

The Birth of the American Soviet

Council of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors of Portland, Oregon

Declaration of Principles

THE Council of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors declares that society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labor alone wealth is produced.

In this society there is an antagonism of interests manifesting itself in a struggle between the master class and the working class, which struggle can only be abolished by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class by the conversion of the means of production and distribution, now held by the master class, into the common property of society, and their democratic control by all of society.

In the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve emancipation, therefore the emancipation of the working class must be accomplished by the working class itself. We can never expect the master class to introduce any measures that will be of slightest benefit to the working class.

The machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, therefore the workers must organize consciously for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an instrument of emancipation.

The ruling class today is absolutely incapable of longer conducting the industrial affairs of the nation in a manner conducive to the welfare of the people. Every act of its official spokesmen in the congress, the senate of the United States and the various state legislatures proves its utter inability to deal with the problems confronting it. Industry has reached such a point of development that the forces of production have come into violent conflict with the existing relations of production, therefore a period of revolution must ensue in which these relations must be burst asunder.

The working class must organize into a class organization for the purpose of waging unceasing warfare against the capitalist class and its instrument of oppression by any action that has for its object the overthrow of the political state of the master class and the substitution therefore of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The purpose of the Council of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors is to organize all members of the working class into one organization and train them in the

The following Declaration of Principles and Form of Organization of the Council of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors of Portland, Ore. and vicinity have been forwarded to us for publication. We feel that this is one of the most important undertakings of the American workers and is in line with the attitude of their European brothers, even in those countries where the Social Revolution is not yet definitely in action. We sincerely hope that the movement will be taken up throughout America by the returned soldiers and sailors in cooperation with their brothers in the labor movement. The action of the industrial barons of this country regarding the returned soldiers and sailors certainly shows the necessity for this work and we hope that these councils will remain true to their purpose and will not degenerate into mutual admiration societies which can be exploited by the politicians, as has been the case with previous organizations of veteran soldiers and sailors.

Our advice to such organizations would be to immediately link themselves into a nationwide group and federate with similar European and Canadian organizations. The Revolutionary Age will be glad to place its columns at the disposal of such organizations or of individual soldiers and sailors who wish to voice their demands. "He has rights who dares maintain them."



Drawn for The Herald, London, England

By Will Dyson

Vested Interests: "Ah, the dear fellow, he footed that other Bill so nicely, surely he won't mind footing this one for us!"

principles of mass action in order that we may realize that accumulation of energy, that concentration of force and continuity of resistance necessary to strike the final blow against the capitalist class.

Form of Organization

1. The Council of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors shall be composed of all men and women employed in industry or who in any manner whatsoever contribute to the social welfare, except those who employ the labor of others. This includes all who work for wages, women who are engaged in housekeeping, discharged soldiers and sailors; in fact all the working class, employed or unemployed.

2. No craft or industrial division shall be recognized by the Council, but existing organizations may send delegates to the Council, the basis of representation being one delegate for every one hundred members in good standing, or major fraction thereof, providing such organization endorses the Declaration of Principles of the Council of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors. The representation of the Soldiers and Sailors shall be upon the same basis as the representation of the Workers.

3. The Council shall have the following officers, elected for a period of six months, but subject to recall at any time by a majority vote of delegates, and the terms of office shall expire on the 31st of December and the 30th of June:—a president, vice-president, recording secretary, secretary-treasurer, sergeant at arms and reading clerk.

4. The president shall preside at all meetings and be ex-officio member of all committees, except where a committee is elected to investigate the official acts of the president. The vice-president shall be present at all meetings, and act as chairman in case of absence of the president. The recording secretary shall keep a record of the minutes of every meeting and permit any member of the Council to examine them upon request. The secretary-treasurer shall have charge of all funds and keep an accurate account of receipts and expenditures. The sergeant at arms shall take care of the door and admit only bona-fide members of the Council at any business meeting. The reading clerk shall read the minutes of the previous meeting, communications, etc. In case of absence of sergeant at arms or reading clerk, the president shall appoint members to take their places.

5. All checks must be signed by the secretary-treasurer, the president and vice-president. All money must be deposited in a reliable bank.

6. Robert's Rules of Order shall be observed at all meetings.

7. This shall be the only rules of order observed by the Council of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors,

as we do not recognize bourgeois formulas and consider a detailed constitution an impediment to revolutionary action.

8. Any member of this Council who denounces the declaration of principles will be immediately expelled upon competent proof, without the formality of a trial. In case the expelled member desires a trial it shall be granted.

9. Sufficient working committees shall be elected, subject to the desires of the Council.

10. This document shall be amended at any time, subject to majority vote of the Central Executive Committee.