

The Revolutionary Age

A Chronicle and Interpretation of International Events

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The Militant Strike

THERE is a revolutionary movement of the proletariat developing in Canada. Labor is awakening to a consciousness of class and the necessity of militant action. The demobilized soldiers are not accepting deception, and express a radical spirit. In Winnipeg at this moment there is a general strike which controls the city. It is not the old passive strike, but a militant strike,—the sort of strike out of which develops the mass action for the proletarian conquest of power. The strikers have issued the following statement:

"There will be no more newspapers until we decide to let them appear. We know the effect that a newspaper has in molding public opinion, and that in the past such opinion has been molded against our class. We realize that had we left the press open it would have taken advantage of the hard situation by trying to show the public that the strikers were weakening in their position by the opening of food depots."

The American bourgeois press is indignant at this action. But facts are facts. The class struggle of the proletariat is a form of civil war; and in civil war, you must break the weapons of your enemy. Unless the proletariat adopts more militant tactics in its strikes it is bound to meet disaster.

Starving Russia

THE Soviet Government of Russia has rejected the plan of Dr. Nansen, approved by the imperialistic Peace Conference in Paris, for "feeding" the Russian people. The capitalist press, corrupt to the bone, is stigmatizing this rejection as proof of the fact that the Bolsheviks are deliberately starving Russia. On the contrary, it is proof that the Allies are deliberately starving the Russian people, in order to crush the Soviet Socialist Republic, that menace to international Imperialism.

Dr. Nansen's plan was political. Its purpose was to weaken the Bolsheviks politically and strengthen the counter-revolutionary Omsk "Government," directed by Czarist generals and financed by the Allies. The Soviet Republic does not want "to be fed," it does not want charity; it asks simply opportunity to trade with the world on equal terms. But the Allies refuse to raise the blockade, a blockade which is one of the most infamous acts in history.

In addition to waging war against Soviet Russia by means of the most cruel blockade of recent history, the Allies are waging military war against the Soviets. British war ships are in the Gulf of Finland. While the press reports that American troops were to be taken out of Russia, 8000 more American troops have been sent to Archangel. It is war, deliberate and unscrupulous. It is murder of the women and children of Russia. It is Capitalism in one of its vilest manifestations. Labor—speak!

Partial Disarmament

THE army of Germany is to be limited to 100,000 men, according to the terms of peace. Drastic regulations are imposed which will prevent Germany doing to the Allies what Prussia did to Napoleon—build up a large army surreptitiously. There are bourgeois liberals—yes, there are!—who greet this as a great victory for disarmament. But the Allies are not disarming. On the contrary, they are all preparing to depend more than ever upon a large army and a large navy. An offensive and defensive alliance is to be concluded between France, Great Britain and the United States. Great Britain is maintaining an army of 900,000 men and its all-powerful navy. Universal military service seems about to be "put over" in the United States. The terms of peace, instead of

bringing universal peace and disarmament, are bringing new threats of war and more armaments. The disarmament of Germany is not a step toward universal disarmament, but a means of protecting the Imperialism of the Great Powers. The ideals of the war—but why waste words?

Which International?

THE first Congress of the Communist International, which convened at Moscow March 2-6 upon the initiative of the Communist Party of Russia (Bolsheviks) adopted a Manifesto and Program which is the new charter of international revolutionary Socialism. This Manifesto and Program is in accord equally with the facts of contemporary development and the spirit of revolutionary Socialism. It calls upon the proletariat and the Socialism of the world to organize in accord with its fundamental proposals, to engage or prepare consciously and aggressively for the final revolutionary struggle against Capitalism.

The test of the revolutionary spirit of a Socialist Party will be acceptance or rejection of this Communist International. Will the American Socialist Party, in spite of its N. E. C. aligning it with the Congress of the Great Betrayal at Berne, accept the Communist International? The membership has the opportunity to decide by means of the following referendum:

That the Socialist Party shall participate only in an International Congress or Conference called by or in which participate the Communist Party of Russia (Bolsheviks) and the Communist Labor Party of Germany (Spartacans).

This motion is clearly an acceptance of the Communist International, in spite of the fact that it was worded before news came of the first Congress of the Communist International being held. Every militant member of the Socialist Party, who adheres to the class struggle and revolutionary Socialism, must vote "yes" on this referendum.

It is sheer sophistry at this moment to discuss whether or not the old International still exists. It tried to hold a Conference at Berne, at which the Roberts and the Scheidemanns were represented, at which the Bolsheviks were denounced, at which the spirit was directly counter-revolutionary. This old International, which collapsed miserably during the war and which acted against the proletarian revolution, betrayed Socialism and the militant proletariat. It is now a corpse that has become stinking carrion.

The Second International has been dominated by moderate Socialism. It was an International largely of Socialist parties which pursued a petty bourgeois, parliamentary policy, which represented the interests of the middle class and the aristocracy of labor. The policy of this International was comprised in social-reformism, in legislating Capitalism out of existence, in the gradual penetration of Socialism into Capitalism. It was nationalistic, and broke down under the test of the war.

That the Second International contributed much to the movement, is indisputable. But its utility largely ceased upon the definite emergence of Imperialism at the start of the 19th century; and during the war and the proletarian revolution the moderate Socialism represented by the Second International developed into the worst enemy of the militant proletariat and revolutionary Socialism.

The new Communist International breaks definitely and completely with the Socialism of the Second International. It harks back to the revolutionary Socialism of the *Communist Manifesto*, planting itself firmly upon the basis of revolutionary Marxism, upon revolutionary mass action and proletarian dictatorship. The new Communist International is the product of life itself, of the experience of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the Spartacan Revolution in Germany. Socialism must accept the Communist International, or it ceases being Socialism.

The President's Message

CONGRESS is in session. It meets at a time when enormous problems press down upon it, when new social forces are coming into action. Congress, during the war, proved itself utterly incompetent, a mere lackey of the President. It demonstrated no initiative, no imagination, no understanding of the constructive needs of the people. Investigation—that was the only activity of Congress, compounded of camouflage and incompetence. The new Congress is equally incapable of dynamic action on vital problems.

President Wilson has issued an address to Congress. At a moment when the world is in crisis, the President proves himself as incompetent as Congress. The problems that press down upon the country require deeds,—but when the President turns from words to deeds, he breaks down utterly. This is not simply a personal tendency, but inherent in Capitalism.

In his message, the President says that "the question which stands at the front in every country amidst the present great awakening is the question of labor," and proceeds:

How are men and women who do the daily labor of the world to obtain progressive improvement in the conditions of their labor? . . . How are they to be given their right advantages as citizens and human beings? . . . There is now in fact a real community of interest between capital and labor, but it has never been made evident in action. It can be made operative and manifest only in a new organization of industry. . . . The new spirit and method of organization which must be effected are not to be brought about by legislation so much as by the common counsel and voluntary co-operation of capitalist, manager and workman. . . . The organization of industry is a matter of corporate and individual initiative and of practical business arrangement. . . . The object of all reform in this essential matter must be the genuine democratization of industry, based upon a full recognition of the right of those who work, in whatever rank, to participate in some organic way in every decision which directly affects their welfare or the part they are to play in industry.

What do the President's words mean? Years ago, he sensed that the peoples yearned for universal peace and a new world; he articulated that yearning in order to develop the ideology of "carry on," and then betrayed the yearning by accepting a peace that threatens the peace and liberty of the world. The President now senses that labor is awakening, that it yearns for a larger life; and he expresses this new yearning in words, while preparing to betray it in deeds. The President is making this yearning for a larger life the means of oppressing and subjugating labor.

Great Britain in deeds is attempting to realize the words of the President. Through "Industrial Councils" and "Industrial Parliaments" the British Government is trying to realize the "community of interest between labor and capital," to "democratize industry." But the President does not even propose the plans of the British Government, nor anything definite. Britain's schemes are not captivating the workers: the workers sense that all these plans are simply means for maintaining the ascendancy of the employers and the capitalists, of baffling the action of the workers. Militant labor is in revolt against the plans of the British Government.

The vital issue, the most pressing problem of the day is precisely this democratization of industry. Industrial democracy alone can bring peace and liberty and happiness to the world, end war and realize universal peace. But industrial democracy, in its very nature, implies the end of private ownership of the means of production, implies workers' control of industry. But the "democratization of industry" proposed by the President proceeds upon the basis of private ownership, of the supremacy of the employers and the capitalists. Until the revolutionary proletariat breaks the power of the capitalists, industrial democracy is unrealizable.

We do not know whether the President will propose any specific plans for realizing his "democratization of industry." His urging of conciliation is not a means to realize industrial democracy, but a means of baffling the action of the workers. But whatever plans are proposed, they will not satisfy labor. "Industrial Councils" or "Shop Committees" which bring employers and workers together are incompetent, and do not realize labor's purposes. They have been tried—particularly in the Standard Oil plants, where labor is brutally oppressed—and proven of no value: the employer can always interpose his veto, the veto of the might implied in ownership. This ownership must be broken.

Industrial democracy is the great issue. And this democracy is realizable only through workers' control of industry, established after the power of the capitalists is broken. Shop committees and the industrial organizations of the proletariat, exercising their functions through the industrial vote and centralized in an industrial government,—that alone can realize industrial democracy. And that means the conscious, definite struggle for communist Socialism.

Manifesto Edition

Anticipating a good demand for our issue No. 23, containing the amended "Left Wing Manifesto," we printed several thousand additional copies which are available at 2 cents per copy while the supply lasts.

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