

The Revolutionary Age

A Chronicle and Interpretation of International Events

Vol. I, No. 36

Saturday, June 21, 1919

Price 3 Cents

Workers' Control of Industry

THERE is a counter-revolutionary magazine, *Struggling Russia* (which is financed by American banks with Russian money), carrying on a very large campaign of advertising against the Workmen's and Peasants' Republic of Russia. This magazine insists that Bolshevism is "the central world problem."

The conscious capitalist press is now stressing this aspect of Bolshevism. They now recognize that it is not a problem of pro-German agents, of mass murder, of chaos in Russia; nor simply a Russian problem—it is the central world problem of Socialism against Capitalism.

The determining factor in international events is not that Germany has been crushed, or that a number of small nations have emerged to "independence," or that the world is being divided territorially and financially. The determining factor is that out of all this, out of the war and the collapse of Capitalism, has emerged the definite proletarian struggle for Socialism. This struggle for Socialism is no longer a theory isolated in action; it is now a fact of life itself, the most vital problem for Capitalism and the proletariat.

In meeting the problem, Capitalism is fighting for its very existence. And it is unscrupulous in its use of methods. The workers of Russia initiated this world struggle for Socialism; and so international Capitalism, represented by the Allies, concentrates its attack upon the workers of Russia as the resolute defenders of the interests of the workers of the world. Starvation, counter-revolutionary plots, assassination, invasion and terror,—all these means are used in a desperate struggle to crush Socialist Russia.

The apologists of Capitalism try to complicate the problem. They try to make it difficult for the workers to understand.

But the problem is very simple. It is not a problem of democracy, or of communizing women, or of mass murder, or of any of the lies spread so feverishly by the bourgeois press and other agents of Capitalism. The crux of the "Russian problem" is simply this: *workers' control of industry.*

Let us for a moment consider the purpose of the Soviet Government. The political power of Capitalism (and its ally, the nobility) has been crushed. The workers have conquered political power. *The workers are using this power to crush the industrial power of the capitalists,—giving the land to the peasants and the factories to the workers.* A capitalist republic (such as prevails in our own country) recognizes the "rights" of capital as supreme: the whole social system is based upon the supremacy of capital. The Soviet Republic, which is a republic of the masses of the people, recognizes the rights of the workers alone. The basis of the Soviet Republic is workers' control of industry,—industrial democracy. Slowly, painfully, in spite of starvation and alien invasion, the Russian masses are crushing the power of capital, freeing the workers from the tyranny and the exploitation of capital, and constructing a new society of communist labor and fraternity, of workers' control of industry, in which labor shall work for the peace and happiness of the people, and not for the profit of the capitalists.

The Russian revolutionary masses are introducing Socialism. This fact is against the interests of Capitalism, since if Socialism proves a success in Russia the workers of the world will struggle for a similar objective. Capitalism, accordingly, mobilizes against the Socialist workers of Russia in order to crush the workers of the world.

What is Capitalism? Capitalism is a social system based upon private property, upon the private ownership of industry by the capitalists. The workers are deprived of industrial property; they must secure a job in order to live, and these jobs are dispensed by the capitalist owners of industry. The owner of industry is out to make profits; he employs the workers simply in order that they shall produce profits for him. The wages of the workers do not represent all the values produced by their labor; the employers appropriate part of these values, a *surplus value* over and above the value represented in the wages, which becomes the profit of the capitalist class. In other words, the workers are robbed of a portion of the fruits of their labor, out of which booty the capitalists acquire wealth and power.

Capitalist industry, moreover, is an autocracy. Starting with the small employer, up to the great masters of finance, the capitalist class absolutely controls industry.

This autocratic control of industry culminates in the absolute control of the industrial life of the nation—and of the world—exercised by finance-capital, by the great banks and industrial monopolists, by an insignificant minority of the people.

The workers have no say in the management of industry under this industrial autocracy. They have no vote in the management of production, or in the disposal of the goods they produce. They must accept the decisions of the industrial autocrats. They may ease their bondage a bit here and there, by means of

of Soviet Russia, means workers' control of industry. How does this work?

In proletarian Russia, the factories are put in the control of the workers. The system of control starts at the bottom, *with the workers*, not with a bureaucratic state, or politicians, or capitalists. Every factory elects a Factory Committee, from among the workers and the technical staff, which is supreme within the factory. Where the capitalist owner has not been eliminated (in many cases he is temporarily retained as a manager) he is subject absolutely, in all his actions, to the control of the Factory Committee, which regulates the purchase and sale of products, factory conditions, wages, hours, etc.

But one factory is not independent of any other factory,—production is a complicated process that requires centralized management. The various factory committees in a particular locality, accordingly, elect representatives to a Lower Workmen's Council of Control, which regulates the relations of factory to factory in a particular district. These various Councils of Control are centralized into an All-Russian Superior Council of Control, which unifies factory production in all the country. The central organ of industrial control is the Supreme Council of National Economy, which unifies the Workmen's Organs of Control, the peasants' committees of management, and the Soviet Government. In this way are unified production, distribution, wages and conditions of labor.

This is the basis of industrial democracy, of workers' control of industry. All these committees and councils of control *are elected from the bottom up, by the workers*, who are industrial citizens and use the *industrial vote* to control the management of production.

It is on the basis of this workers' control of industry—the end of capitalist industrial autocracy and the profit-power of the capitalists—that the workers and peasants of Russia are constructing a new society.

The "central world problem of Bolshevism," accordingly, is a simple workmen's proposition. It is within the comprehension of every man and woman who works for a living in shop, mill or mine; easily comprehended, in spite of the distortions of a mercenary press. The "central world problem of Bolshevism" means simply the determination of the proletariat to crush the industrial autocracy of Capitalism and introduce the industrial democracy of Socialism,—workers' control of industry.

The Soviet Government itself, which is of a political character while elected industrially by the workers in the factories and the peasants in the fields, is a *temporary* affair. It serves two purposes: 1) to crush the political power and the resistance of the capitalists, Russian or alien; and 2) to develop the conditions for the construction of a *new* industrial government. When the introduction of Socialism in Russia (and the world) is completed, then the Soviet Government, the dictatorship of the proletariat, will disappear, having accomplished its purpose; then the only government which will remain (which is not a government in the old sense) will be the industrial administration comprised in the management and regulation of production for the workers. This final "government" is now being constructed by the Soviet Republic, through the Factory Committees, the Workmen's Councils of Control and the Supreme Council of National Economy.

It is a simple proposition, this workers' control of industry; but it means the end of Capitalism. That is why Capitalism, predatory, reactionary, brutal, represented by the Allies, is determined to crush the Soviet Republic.

This means to crush everywhere the developing proletarian movement for workers' control of industry,—which alone can bring peace, liberty and happiness to the workers.

Capitalism means oppression, misery and degradation for the workers. The democracy of Capitalism (limited to politics) is a fraud, a means for the oppression of the workers. Capitalism and its democracy mean want, unemployment, starvation wages, oppression for the workers; and wealth, ease and luxury for the capitalists.

Industrial democracy, workers' control of industry, means the world for the workers, peace, liberty, happiness.

Rush Your Seconds!

Resolved, by the Joint Meeting of the branches of Local Cuyahoga County, (Cleveland), having an average of 1821 members in good standing for the year 1918, that we initiate the following referendum motions, to be submitted to the party membership of the United States:

Resolved, that the act of the National Executive Committee in expelling from the Socialist Party of Michigan from the Socialist Party of the United States, a state with 6,000 members, without giving the state a trial or even a hearing in its own defense, is hereby rescinded and annulled and the Socialist Party of Michigan restored to all the rights and privileges of membership in the Socialist Party of the United States.

Resolved, that the action of the National Executive Committee of the Party in arbitrarily suspending the Russian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Lettish, Polish, South Slavic and Hungarian Federations from the Party is hereby rescinded and annulled.

Resolved, that the action of the majority of the National Executive Committee, which is largely composed of candidates for re-election in the referendum just closed, in holding up and refusing to tabulate the vote on Referendum B and C, for the election of the National Executive Committee, International Delegates and International Secretary, and calling a National Convention, is hereby rescinded and the national secretary instructed to immediately tabulate the vote and to declare the candidates receiving the highest number of votes elected, in accordance with the National Party Constitution.

Resolved, that the action of the National Executive Committee in preparing to place the property of the Socialist Party in the hands of a Board of Directors, three to be elected for three years, three for six years and three for nine years; these directors not being subject to recall by either the National Executive Committee or the membership of the Party, be reversed and rescinded.

unions; but this slight advantage is offset by the increasing power and tyranny of capital.

Under this system, the workers do not work to live, they live to work. They live to produce wealth and power and pleasure for the masters of industry.

This industrial autocracy of capital controls the government. It controls the press. It controls the schools. It controls because these industrial autocrats have the wealth, and wealth under Capitalism means power. This industrial autocracy is able to purchase the services of a mercenary army of intellectuals, educators, politicians and journalists, whose task it is to deceive the masses and promote the supremacy of Capitalism. Democracy in government becomes a fraud under a system where industrial autocracy prevails.

Out of the industrial autocracy of Capitalism comes the misery and oppression of the workers, wars and all the evils that afflict humanity. Out of this system develops the class struggle of the proletariat to overthrow Capitalism.

As a contrast to this terrible system, the Soviet Republic of Russia looms as an oasis in the desert, as the Promised Land of working class emancipation.

First of all, the government of Soviet Russia is a *working class government*. The capitalists are excluded from participation in this government, since the class interests of the capitalists compel them to exploit the workers; and the Soviet Government is a government of the workers. Where a capitalist government uses its power against the workers and for the capitalists, the Soviet government uses its power against the capitalists and for the workers.

The purpose of the Soviet government is to break the power of the capitalists, and develop the conditions for the introduction of Socialism.

Socialism, in the theory of Marx and the practice