

The Revolutionary Age

A Chronicle and Interpretation of International Events

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ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY

By Local Boston, Socialist Party

H. G. Steiner, Business Manager

285 Washington St., Boston, Mass.

Bundle orders 2c a copy, Subscription \$1.00 for six months (26 issues).

The Principles and Tactics of the New International

From the Call of the Communist Party of Russia (Bolsheviks) for a Communist International Congress.

It is an urgent necessity that the first congress of the new revolutionary International be called. During the war and the Revolution the complete bankruptcy of the old Socialist and Social Democratic parties, and the second International, as well as the incompetency of the middle elements of the old Social Democracy (the so-called "centre") for live revolutionary action, has finally become evident. At present, however, the outlines of the genuine revolutionary International are distinctly coming into view.

As a basis for the new International, we consider necessary the recognition of the following principles, which we shall consider our platform, and which have been worked out on the basis of the program of the Spartacus group in Germany and the Communist party (Bolsheviks) in Russia.

1. The present is the period of the dissolution and the collapse of the whole capitalist world system, which will mean the complete collapse of European culture, if Capitalism, with its unsolvable contradictions, is not destroyed.

2. The problem of the proletariat consists in immediately seizing the power of the state. This seizure of the power of state means the destruction of the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie and the organization of a new proletarian apparatus of power.

3. This new proletarian state must embody the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in certain places also the small peasants and farm hands, this dictatorship constituting the instrument for the systematic overthrow of the exploiting classes and the means of their expropriation.

Not the fraudulent bourgeois democracy—this hypocritical form of rule of the finance oligarchy—with its purely formal equality, but the proletarian democracy and the possibility of the realization of freedom for the working masses; not parliamentarism, but self-government of these masses through their elected organizations; not capitalist bureaucracy, but organs of administration which have been created by the masses themselves, with the real participation of these masses in the government of the countries and in the activity of the Socialist structure—this should be the type of the proletarian state. The power of the Workers' Councils and similar organizations is its concrete form.

4. The dictatorship of the proletariat is to complete the immediate expropriation of Capitalism and the suppression of private property in means of production, which includes, under Socialism, the suppression of private property and its transfer to a proletarian state, under the Socialist administration of the working class, the abolition of capitalist agricultural production, the nationalization of the great business firms and financial trusts.

5. In order to insure the social revolution, for defense against enemies within and without, of assistance for other national groups of the fighting proletariat, etc., the complete disarmament of the bourgeoisie and their agents and the general arming of the proletariat is necessary.

6. The present world situation demands the closest relation between the different parts of the revolutionary proletariat and a complete union between the countries in which the Socialist revolution has been victorious.

7. The fundamental means of the struggle is the mass action of the proletariat, developing into armed and open war upon the bourgeois state.

8. The old International has broken into three main groups: First, those frankly social patriots who during the entire imperialistic war from 1914 to 1918 supported their bourgeoisie and transformed the working class into hangmen of the international revolution.

Then there is the "Center," at present theoretically led by Kautsky and representing an organization of such elements, constantly wavering, not capable of following a definite plan of action and at times positively traitorous.

Finally the revolutionary left wing.

9. As regards the social-patriots, who everywhere in the critical moment oppose the proletarian revolution with force of arms, a merciless fight is absolutely necessary. As regards the "center," our tactics must be to separate the revolutionary elements, and to pitilessly criticize the leaders. Absolute separation from the organization of the Center is absolutely necessary at a certain phase of development.

10. On the other hand, it is necessary to proceed in a common movement with the revolutionary elements of the working class who, though hitherto not belonging to the party, yet adopt today in its entirety, the point of view of dictatorship of the proletariat, under the form of Soviet government; including the syndicalist elements of the labor movements.

The official Socialist Party of the United States was not invited to this Congress, but the Left Wing of the party was. Our task is to conquer the party for Left Wing Socialism, and affiliate with the Bolshevik-Spartan International.

Perhaps. Perhaps Not!

THE forces opposing Bolshevism in America are a peculiar mixture. Reactionary labor union officials and sweaters of labor, the university and the gutter, the Government and plutocracy, are feverishly agitating against this "menace to American institutions,"—American institutions, of course, being used to mean the evil supremacy of Capitalism.

Among the agitators against Bolshevism is Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson, formerly an A. F. of L. union official. This "labor representative" in the Cabinet of President Wilson is justifying his appointment by actively defending the interests of capital. He is deporting radicals. He is using his office—necessarily—against labor and for capital. He is preaching optimism to the workers, vividly picturing the prosperity that—is to come.

The other day, Secretary Wilson said that "the backbone of Bolshevism in America has been broken." Why, Bolshevism hasn't really manifested itself yet. "American labor will not be involved in the movement. When the American laboring man comes to realize what the movement means he will shun it." Perhaps. But since Bolshevism means Socialism, and Socialism expresses the fundamental interests of the workers, the only way to break Capitalism, that maker of war and misery and oppression, it's more likely that when American labor understands what Bolshevism means, it will accept its policy and practice. Understanding alone is necessary for acceptance. That's why Capitalism lies so much about Bolshevism.

Irish Labor Acts.

THE strike in Limerick, Ireland, threatens to become general. The strike is political in character, being a protest against military regulations imposed by the British Government upon the Irish workers.

The strike, it seems, is managed by a Soviet, which is assuming the task of feeding the people. There is no disorder, and food is sold by the Soviet Strike Committee at lower prices than by private concerns. Limerick has been proclaimed a military area by the British Government, but the Soviet rules.

How deep this revolt is, it is impossible to judge, although reports come that similar Soviets may be organized in other cities of Ireland. Nor is the revolutionary character of the movement clear, although apparently not connected with the Sinn Fein. The conscious Irish working class refuses to accept the bourgeois, nationalistic program of the Sinn Fein—its program for national independence and economic servitude for the proletariat. The Sinn Fein "Parliament" has petered out, although of agitational value. Again it is clear that the proletariat alone has the power to compel decisions. The "General Strike Against British Militarism" must develop into revolutionary action against Capitalism, for the establishment of a Workers' and Peasants' Republic. The Irish revolutionary movement is part and parcel of the international revolutionary movement of the proletariat against Capitalism.

It Smells of Oil.

IT has ended quickly—the "revolution" of General Blanquet in Mexico, apparently organized and financed by the oil interests of American and British Imperialism.

The resort to "revolution" having failed miserably, the oil interests are preparing diplomatic intervention. British capital owns about 20% of the oil properties in Mexico. The other day, it was announced that the British Government had purchased the oil interests of its financiers involved in the controversy with Mexico. This action, it was declared, indicated that "Great Britain did not intend that the property acquired by British subjects in good faith, and under the laws of Mexico at the time, should be confiscated."

This is an action potential of aggression. The Mexican Government, in its policy of protecting Mexico's natural resources and curbing the power of foreign capital, is limiting the power of this capital by means of taxation. Up until now, its acts affected private capital; but with the British Government assuming ownership of oil properties, these acts will strike directly at the British Government, become political and diplomatic, and provide Britain with the pretext for government intervention.

The American State Department, apparently, has approved, at least tacitly, of Britain's action. This would indicate an imperialistic combination against Mexico, for intervention. The interests involved are sketched by *The Nation*: "It is beyond question, for instance, that E. L. Doheny, President of the Mexican Petroleum Co., went abroad some months ago as one of the representatives of the National Association for the Protection of American Rights in Mexico, the powerful banking group among whom are J. P. Mor-

gan & Co. . . . Vice-President Sisson is prepared to advocate 'international law of eminent domain in which the interests of society as a whole would have precedence over any integral part thereof,' ergo, it is for us to avail ourselves of the natural resources of Mexico. . . . Preceding the announcement of last week that the British Government had taken over the holdings of its nationals in Mexico, it was announced that the Cunard Co. planned to build 29 new transatlantic liners, and that these big boats were all to be oil-driven. 'With the Russian and Rumanian oil fields temporarily closed, and nine-tenths of the British oil coming from Mexico,' says the statement, 'British interests are trying to secure American-owned Mexican oil fields by long-term contracts at huge figures.' . . . A few days later it was announced that J. P. Morgan & Co. and other American financial interests had joined with certain Japanese capitalists to promote a new American-Japanese steamship corporation, and that America would invest \$200,000,000 in the enterprise."

Stone Age Minds

IN the midst of an upheaval that is transforming the world, and equally the proletarian movement, the bureaucracy of the American Federation of Labor still clings to the ideas and the tactics of the Old Stone Age of the labor movement.

In an editorial on the Seattle strike, in the *March American Federationist*, official organ of the Gompersized A. F. of L., the Stone Age mind reveals itself. It says:

It must be freely conceded that during the war period in many instances the workers were compelled to accept wages which were insufficient and inadequate to meet the increased prices charged for food, clothing, fuel, shelter, etc. It is likewise a recognized fact that the workers did not take advantage of the nation's needs; that in the greater number of instances the workers maintained industrial peace and gave practically uninterrupted service to our government when the war was in progress, while the profiteers were reaping an unprecedented harvest.

What an indictment of the A. F. of L., out of the mouths of its own spokesmen! This is a picture of labor betrayed, while the profiteers fattened upon labor: a picture of labor shackled by its own organization, rendered helpless while Capital wreaked its will upon it. Truly, the mass revolt in the A. F. of L. against the bureaucracy which produced strikes and more wages during the war, and which is now producing a new militant temper, is amply justified by, one of the bureaucrats himself.

Speaking directly of the Seattle strike, which has given a new impulse to the American labor movement, the *Federationist*, after emphasizing that the A. F. of L. is against the general strike or the sympathetic strike (camouflaged as being in the control of the international unions, that is to say, the bureaucracy) proceeds with its Stone Age analysis:

The general strike inaugurated by the Seattle Central Labor Union an undertaking in violation of the rules and regulations of the American Federation of Labor. The greater number of the local unions did not have the approval and sanction of their international unions and did not receive their moral or financial support. [Our italics—what a confession of treachery and organized scabbery.] Born in a spirit of insubordination, disregardful of all rules and regulations adopted by trade unions for orderly procedure and the safeguarding of the rights and privileges of their members and jeopardizing the funds of all local and international unions by subjecting them to the will and whim of officers of central labor unions, this strike was bound from its inception to die an early death.

The general strike in Seattle was a mass movement, imposed upon the union officials. It was developed out of the new impulse for mass industrial action which is inspiring the American proletariat. For five days, the Strike Committee was in absolute control of Seattle; for five days, a glorious page was written in American labor history; and then desertion and betrayals by conservative A. F. of L. union officials caved in the head of the strike. And they actually defend and even boast of their treachery!

Consider the smug, bureaucratic spirit of the *Federationist*, characteristic of its policy. It clings to old traditions, it speaks of "insubordination" in the spirit of the police chief. Insubordination! Is it still a mystery why the A. F. of L. is a hindrance to the development of militant labor tactics, to the emancipation of the American proletariat?

The general strike is a necessary weapon of militant labor. Industry is concentrated; the employers are organized; skill has become a negligible factor; craft divisions have been wiped out by the new industrial technology; under these conditions industrial unionism and the mass strike are indispensable to the proletariat if it wants to immediately conquer concessions, and ultimately conquer Capitalism. But the A. F. of L. policy, still clinging to the tactics of the Old Stone Age in the labor movement, is violently against new tactics and new ideas in the waging of the proletarian struggle.