, it appears that President Wilson and his Government are the centre of the reactionary clique that is directing a counter-revolutionary war against Russia.

In the Chicago "Tribune" of September 25, Arthur Sears Henning writes from Washington:

"The United States has undertaken to furnish Kolchak with the principal aid from allied sources, while Great Britain and France have agreed to furnish supplies and other aid to General Denikine, who is the anti-Bolshevik commander in South Russia. The extent and precise character of the assistance the president has promised Kolchak is not known.

"That the president has agreed with the Allies on a plan for support of Kolchak and Denikine in this war on the Bolsheviks was confirmed today at the State Department. Said one official:

"The other Powers are taking care of Denikine, and it is up to the United States to look after Kolchak."

It has been clear for some time that President Wilson was implacable in his determination to wage war against the Communist Republic of Russia. In the Peace Conference Wilson united with Clemenceau against Russia; the United States Government has approved the plans by means of which Japanese capital is consolidating its control of the natural and industrial resources of eastern Siberia, and has been lavishly financing Kolchak &

Co. All this during a time when Wilson was speaking of universal liberty and disarmament, and pleading with our people not to "break the heart of the world."

This situation suggests a number of very interesting questions:

Where does Congress participate in this international brigandage? Or is it sufficient for Autocrat Wilson to act, providing it promotes the supremacy of Capitalism? These millions of dollars of American

Is universal peace to be realized by means of waging secret and open war against the workers wherever the workers conquer power?

What are the secret agreements with Japan, granting compensations to American Capitalism for "our" government's support of Japanese brigandage in Siberia?

After Kolchak is defeated, which is inevitable, who will repay to the American government the millions upon millions of dollars spent to finance Kolchak & Co.?

What has become of the promises made to the mothers of American troops in Russia about immediate withdrawal? money are being spent to murder the Russian people and crush their Communist liberty. The Allies demand that the Soviet Republic shall pay the international debts of Czarism—debts contracted for the purpose of crushing the Russian people. The Soviet Government, yielding to the Shylocks of international finance, recently expressed itself as willing to pay these debts. Now an official of the former Czar's Empire is contracting loans, by means of which to crush the Russian people: the Allies, of course, will insist that the Russian people honor these debts!

The situation in connection with the war against Soviet Russia is very simple. International Imperialism, united in the Council of Five, is determined to assure the permanency of its financial and territorial division of the world, thereby assuring the permanency of Capitalism. Soviet Russia, with its inspiration to the workers of the world, threatens this permanency. International Imperialism, accordingly, mobilizes its forces against the Communist Republic of Russia, against the revolutionary movement throughout the world.

That the United States should assume a dominant position in this reactionary war against Russia may surprise liberals, but not the Communist who interprets events by means of Marxism. The representatives of the United States may speak a liberal language, but its Capitalism speaks in the iron tongue of reaction. American Capitalism has definitely emerged into Imperialism; American Imperialism today is the mightiest in the world, having usurped financial world-power. The United States, accordingly, is the centre of world reaction, representing the mightiest and most reactionary Capitalism in the world.

Consequently, American Capitalism has enormous interests at stake in the general international issue of the Russian Revolution; and it is defending that stake, menaced by the oncoming World Revolution.

Leon Trotzky is quoted as saying: "It is not in Finland or Esthonia that the immense world struggle against Capitalism can be fought, but in America and England, and above all in the Far East." Precisely; and particularly in America. The United States is the most consummate and brutal product of Capitalism; it is as merciless against Soviet Russia as it is against its own proletariat on strike. President Wilson, in his tour for the League of Nations, has thrown off the mask: he has openly defended Imperialism and made it clear that Soviet Russia must be crushed. And this task includes the crushing of the American proletariat.

The final struggle against Capitalism, which will assure the World Communist Republic, will be fought out in the United States.

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