

The Revolutionary Age

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They can Deport Men, but not Ideas!

THE master class of America is becoming nervous. The workers are restive and Capitalism is unable to sooth them. The war has petered out and those who bore its bloody burden are awakening to the realization that they were duped. All the glowing promises, all the thrills of victory, all the sacrificial fire, all the democratic phrases are gone and only the hideous reality remains, the struggle for existence, the bite of poverty, the quest of a job, the daily grind, the fear of want. The mirage has vanished and only the gritty desert sand remains to torment the parched lips. . . .

The workers, those who remained behind and bore the slavery of industry, those who went forward and suffered in the hell fire of war, are demanding a fulfillment of the promises. Not perhaps as yet consciously but nevertheless insistently and the "masters, lords and rulers of all lands" are empty handed. The master class is becoming aware that a demand is being made, that they are unable to fulfill it, and so they are nervous. They turn this way and that without result and their nervousness turns to irritation. "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad."

During the war the class conscious worker foresaw many of the developments that are now taking place and he gave voice to his vision. The jails opened to receive him, condemned as a pro-German. The hysteria of war blinded the others of his class, they were silent and Capitalism smiled. The jails filled, still the voices increased and Capitalism ceased to smile. . . .

Now the war is over and the voices have become a roar and the roar has become action. The workers are seething with dissatisfaction—dissatisfaction that may at any moment become revolt. The master class is nervous and nervousness begets precipitate action. Deportations become the order of the day.

American Capitalism has awakened to the fact that jailing men can not stop the spread of ideas. It has taken it many years to realize this fact and it has realized it only to turn to the deportation of men in order to accomplish the same result. Jailing men does not succeed in jailing ideas, consequently deporting men will result in the deportation of ideas!

Fifty-three men and one woman are already in New York Harbor awaiting deportation. They are charged with being agitators and the press reports that government officials have a list of over 5,000 men and women, also agitators, whom they propose to deport. According to the newspapers the avowed object of the action is to stop the industrial unrest that is today spreading throughout America. The prisoners are alleged to be Bolsheviks, Anarchists and members of the I. W. W., or sympathizers of these movements.

Whether this action is a violation of the constitution of the country, or of the freedom that residents are supposed to enjoy matters not. The world is at present in the throes of the birth of a new order of society. The class struggle is actually flaming in action and these deportations are an evidence of the fray. Two opposing classes face each other and struggle for the conquest of power. Capitalism is fighting for its existence and these deportations are part of the struggle. Constitutions and bourgeois guarantees are worthless and legality plays but a minor role.

Capitalism believes that these agitators menace its existence, it has discovered that prison walls do not allay the menace and so it turns to deportation. Deportation plays a double part. It gets rid of the agitator and at the same time brands him as something alien to the soil of America thus fostering in the mind of the unthinking the idea that the propaganda is also alien to America.

The cry is for Americanization, and Americanization has been interpreted by the press, university professors, the pulpit and all the other agencies of reaction to mean something altogether apart from the rest of the world. America and Americans are different, they know nothing of labor troubles, they have no ideas for the reconstruction of society, everybody is content with things as they are, everyone is equal, there are no kings in America! All the discontent that is at

present seething throughout the world is the result of foreign doctrines and though in some parts of the world there may be reasons for the discontent here it is entirely the product of agitation and propaganda by sinister forces utterly foreign to these shores! Deport the foreigners and their ideas go with them and we can once more resume our peaceful progress towards the millennium, we become a nation of potential presidents and multimillionaires!

This cry of Americanization, this movement for an intensive and narrow nationalism, is in reality nothing

Strike Breaking

The arrest of Ime Kaplan, secretary of the Lawrence Strike Committee, on the charge of draft evasion is merely a further instance of how even the Federal laws and the legal machinery of the country, to say nothing of the State laws and machinery, are used for the purpose of supporting the master class. The fact that Kaplan was released after a few hours detention only serves to strengthen the assumption that the affair was a deliberate "frame up" for the purpose of injuring the cause of the workers. If after investigating the case for a couple of hours the authorities can decide that Kaplan had complied with the law, the question naturally arises as to why such investigation was not made prior to the arrest.

According to press reports Kaplan was arrested while a committee meeting was in progress, and the men making the arrest also threatened Sam Bramhall, chairman of the Strike Committee, that they were after him. Bramhall is a man beyond the draft age and it would be interesting to know why the police are after him. It would also be interesting to know, provided the newspaper accounts of the affair are correct, upon what authority the police have the right to threaten him. A policeman's job is to enforce the law, to make arrest if the law is transgressed, not to take it upon himself to threaten individuals. The assumption upon which the workers are supposed to respect the law is that the law is for the protection of the community. If this assumption is destroyed, if it becomes clearly apparent to the workers that the law is only a club with which is to beat them into submission then the effects will be indeed far reaching.

The press gave much publicity to the arrest of Kaplan as "a draft dodger" and interspersed the news with many references to "foreigners" clearly showing that the objective aimed at is to once more divide the workers. The war department has officially stated that the draft is no longer operative and it logically follows that it is no longer necessary to carry a registration card to protect one from arbitrary arrest. Why was Kaplan singled out for examination as to his draft status? Why was he taken away from the Strike Committee at the moment of critical deliberations? Did his arrest serve the interest of the 30,000 workers who are on strike, or did it serve the interest of the half-dozen industrial barons who are responsible for the strike?

The actions of the authorities in this matter require investigation, not only by the workers of Lawrence, but, by the workers of the entire country. The master class makes the laws through its henchmen in the legislatures, and what is more important it applies the laws through its control of the police. Bourgeois society rests on the theory that governments and laws exist for the benefit of the community as a whole, once this theory breaks down the structure of that society crumbles. The workers have had many instances of the fallacy of such an assumption and have still remained blind to the real situation but that is no guarantee that they will always remain blind.

more than an attempt to utilize all the base passions let loose by the war, self-glorification, racial prejudice. But the war that has enabled the cultivation of these ideas has also forever damned them. American soldiers have gone to Europe and found out that they were not so much Americans as human beings, subject to the same feeling and emotions as the millions of human beings with whom they fought and the other millions against whom they fought. American workers have stifled all their ordinary development

through the years of war only to find that their masters took advantage of the opportunity to more firmly entrench themselves in their privileged positions. The war is over, the "Hun" is no longer at the gate and the workers of America are taking a breathing space and looking around.

They find that while they have unsparingly labored others have schemed and that all their toil and misery and bloodshed have resulted in nothing except riches for the few and poverty for the many. They have, however, discovered something more. They have begun to realize that they have a community of interest with the workers of other lands, that the things they are complaining about are the same things against which workers of other countries are protesting. And more than this they are seeing that the Russian workers have found the solution. Dimly, through darkened glasses, they are seeing that the evils which are pressing them down are not the superficial, individual, local evils but evils resulting from a state of society that functions equally in the Seattle shipyards, the Lawrence mills, the Japanese rice fields, the English mines. . . .

The unrest is not the result of agitators or of agitation but of conditions. The ideas are not the result of agitators so much as they are the result of the fact that the workers have begun to think for themselves. The Russian revolution, the struggle in Germany, the unrest in England, France, Italy, all affect the unrest in America just as the American unrest affects the unrest in England, France and Italy, and the deportation of the agitators only further this unrest.

While America is engaged in deporting subjects of the British Empire as alien agitators, England has gathered together over 200 agitators for deportation to America. The ships that carry the English, Scotch and Irish agitators to Britain will pass the ships that carry the American born agitators to America. Englishism is being paraded in England just as Americanism is in America. The American agitator is looked upon with as much horror by the unthinking British workers as his compatriot is regarded by the unthinking American.

The Seattle strike, the Butte strike, the strikes in the textile trades are the results of conditions and the tactics adopted by the workers in their struggles with the master class are also the result of conditions. The strikes in America are conducted on American lines because they are confronted with American conditions. The basic tactics of both the workers and the bosses are the same the world over but in detail they differ according to the prevailing conditions.

The unrest, the revolutionary movement, that is sweeping Europe has its reflex in the American working class, but the American capitalist class also reacts to it. A period of reaction is here, is developing intensively. The espionage act will shortly have to be repealed because the war is over but in the meantime the master class is preparing new laws to take its place, laws which will meet the newer developments. The change in the immigration laws which makes possible these deportations is one of the new laws. These deportations are the first overt act in the new war of the capitalists on the workers. Many more acts will follow, but the Seattle strike also took on new aspects. The fight made by the western workers was the first step in repelling the attack. As the struggle becomes more intensive both sides will develop new methods. The working class is learning rapidly and is daily developing new tactics.

The reply to the new reaction will probably be that revolutionary propaganda will go underground. Secret organizations will function with more power and intensity than did the old open organizations which are now proclaimed. Deportations may go on but the working class has already grasped the ideas that are today revolutionizing the world, the ideas that Russia and the German Spartacans have translated into action. Jailing the agitators have spread their ideas, deportations will simply further the work.

Ideas cannot be deported. Capitalism can not bolster up its tottering power. The march of progress has decreed that it must go. "It is history's iron must." Let the ships sail!