

# The Revolutionary Age

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## Union Bureaucracy

WHEREVER militant labor gets in action, it meets the antagonism of the bureaucracy of the old unions. The American labor movement is familiar with the contemptible intrigues of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy against I. W. W. strikes, and particularly during the great Lawrence strike of 1912, when the A. F. of L. officials did all in their power to break the workers' struggle. This tendency also characterized the recent general strike in Seattle.

The union bureaucrats are particularly against industrial unionism, since industrial unionism ends craft divisions and craft disputes, which constitute the power of the union bureaucracy. In Canada, the One Big Union—industrial unionism—has captured the imagination of the organized workers. The One Big Union directed the great general strike in Canada; but, says an observer, "the *International Brotherhoods have come out against the strikers, shrewdly foreseeing in the One Big Union the destruction of their organization.*" This is a damning indictment of the old unionism.

One of the chief functions of the Communist Party now in process of formation will be to wage unrelenting war upon the old union bureaucracy, to encourage and rally the militant mass movements in these unions, to construct a revolutionary union movement.

## July 14—November 7

JULY 14, symbol of the conquest of the Bastille by the masses of Paris, was this year in France officially a celebration of the victory over Germany. The July 14 of 1879 symbolizes revolution and progress; but the official "Victory" celebration of July 14, 1919, symbolizes reaction. Yet among the masses there was a revolutionary threat! . . .

The bourgeois press offers its tribute to July 14, and the French Revolution, greeting these events as real contributions to the progress of the world. Simultaneously, the press heaps slander and abuse upon the Russian Revolution.

One hundred years ago, the French Revolution was slandered as an orgy of assassins and beasts. The whole of privileged Europe intrigued against the Revolution, precisely as it now intrigues against the Russian Revolution. But the ideas of the French Revolution

conquered; and now, the world greets the French Revolution as a great event.

November 7 symbolizes the proletarian revolution; for it was on that day in 1917 that the Russian proletariat conquered power. Abuse and slanders are the portion of the men and women of this Revolution; the whole world of bourgeois privilege is arrayed against the Soviet Republic, the Bolsheviki being stigmatized as beasts and assassins,—precisely as during the French Revolution.

When the world accepted democracy, it reversed the original opinion of the French Revolution; when the world accepts the Communist Commonwealth—as it will—the world will reverse the prevailing opinion of the Russian Revolution, and greet it as the greatest event in all history, since it initiated the final struggle against class privilege and class domination.

## The Small Nations

BEFORE the Allies secured the services of Woodrow Wilson in creating an ideology for the war, they conceived the war as a war to "protect the small nations." But these nations were not "protected" at the Peace Conference, being used by the great powers in making the world safe for *their* Imperialism.

Under the conditions of Imperialism, there can be no real independence for the small nations; they may have their own governments, but these must act in accord with the Imperialism of the great powers. The small nations, moreover, become means for the great powers directly to promote their own predatory purposes.

New nations are being created in Central Europe,—Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Jugo-Slavia; and others are in prospect. No carving out these nations, the Allies have one general purpose: to erect a barrier against Bolshevik Russia. It works this way: the Allies decided that Soviet Russia should be crushed: accordingly, they bargained with the Czechs that, in return for national independence, they should fight against Soviet Russia. This bargain has been agreed upon also with Finland. Now comes the news that the Allies have decided that Soviet Russia must be crushed, but they dare not send their own troops to do the dirty work; accordingly, an agreement is concluded with Rumania and Czecho-Slovakia to fight the Hungarian Soviet Republic. The Allies control the world's trade and finance and use this control to coerce the small nations.

Imperialistic France is developing a grandiose scheme for the domination of the continent of Europe. In fulfillment of this scheme France is erecting a group of small nations in Central Europe which are under the diplomatic and financial control of France, and which cannot act unless allowed to by the imperialistic clique that governs France. Imperialistic France conceives this scheme so important that it antagonizes Italy in order to construct a Jugo-Slav nation under French control.

The small nations, moreover, are satisfied to be used by the great powers. The capitalists of the small nations possess large appetites and small power—hence they adopt means of intrigue and become vassals of the big imperialistic nations. They are utterly reactionary and terrible oppressors of labor.

Time was when the struggle for national independence was revolutionary and progressive. Now these aspirations for national independence are simply an opportunity for Imperialism to aggrandize itself. The struggle of our epoch is the international proletarian struggle against Imperialism.

## Now to Work

CAPITALISM plunged the world into war. It made work for death instead of life the normal occupation of peoples. It disorganized industry, encouraged destruction and idealized death. Capitalism did all these things in order to promote the supremacy of Capitalism.

The terrible tragedy of the war was a product of the terrible tragedy of peace. Capitalism is latent war and destruction, becoming actual and all-consuming at a particular moment. The necessity of war and destruction creates its own ideology: Capitalism makes a litany to war and destruction necessary to Capitalism but against life and peace.

Capitalism, during the war, made its litany to war and destruction familiar to the masses. War was a symbol of all the virtues, of self-sacrifice, of honor and courage, of the finest in man. Work, in itself, was beautiful in the measure that it promoted war. It was necessary to *fight and destroy*, argued Capitalism, in order to realize one's ideals.

But the workers did not realize any of *their* ideals during the war—they simply realized death, agony and oppression. War was to the workers a tragic teacher; it taught them that it is necessary to fight and destroy to realize ideals, but in a particular way. The masses of Europe, accordingly, are restive; they have accepted the ideology of power; they propose to fight and destroy in the struggle *against Capitalism* in order to realize their proletarian ideals.

But now Capitalism, realizing the menace of its own teaching, is speaking piously against war and destruction. It now sings a litany to peace and work.

The statesmen of the world, until recently idealizing war and destruction, are now idealizing work. In Italy, France, and England, in the "Socialist" Republic of Germany and in the United States, the chorus now is: "Cease your struggles, workers. We must have social peace. An end to destruction! In work alone is our redemption."

Work is now necessary to Capitalism, as war was necessary for almost five years. The proletariat is always urged to do the thing necessary for Capitalism.

But this means work under the old conditions of peace,—with the oppression of the worker by the employer. There is not much redemption in *that* for the workers.

Struggle is necessary. It is necessary to struggle against oppression, against injustice, against the dominant class and its old order. It is necessary to destroy this order of Capitalism. Social peace is realizable only *after* the struggle against Capitalism ends in the destruction of Capitalism. Life must destroy in order to realize life.

Work is necessary. But work under Capitalism means drudgery and oppression. It means that man lives to work, instead of working to live.

"In work alone is redemption," says that Capitalism which just a year ago urged that redemption was in war. There is redemption in work,—under new conditions. If the workers return meekly to work under the old conditions, it will mean redemption *for Capitalism*. It is necessary that the workers should struggle to end Capitalism, after which alone work will mean redemption for the workers.

To work? Yes! To work in the struggle against Capitalism, to destroy the old order. Then will work mean redemption—a new life and a new world.