

The Wrath of the Millions

By Barnet Braverman

THROUGHOUT the world the wrath of the proletariat is preparing to hurl itself at the forces of Imperialism.

The wrath of an accusing working class is about to deal with the politicians and financiers of Imperialism whose power is based on a bluff and on past, dense ignorance of the working class.

In Paris, the ablest servants of Imperialism have been conducting a series of discussions to consider ways and means of bolstering their worn, decayed social system. Through press channels these servants of Imperialism would have us think of their discussions as the embodiment of a peace conference.

But where is there peace?

There will be no peace in the world after the servants of Imperialism have adjourned their conference. There can be no peace—there shall be no peace—in the world until the workers have organized their wrath and used it mercilessly to crush laws, customs, and institutions that have enabled a few imperialist politicians and financiers to exploit and bleed the proletariat.

While Wilson and House, Lloyd George and Balfour and Pichon, and other representatives of Imperialism are evolving a capitalist peace and considering the possibility of future wars in which the workers are to murder one another without cause, the wrath of the proletariat is raising its giant form, ready to strike hard in England, Ireland, Scotland, South America, the United States, Roumania, Italy.

While the world is in the throes of proletarian wrath, what are the Socialists of America thinking, now?

American Socialists should reconcile themselves to the cold, bare fact that parliamentary or moderate Socialism is dead to stay dead.

Moderate Socialism in America gave its last gasp when its high priest, Victor Berger, was convicted a few weeks ago for violation of the espionage act.

I think, moderate Socialism in America gave its last gasp when its arch apostle, while on the witness stand, revealed graphically and unconsciously, the craven, compromising, treacherous, psychology of moderate Socialism as he expressed disapproval of the Bolsheviks in Russia and revolutionary working-class tendencies in the United States. Will American Socialists agree that this brand of Ebert-Kerensky-Scheideman Socialism is more dangerous to intelligent American working class revolution than capitalists with their institutions? They should, if they be honest and clear in their perceptions.

Why the childish prattle of moderate Socialism, to appease the anger of imperialists, about buying out the industries when they can be expropriated by a government based on proletarian dictatorship? American capitalism will never sell itself out any more than did feudalism or American negro slavery.

Socialists should discard the practice of trying to cater to the good will of the enemies of the working class. Socialist policy must become drastic and posi-

tive in its demands and welcome a similar policy from the bourgeoisie although the latter have shown they need no invitations to be drastic and positive in their methods for the protection of their power.

Today the forces of American, French, English, Italian, Japanese and German imperialism are lined up solidly against the proletarian revolution in Russia. Socialists in America should realize their task to bring pressure upon American Imperialism by supporting the Bolsheviks and world-wide revolt.

The United States teems with proletarian wrath that is not yet organized, the wrath of people who distrust the government in foreign affairs, the wrath of men and women workers who want something more out of life than the opportunity to work from sunrise to sundown, the wrath of a greatly increasing unemployed army, the wrath of returning soldiers who are jobless after having fought for "democracy" and "freedom." These people, fretting under the double yoke of economic insecurity, unemployment and high prices, constitute the material now before our eyes, the material with which we must work to create self-disciplined mass revolution.

An American revolutionary Socialist movement must convince workers that their wrath can bring them permanent relief from economic insecurity only when their indignation is expressed in conscious mass action for the abolition of the capitalist state called "democracy" and the organization of a state recognizing the needs of those who work on a socially useful status.

Moderate Socialism has always interfered with the development of working class initiative just as much as the conservative labor unions of the American Federation of Labor. Moderate Socialism has ever supported the capitalist state in which the bourgeois have always held the reins of power.

There is no difference between moderate Socialism and bourgeois reform. The former is to catch votes for some Socialist politician, and the latter to carry out reforms under pressure from the masses.

In many sections of the country factories and mills are closing or have shut down. A revolutionary Socialist government based on proletarian dictatorship would not hesitate to expropriate and open these factories and mills for the employment of those who are eager to work, *eager to produce wealth.*

In different states conferences (always "conferences") are on between state and federal officials and conservative, sane labor leaders, all engrossed in the problem of reaching a solution for unemployment.

Conferences are of no avail. Bourgeois conferences (conservative, sane labor leaders belong to the lower strata of the bourgeois) never helped the workers.

Can conferences between government officials and conservative labor leaders give employment to ten million unemployed persons (figures based on figures by Dean Kirchwey, for the United States Department of Labor) while private owners of industry deem it unprofitable to employ or buy labor power?

Talk emanating from conferences and reported in the press with a pretense of achievement will not solve economic problems of the moment, especially at this moment, with proletarian wrath holding itself ready to take what the bourgeois refuse to give up—the control of government and industry.

As far as moderate Socialism is concerned in the matter, it cannot rise from its grave to offer spectre promises that could not be kept. Wherever moderate Socialism had opportunity to co-operate with revolutionary mass demands, it developed into social patriotism, capitalist state worship, counter-revolution and discouraged working class initiative.

Is the American Socialist movement to be a factor in the world-wide proletarian revolution? Then it must welcome and promote initiative among the people, to create social conflicts that will put the bourgeois on the defensive, must encourage disregard and disdain of imperialist social and economic repression, must support attacks of the workers on every form of bourgeois control.

Nothing short of a dictatorship of the revolutionary Socialist proletariat as the forerunner of genuine industrial democracy, should become the dominant note in American Socialist policy. There cannot, will not, be room for any other policy, because people are not in a mood for compromise with unemployment, economic insecurity and other phases of capitalist civilization, after supporting a war that was foisted upon them in the name of democracy and freedom.

A degraded press, ever since the Bolsheviks assumed power fifteen months ago, has been looking upon the proletarian revolution in Russia with alarm, derision, hatred. With the spirit of revolt imbedding itself in the hearts (and I hope the heads as well) of the American masses, press, politicians and financiers refer to Bolshevism as a bogey, a force resolving itself into chaos and confusion.

What worse chaos and confusion can be produced than exists now throughout the world as a result of capitalist imperialist domination?

The bourgeoisie has nothing to offer the people, and is powerless before the historic forces of post-war events. Bourgeois organization of industry is cracking. But many are not aware of this at present. Occasionally a London will say words to disarm the workers about the consciousness of their might, as he did, not so long ago in the House of Representatives, when he referred to the proletarian revolution as an impossibility in the United States.

But before us looms the wrath of the millions!

And we hail the wrath of the millions!

The growing wrath of the people indicates their awakening from the slumbering stupor of capitalist democracy. And this wrath, that must become self-disciplined and intelligently expressed, shall use its energy in building order out of chaos, establishing a real world peace, creating a Soviet republic, and organizing a league of free working class nations.

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