

On Which Side of the Barricade are You?

By George Andreytchine.

(Reprinted from *The Industrial Worker*).

SINCE the advent of the Bolshevik party as the controlling power of the Soviets in Russia some two years ago, much ink has flown and much foam has been spouted against it by all the combined forces of the exploiters of the working masses, as well as by their dupes, the yellow socialists, yellow anarchists and yellow syndicalists.

The Industrial Workers of the World knows too well the effects of the calumnies, insinuations and perfidious lies sent broadcast against its organization, tactics and principles. In spite of all these bitter lessons we have learned in our turbulent existence, we are resorting to the methods of our sworn enemies in dealing with the new scape-goat of the plutocrats—the Bolsheviks of Russia, Hungary and Germany. A perusal of the pages of the *One Big Union Monthly* will convince the curious reader that we are not very good friends of the Bolsheviks.

Here is the latest panegyric of its editor. This is from the October number, headed "Communism in Hungary":

"The Bela Kun government was Communist only in name. Not as if the members of this government and the party stand behind it could rightly be accused of sailing under a false flag. Unquestionably their intention was, if they had been left in peace, to gradually substitute for private ownership and control of property, ownership and control by the people. And there is no reason to believe that they would have succeeded worse or better than the Bolsheviks of Russia. If the Allied powers had not attacked them and laid obstacles in their way they would in all probability have established a firm dictatorship and gradually educated and organized the people to the level of industrial organization by means of which they would have taken over and carried on production. In a few years Communism might have been a reality in Hungary.

"As it was, Communism in Hungary limited itself to a few proclamations on paper and a few experimental compulsory measures, more or less at random, measures which under the circumstances worked for dissolution and weakness, rather than for order and strength. They no doubt did the best they could, but what was to be done? Only that government can survive which has it in its power to satisfy the people's needs of food, clothing and shelter and the other necessities of life. During the prevailing state of war the so-called Communist government could not do this. For this reason they lost the support of the starving masses. It was found more practical to go back to old methods, at least in part." (Boldface mine G. A.)

This in regard to Hungary and the Bela Kun administration. In other numbers we have read similar remarks slung at the Bolsheviks of Russia. They have provoked much comment in the ranks of our own membership, particularly the boys in the Leavenworth Prison, who indignantly greeted the much more sympathetic words of Robert Minor. I have questioned carefully more than 100 members of the I. W. W. and recorded them all as opposed to the attitude of Fellow Worker Sandgren. As for our adversaries, of the Communist Party, Communist Labor Party, etc., we cannot answer them when they ask "On which side of the barricade are you!"

Yes, on which side of the barricade are we! The statement in blackface above puts

much doubt in the mind of the revolutionary worker who has learned to turn every day towards the great East and inspiringly say: "Hold fast, toiling masses of Red Russia, we are coming to your rescue! Your struggle is our struggle, your victory our victory and your noble ideal our ideal!"

In reprinting the article of Fellow-Worker Andreytchine, also that of Fellow-Worker Davidson which appeared in *The Communist* last week, the editor takes sharp issue with the characterization of the Communist Party as among the "adversaries" of the I. W. W.

The opposition voiced in this paper and on the public platform has been to the official propaganda which Fellow-Worker Andreytchine himself attacks, citing the support of 100 other members of the I. W. W. whom he has personally interviewed.

In so far as there are differences in theoretical understanding between the I. W. W. and Communist Party, these do not represent an opposition of the Communist Party against the I. W. W. The members of the Communist Party are among the most ardent supporters of revolutionary industrial unionism of the I. W. W. character. Indeed, the two articles respectively reprinted show every prospect of approach to a single, unified propaganda by these two organizations.

We have championed the cause of all oppressed, persecuted and bleeding workers under the lashes of Moloch Capital. And now when all the revolutionary proletariat is bent on averting bloody invasion of the territory of the Russia of the Soviets, we are occupied in seconding the long heralded lie that Bolshevism is a failure.

Far from being a new convert to Bolshevism, which could be said of many of the present leaders of the hysterical political chapels, who alone represent the only teachings of Communism, who are aping Lenin to absurdity, I still remain a partisan of industrial unionism and syndicalism, as opposed to political "Communism" of the brand represented by the Michigan Messiahs. What I urge Fellow Worker Sandgren and his partisans to do is to abandon the mud-slinging tactics which some day will bring us before the revolutionary tribunal of the proletariat of the world, in case the Russian Revolution is drowned in the martyr's blood of peasants and toiling masses and capitalism triumphs a-new, under an indictment reading: "What have you done to avert the downfall of the glorious achievement of the Russian proletariat?"

We must beware of the tactics that Jouhaux, Legien, Branting, Henderson and their cohorts have pursued, veiling them with a red scarf. European Syndicalism completely capitulated before the imperialists and served them dog-like while the war lasted and now they use it as smoke-screen, as barage fire, in attacking Soviet Russia.

The old idols of the French working class, Jouhaux, Dumoulin, Bourderon and Merheim, the last two delegates to the famous Zimmerwald Conference, ex-enemies of the capitalist system, during the last congress of the General Confederation of Labor (C. G. T.) were leagued with the bandits who are seeking the overthrow of the Bolshevik government, which inevitably will lead to the Czar, with his Siberia, gibbet rope, prisons, pogroms, and which Sandgren calls

"more practical, at least in part" than Bolshevik State Communism.

We must remember the shrewd defense that the yellow syndicalists used against revolution, which I regret to say resembles very much the wise sayings of Fellow Worker Sandgren. Here is what the ex-anarchist Jouhaux said, apologizing for the treacherous abandonment of the general strike, set by himself and his colleagues for July 21st, to save the Russian and Hungarian Revolutions:

"In our opinion the C. G. T. should aim at practical results beyond those commonly conveyed by the word Revolution with a big, well-rolled R! It is justly said that revolution is a mere word since for the majority of us there is nothing behind it. But what should it stand for? Is it the catastrophic act which determines the collapse of a system? Or is it the long evolutionary process which little by little penetrates the system, the action which has sapped a regime and developed within the regime itself the organism which is to succeed it? That is revolution, and has always been revolution as the C. G. T. understands it. I have remained faithful to the old idea of Proudhon: 'The workshop will displace government.' We will replace the direction of persons by the administration of things. But this is not to be done by mere street lighting, by barricades, even by the general strike! One must have a clear conception, ready to apply and well understood by those who are to apply it, of the new organization which is to be erected, of the possibility of development into an increase of well-being and not into a famine. For we shall do well to realize very clearly that revolution which ends in famine is not revolution but the destruction of revolution."

Two days after this pompous pronouncement of the pontiff Jouhaux, the Bela Kun government was overthrown with the shameless co-operation of the labor unions, headed by men of Hillquit's and Berger's type—Garami and Weltner. Does Sandgren mean endorsement of the ignoble coup d'etat?

Much has been said against the Bolshevik policy towards labor unions and much of this criticism may be legitimate. They were not organizing industrial unions, not because they were opposed to them, which is denied by Lenin's statement to Minor, "The Industrial Union is the basic unit of the future order of society," but because it was a physical impossibility to do so. Also it is true that most of the unions in Russia today have been organized by members of the I. W. W., who returned to their native land after the March Revolution. Robert Minor and John Reed say that the coal miners' industrial union of the Donetz region had 60,000 members, all carrying I. W. W. cards and endorsing our preamble. Then, Minor says, the Germans came and with the aid of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie shot most of the militant members of the union, closed the halls, suppressed their papers, bulletins, in one word, smashed the whole magnificent achievement of the valiant members of the Industrial Workers of the World.

Under the Bolsheviks they were left unmolested, nay, received the co-operation of the people's commissaries.

Bill Shatov, once a member of the I. W. W. in America, and now an ardent worker ustry has been taken up by amazingly many

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