

Labor Organization and Agitation

THE purpose of the Left Wing organization is to create a revolutionary working class movement in America, which, through the action of the working masses themselves, will lead to workers' control of industry and the state, as the only means of expropriating capitalist property and abolishing classes in society.

The capitalist state, as has been clearly proven, expresses the existing dictatorship of the capitalist class, a weapon to defend capitalist interests and to extend them at the expense of the workers. Capitalist control of the machinery of politics and publicity makes it impossible for the workers to conquer this state power by use of the ballot; but even if it were possible, the state could not be used by the workers for their own purpose so long as the factories, mills, mines, land, transportation systems and financial institutions remained in the hands of private capitalist owners.

With the legislatures, courts, police and armies under control of the capitalists, the workers can only win the state power by extra-parliamentary action which must have its basis in the industrial mass action of the workers.

The first act of the workers' dictatorship must be the destruction of the capitalist state and the creation of a new form of Government based on the workers' organizations, whose purpose shall be the permanent destruction of capitalist power by the expropriation of capitalist property.

The absence of any feudal class in America permitted the capitalist class here to concentrate all its strength upon the robbery and subjugation of the working class. At the same time the founders of the American Government so framed the Constitution as to guarantee the permanency of capitalist dictatorship, without any opportunity, under the law, of the workers ever gaining control. For the purpose of blinding the working class and enlisting its support, the fundamental law was clothed in idealistic "democratic" phraseology; and, theoretically, universal suffrage was granted.

But the capitalist system creates a condition whereby the state power is vested, not in the ballot, but in the control of industry. And industry is not a democracy, but an autocracy, in which the fortunes and lives of the great majority of mankind are at the absolute mercy of the capitalist employers. As the power and class-consciousness of the working class increase, the employers resort to palliatives and reforms—"welfare" measures, profit-sharing, schemes of "partnership with labor," etc.—which have as their object and result the further exploitation and deception of the workers.

The unhampered development of American capitalism, in whose service the best minds of the race have been conscripted, has created a condition in which the Government is controlled by the great capitalists to a degree unparalleled in history, while appearing to be an advanced political democracy; a condition in which the working class is the most exploited in the world, while appearing to be the best-paid and most comfortable; where the most abysmal ignorance of the workers' class-interests prevails, while apparently they are the best educated.

The European War has speeded up social and industrial evolution, however, to such a degree that Capitalism all over the world has reached the stage at which it can no longer contain within itself the vast forces it has created. The end of the capitalist system is in

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sight. In Europe it is already tottering and crashing down; and the proletarian revolutions there indicate that the workers are at the same time becoming conscious of the will to power. The capitalists themselves admit that the collapse of European Capitalism and the rise of the revolutionary proletariat abroad cannot help but drag American Capitalism into the all-embracing ruin.

In this crisis the American working class is faced with a terrific alternative. Either the workers will be unprepared, in which case they will be reduced to abject slavery, or they will be sufficiently conscious and sufficiently organized to save society by reconstructing it in accordance with the principles of Communism.

It is the intention of the Left Wing to help prepare the American workers for their historic role, so that when the hour strikes they may take their places in the front ranks of the Social Revolution.

I. REVOLUTIONARY INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM.

By the term "revolutionary industrial unionism" is meant the organization of the workers into unions by industries with a revolutionary aim and purpose; that is to say, those whose purpose is, not merely to defend or strengthen the status of the workers as wage-earners, but to gain control of industry.

In any mention of revolutionary industrial unionism in this country, there must be recognition of the immense effect upon the American labor movement of the propaganda and example of the Industrial Workers of the World, whose long and valiant struggles and heroic sacrifices in the class-war have earned the respect and affection of all workers everywhere. We greet the revolutionary industrial proletariat of America in the ranks of the I. W. W., and pledge them our wholehearted support and co-operation in their struggles against the capitalist class. But in view of the attitude of some of their leaders and spokesmen, in their denial of the political nature of the class-struggle, and more especially in their rejection of the principles and tactics in the revolutionary movement side by side with the Communist Parties, we condemn the shortsightedness of the theoretical position taken by them.

In the Labor movement a new tendency has recently manifested itself, as illustrated by the Seattle and Winnipeg strikes. This tendency, an impulse of the workers toward unity for common action across the frontiers of craft-divisions, is expressed most clearly in the Seattle Resolution outlining a plan for the recognition of American Labor into twelve great industrial departments, and also in the One Big Union movement of Canada and the West. If carried to its logical conclusion, this method organization and action would inevitably result in workers' control of industry.

To that end it be an instruction to all editors, propagandists, and members to advocate the principles of the One Big Union. Further, where members of the Left Wing are compelled by the monopoly Job Control of the American Federation of Labor, to be members of that reactionary organization, which is in our opinion the main buttress of the Capitalist oligarchy which controls this country; such members should also enroll in an industrial union covering the section of industry in which they are engaged and, if no union functions in

the area wherein they have their habitations, it shall be the paramount duty of such member or members to initiate an industrial union within such area.

The National Left Wing declares its firm conviction that the American Federation of Labor, in its present organization and under its present leadership, is entirely reactionary, and cannot be of any value in the workers' struggle for emancipation.

II. PROGRAM.

The National Left Wing Conference of the Socialist Party appeals to the workers to educate and organize themselves so that they may understand the necessity of acquiring knowledge and power to overthrow the present capitalist system and carry on industry.

To Labor and Labor alone is industry responsible. Without the power of Labor, industry could not function. The need of the hour is that Labor recognize the necessity of education and organization. This cannot be achieved by attempting to influence the leaders of the Labor movement, as has been clearly shown by the recent Convention of the American Federation of Labor. It can only be done by the workers on the job, coming together and discussing the vital problems of industry.

Because of the industrial crisis created by the World War, together with the break-down of industry following the cessation of hostilities, there is great dissatisfaction among the workers. But the workers can find no means of coping with the present state of affairs. Their unions have refused to take any steps to meet the grave problems of today, and it therefore becomes immediately necessary to find some way by which the workers can act. We suggest that some plan of Labor organization be inaugurated along the lines of the Shop Stewards' Committees, of Scotland and England, or the Factory Shop Committees of Russia. These Committees can serve as a spur or check upon the Unions. Such Committees will necessarily reflect the spirit and the wishes of the rank and file and will enable the National Left Wing to keep in direct touch with the workers. In this way, the workers can be educated on the job and prepare for the taking over of industry. Also these Committees will bring the workers into direct relation with their employers—which means the abolition of Arbitration Boards and such conciliatory bodies.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS.

We recommend the following measures:

1. That a Committee of seven be elected by the Convention to be known as *The Labor Committee*.
2. That the functions of this Committee shall be to carry on revolutionary propaganda among the workers on the job.
3. Those workers found to be radical shall be organized into Shop Committees.
4. These Shop Committees shall distribute literature, supply information to the Labor Committee, and generally keep in touch with the National Left Wing organization.
5. At places where a number of these Committees are formed, they shall elect delegates to a local Workers' Council.
6. An appropriation shall be made for the purpose of carrying on the work of this Committee.
7. A general propaganda periodical shall be issued by the National Left Wing Council for the special purpose of reaching the workers at their jobs. And this project shall be referred for further elaboration to the Labor Committee.