

The Mass Strike in Action

IN CONSIDERING the period of revolutionary strikes into which the American proletariat—and the proletariat of other nations—has emerged, it is important to remember that the coming of the war occurred during a time of great industrial disturbances. Strikes of great magnitude had shaken Capitalism to its basis—class antagonisms on the industrial field were being sharpened while they were officially being modified in politics; new strikes were developing; everywhere there was potential action against Capitalism. Then war was declared; and the strikes ceased, proletarian energy being directed in the channels of war instead of proletarian action.

But the war, while breaking short this phase of industrial unrest, introduced a new phase—more conscious and definitely revolutionary. The miserable collapse of bourgeois society; the agony of the war; the victorious proletarian revolution in Russia and the developing proletarian revolution in Germany—all these have loosed the initiative and energy of the proletariat. The epoch of strikes into which we have emerged is, on the one hand, a consequence of the revolutionary stimuli of Russia and of Germany; and, on the other, of the problems of economic reconstruction which press down upon Capitalism.

In the United States, there is no program on "reconstruction." The Capitalist Class, accustomed to a docile proletariat, is not bothering much with the problem; and, moreover, its unprecedented prosperity during the war developed a fatalistic attitude. President Wilson, shortly before his departure for France in December, "put up" the problem of reconstruction to Congress; but Congress did absolutely nothing, was bankrupt and impotent. Soldiers are being demobilized who cannot get jobs; workers are being thrown out of jobs; the employers are trying to lower wages to pre-war standards—and all this is producing protest and strikes.

Outstanding among the recent strikes are the strikes

in Seattle and Butte. In Seattle, the strike was forced upon the conservative union officials by an upsurge of the spirit of action in the workers; it developed into a general strike—the first of its kind in recent American labor history; it developed revolutionary sentiments, in the proposals of the strike committee to assume municipal functions while the general strike was on. The strike was crushed by the betrayal of the conservative union officials and by the display of military force by the municipal government. The Butte strike was equally important and dynamic; it was directed by an actual Soldiers', Sailors' and Workmen's Council; it showed the I. W. W. to be a real industrial force; and again it was the conservative craft unions that broke the strike. In these two strikes there was manifest that primitive initial mass action which, when developing into the final revolutionary form, becomes the dynamic method of the proletariat for the conquest of power.

There is still a mass strike in the textile mills of Lawrence, Mass. Strikes are breaking out all over the country, are multiplying. This is the peculiar characteristic of the period into which we have emerged; it is the attitude of the Socialist toward these strikes that will hasten or retard the coming of Socialism. Out of these strikes the Socialist must develop larger action, must marshal and direct the proletariat for the conquest of power; and our parliamentary action must be a means of serving the industrial proletariat in action, of developing mass action.

Out of these strikes, moreover, the Socialist must try to develop the *political strike*. The political strike is a strike in which the proletariat uses its industrial might to accomplish political purposes, to bring pressure to bear upon the bourgeois state. It is out of the political strike that develops the final mass action; and the political strike is a supreme form of political action.

There is, at this moment, an opportunity for a polit-

ical strike of the first magnitude. Union after union has declared in favor of a strike to demand release of Tom Mooney; some unions have gone further and insisted that this strike should include all political prisoners. But the movement is being sabotaged by the bureaucracy of the American Federation of Labor; and even by men active in Mooney Defense. They decide to call a general strike on July 4—a legal holiday, a day on which it is absurd to speak of a general strike; and, moreover, they decide that it should be a strike for Mooney alone, and not include other of labor's prisoners. Moreover, the general strike is again being sabotaged by the union conservatives; it is now in a sort of eclectic state.

In this emergency, the whole force of the Socialist Party should be concentrated on propaganda for a great mass demonstration on July 4, and for a general political strike on July 5, to demand the release of class war prisoners. Large sections of American labor are prepared for such a strike, but they are being baffled by the bureaucracy, by reactionary union officials. It is the task of the Socialist to engage this struggle, to concentrate on this fundamental issue. Our comrades are languishing in prisons; a nesty cannot reach them, and we don't want amnesties for them. *We want them to be released by the industrial might of the proletariat, by class conscious action.* If the political strike materializes, it will blaze a new trail in American labor history; it will set precedent for the future; it will mean real class action by the proletariat, an appreciation of the political character of its struggle.

The political strike is new to American labor. It is indispensable. It must come. It is the first of the left wing Socialist to develop an intense propaganda in favor of this method of struggle, to lop out of the strikes of the proletariat the action the concept of the political mass strike.

Socialist Parties in England

By N. Mescheriakov

From the Moscow "Pravda"

THERE are a number of Socialist parties in England.

At the front of the Left there is the British Socialist Party. It is Marxian in theory and its sympathies are with the Russian Revolution and Bolshevism.

The party's leaders (Newbold, Fairchild, Sylvia Pankhurst) follow with great interest the march of the proletarian revolution in Russia. They are particularly interested in our organization of worker's control of industry and the structure of our Soviet Government of Workmen's Deputies. Its leaders proudly call themselves Bolsheviks. The British Socialist Party has expressed its solidarity with the Russian Revolution in one way, by publishing a Manifesto protesting bitterly against the sending of English troops to crush the Revolution.

Alongside of the British Socialist Party there exists in Scotland another party revolutionary in its nature—the Socialist Labor Party. Theoretically, this party strives to combine Marxism with the teachings of the American Socialist, Daniel De Leon, teachings as yet slightly known in our own country. Newbold, in the memorandum he gave me for Lenin (as the coming leader of the revolutionary labor movement of the world) characterizes the Socialist Labor Party in these words: "These are the most enthusiastic Bolsheviks. In my opinion, they are the real Bolsheviks of England. The S.L.P. is very consistent and carries on a wide propaganda; it has a large quantity of literature. The members of the S. L. P. propagate as much as possible the ideas of Bolshevism, published the secret documents, defend the Bolsheviks from attacks, and call themselves the party of the British Bolsheviks. They are our Leninists." It must be taken into consideration, in evaluating this description, that the writer—Newbold—is not a member of the S.L.P.

Away from us stands the most influential English Socialist Party, the so-called Independent Labor Party. Those of its leaders whom I met (Snowden, Bruce Glasier, MacDonald, Brailsford and others) are not at all revolutionary. They do not believe that there will be a revolution in England after the war. On the contrary, they believe that after the war there will be a reaction in England. They expect a still more reactionary wave in France. However, the ideas of this party have always been opportunistic. Nevertheless, even these leaders show sympathy for the Russian Revolution, and are greatly interested in it. They have also protested against sending English troops to fight the Russian Revolution.

But the rank and file of the Independent Labor Party is much more sympathetic toward the Russian

Revolution. In his memorandum, Newbold, who as an agitator has traversed England from one end to the other, is thoroughly acquainted with the English labor movement, characterizes the I. L. P.: "Their rank and file, insofar as they understand our movement, approve of it; they are proud of the name Bolshevik and without hesitation will follow your example at the proper movement."

Unfortunately, all these Socialist parties are numerically very weak. The British Socialist Party has 10,000 members, and the Independent Labor Party 45,000. The majority of the English workers are not affiliated with the Socialist parties, but are in the

Socialism and the "Majority"

By N. Lenin

IN attacking the petty bourgeois "Socialists" of the year 1848, Marx particularly and violently condemned their uncontrolled phrasemongery about "the people" and the majority of the people in general.

In order that the majority should really rule in a country, it is necessary to have definite, actual conditions, namely: it is necessary that such a form of government be established, such a governmental authority, as would furnish the opportunity to have affairs decided by a majority and to assure the development of that opportunity into reality. From another point of view, it is necessary that the majority, in accordance with its class composition and in relation to any other class within that majority (or outside of it) should be able to direct government co-operatively and successfully. It is evident to every Marxist that these two real conditions play a decisive role in the question of the majority of the people, and in the course of governmental affairs in accordance with the will of this majority.

If the power of government is in the hands of a class whose interests coincide with the interests of the majority, the administration of the government can then be, in reality, identical with the will of the majority.

If, on the other hand, the government power is in the hands of a class whose interests diverge from the interests of the majority, then every attempt to govern inevitably becomes a fraud upon or a subjugation of that majority. Every bourgeois republic furnishes us with hundreds and thousands of examples of this.

trade unions which form the so-called Labor Party semi-socialistic in its program and extremely inactive in its tactics. In that party the notorious so-called patriot, Arthur Henderson, wields great power. At the beginning of the war the Labor Party concluded a "civil peace" with the bourgeois parties.

But the mass of the English workers are not yet gradually being revolutionized. Their sympathy for the Russian Revolution grows steadily. For example, the English workers tried to form Workmen's Councils. But the English workers not yet clearly understand that Councils—as organs of the revolutionary struggle and proletarian dictatorship—can work successfully only in the atmosphere of a proletarian revolution. Accordingly, nothing far has been accomplished by these Councils in England.

The old leaders—adherents of coalition with the bourgeoisie—and the old unions are gradually beginning to lose their influence over the laboring masses. More and more often the workers violate the "peace" by calling strikes in spite of the advice of old leaders and the prohibitive orders of the old unions. The Workmen's Councils are in conflict with these strikes.

The revolutionary spirit among the English workers is gradually increasing, though the process is slow. The food crisis and the dislocation of industry must assume more acute forms in order to provoke a revolutionary outburst in England.

Even among the petty bourgeois radicals in England there is noticeable a sympathetic attitude toward the Russian Revolution. The most enthusiastic among them is King, the famous member of parliament. The radical papers, the *Manchester Guardian* and the *London Daily News* give the best information concerning Russia. These two papers also resolutely protest against intervention in Russia and interference with the Russian Revolution.

The English Labor movement is at the crossroads. New and younger leaders are coming up from the depths of the working masses, taking the places of the old leaders, the opportunists and social patriots who are losing their influence. Newbold says in his memorandum: "A number of riots have occurred in the coal regions; to the surface have come a considerable number of fine young comrades, they are not yet able to oust the old leaders in centres of trades unionism in Britain."

The inevitable disruption for which the war is responsible and the industrial crisis which will result out of this disruption will accelerate the process of creating a new revolutionary labor movement in England.