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Confiscatory

AMERICAN capital claims that the Mexican Government is confiscating its property in oil wells.

Now comes another cry of confiscation. The Congress of Sonora, Mexico, in the introduction of a national agrarian policy, has decided to nationalize certain lands and pay for them in "agrarian bonds." The Mexican land-owners must submit to this law; but the American and other foreign owners protest, and demand the protection of their governments by means of intervention. In other words, they aim to break the laws of Mexico and its national sovereignty by means of armed force.

The cry of confiscation is subterfuge. Capitalist accumulation is itself a process of confiscation: confiscation of national resources, of the wealth produced by the workers, of the property of small producers. It is thievery. This thievery in Mexico was enormous. Under the Diaz regime foreign—particularly American—capital thieved the natural resources of the Mexican people. Robbery, fraud and murder were the accompaniments of this process of confiscation. Now the Mexican Government proposes to discipline foreign capital, make it subservient to the law, and restore these resources to the Mexican people. The cry of "confiscation" uttered by American capital is a hypocrisy and a deception.

The President's Power

BOURGEOIS liberals are cracking their heads, in the peace treaty controversy, over the power of the Presidency. They lament that President Wilson, independent of Congress and without the sanction of the Senate, made certain commitments at the Paris Conference and that he is using his bludgeon power to compel an acceptance.

It is a fact that the President has the power

to make war or peace independent of Congress by simply so maneuvering foreign policy as to leave Congress no other course but to approve. The President in these matters is practically Dictator. Shortly before this country went to war, Colonel George Harvey in the *North American Review* declared that we need not look to the Kaiser or the Czar for the example of an autocrat: there was a bigger autocrat in the White House citing Wilson's course toward Mexico and Germany as proof.

The President is Dictator. The framers of the American Constitution consciously arranged things so as to baffle the will of the masses in relation to the vital functions of government: their's was the real instinct of a ruling class. Certain functions of government were not assigned either to Congress or the President; but with the development of complexity in industry and government, these functions have been usurped by the Presidency. Imperialism completes the development of centralizing all vital functions of government in an executive autocracy.

A Trade Union Congress

THE "international" Trades Union Congress now in session at Amsterdam, is a peculiar but instructive affair. The one struggle there, is a struggle of conservatism against conservatism,—while in the open spaces beyond, the proletariat is revolutionizing the old world and the spirit of action fires the imagination.

Much of the time of the Congress has been consumed in making the German delegation issue an avowal of guilt and repentance concerning the war. The Germans made an "explanation;" the Congress accepted it but did not express its "satisfaction:" so each faction claims a "victory"—the Germans at having their explanation accepted, the other at the Congress not having expressed its satisfaction at the explanation. Surely, these are great proletarian problems! This is waging the class struggle!

Nothing creative is coming out of this Congress. The old bureaucratic officials are there, and they do not represent the new revolutionary upsurge in the unions; in fact, the Congress is trying to crush the revolutionary spirit.

But the trades unions are not the solid conservative force that they were. Vital currents are developing—currents of revolutionary initiative and action. The transformation in political and economic condition must necessarily transform the unions. It is a vital task of the Communist Party to facilitate this transformation.

The Negro Pogrom

VIOLENT clashes, involving large numbers of white and colored men, have occurred in a number of cities. The experience of Washington was repeated in a much more tragic form in Chicago, where scores of dead are the aftermath of the riots.

Chicago represents an armed camp, with Terror supreme. The citizens of Chicago might well yearn to be in Petrograd and Moscow, where riotous disturbances are now things of the past. And it is interesting to observe that, at the moment the press is urging the American government to "restore" order in Mexico and Soviet Russia, order is not maintained in the United States.

There is much discussion of the causes of these race riots, one of the most disgraceful aspects of American civilization. Some ascribe them to the insolence of the Negro; others to the decline of faith in God, still others to the war.

The war is an important factor, not simply in the sense that it has generated ideals of force, but in the sense that it has developed a more militant spirit of resentment and independence in the Negro. During the war they were flattered; in the army and in the munition plants they were necessary and were the equal of the whites; they have been in the fight to realize democracy—but now they discover that they are condemned to the old conditions of discrimination and inferiority. The fighting spirit is still strong in them, and they rebel.

The antagonisms between the Negroes and the whites has become merged in the economic problem—or rather, the economic problem is used to foment race hatred. The war has disturbed American economic conditions, causing a very important migration of all labor, but particularly of Negro labor. Competition for jobs is multiplied, and a racial struggle develops instead of a class struggle against Capitalism.

The new sense of independence in the Negro must be bent to the uses of the militant labor movement. The Negro is justified in his resentment; even though the offended party, the Negro does not incite the riots; in Washington and Chicago whites started the trouble. But the Negro—and the white worker, equally—must be made to realize that this race struggle is suicidal, promotes the supremacy of their joint oppressors. But the white workers, unfortunately, misled and deceived, do not realize this. The A. F. of L. recently decided to allow Negro workers into the unions—but this was done simply to perfect the job trusts and "control" the influx of Negro labor. But the other day the Federated Employees' Association of the Pennsylvania Railroad resolved against the employment of Negro workers on that system; and at least four distinct divisions of labor affiliated with the Association are identified with the A. F. of L.

The old unions have discriminated against the Negro, as they have discriminated against the unskilled and the Orientals. Most Negro labor is unskilled, which makes the Negro problem economically a phase of the larger problem of the unskilled generally. This problem is most important, and will become the test of revolutionary Socialism.

The American proletariat is composed largely of the Negro and the foreigner, both of whom are mostly unskilled workers. In order to break the A. F. of L. and develop a revolutionary union movement, it is necessary to awaken and mobilize the unskilled. The Negro, accordingly, constitutes a vital problem of our revolutionary movement. The race problem is simply a phase of the general social problem, which the Communist revolution alone can solve.

The H. C. of L.

AFTER almost a year of roaming in the mystic realms of "world reconstruction," President Wilson is again in the mud of reality. The general and acute discontent at the high cost of living has compelled the government to consider the problem.

During the war people were partly reconciled with the high cost of living by means of more regular employment, partly terrorized