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Revolutionary Unionism On Trial

THE revolutionary Socialist is intensely interested in the trial of the group of officials and members of the I. W. W. The trial is an historic event of the first importance,—not only in the magnitude of its scope, but in the magnitude of the issues involved.

This trial is the greatest of its kind in the history of the American Labor movement. Moreover, the issues are not personal, but social; not group, but class in scope. At a time when the cause of the workers has been betrayed by the "regular" unions paralyzed in the A. F. of L., the proletariat itself takes the bit in its teeth, acts and strikes aggressively. And it is this fact that has brought the I. W. W. to trial. The I. W. W. is an expression of latent revolutionary spirit of the American proletariat; and, accordingly, the capitalist government and the capitalist-dominated and corrupt bureaucracy of the A. F. of L. engage in a covert conspiracy to destroy the I. W. W., each for peculiar motives of its own, but each, equally, because the revolutionary proletariat menaces their interests.

This unholy alliance is explained by this fact: *once the American revolutionary proletariat awakens to consciousness, organizes itself and acts, it will mean the end of the domination equally of capitalist government and of the capitalist-dominated A. F. of L.*

An important immediate issue involved is the ability of the workers to strike during the war. It is the purpose of the capitalist class to curb and abolish strikes during the war, and in this way make more profits in the present and set a precedent for the future. But war intensifies the exploitation of the workers: war means a more brutal capitalism, a more intensely exploited proletariat; it means all the evils of the capitalist system raised to the highest, most malevolent point. Under these conditions, the class struggle should be waged more aggressively. The proletariat can not relinquish its strikes—that way lies more misery and subjection.

The capitalist class uses war to promote its own interests: securing new markets which can absorb its surplus capital, increasing its military prestige, making fabulous profits out of war needs, and increasing its domination over the workers.

The proletariat should use war to promote its interests: multiply its strikes for better conditions, emphasize its antagonism to and weaken the domination of the capitalist class, and develop its revolutionary spirit for action in the days to come.

The employers in the West used the war to cheat the government and the people, to make unheard-of profits. At the same time, it tried to break the spirit of the workers, crush their organizations and action. The workers marched out in revolt, through their own spontaneous mass action, and rallied around the I. W. W. as a true representative of the workers. The capitalist government thereupon

proceeded against the I. W. W. in order to strike at the workers.

This is a vital immediate issue; but there is a correlative ultimate issue of even more vital importance: *the trial of the I. W. W. means the trial of revolutionary unionism.*

feasibility of making a Social Revolution, the revolution of the proletariat which is the greatest revolution in all history, by the peaceful methods described in the indictment. No, gentlemen, the Social Revolution is a much more difficult task than all that.

unorganized unskilled workers, which constitute the factor in the overthrow of Capitalism. Rally to the support of the indicted I. W. W.! Rally around the revolutionary proletariat in action!

The Constituent Assembly and the Bolsheviki

THE dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by the decree of the Bolshevik government was a necessary and a revolutionary act.

In the decree of dissolution, Nikolai Lenine, premier of the revolutionary proletarian government, declared that the Constituent Assembly was elected from the old election lists, hence necessarily became the organ of the bourgeois republic; that the Constituent Assembly had set itself against the revolution of November 6, which decreed all power to the Councils; that the revolution had proven to the masses the deceptive character of the parliamentary regime, and that there is only one government capable of maintaining the struggle against the exploiting class,—the revolutionary government of the Councils of Workers and Soldiers.

The parliamentary regime is the expression of bourgeois democracy,—an instrument for the promotion of bourgeois class interests and the deception of the masses. The proletarian revolution annihilates this parliamentary regime. The division of functions in a parliamentary government is a necessary instrument against opposition,—the legislature talks and represents "democracy," while the executive acts autocratically. The revolutionary government of Russia unites both functions democratically in the Councils of Workers and Soldiers.

All democracy is relative, is class democracy. The revolution in Russia recognizes no other class but the proletariat and proletarian peasantry. Its democracy is also class democracy, with this vital difference: that while bourgeois "democracy" perpetuates class tyranny, proletarian democracy annihilates tyranny.

The problem of parliamentary government is a crucial one in the proletarian revolution: Socialism cannot seize the ready-made machinery of the State and use it for its purposes. A new form of government must be organized by the revolutionary proletariat,—as in Russia.

Years ago, Karl Marx indicated the function of a "dictatorship of the proletariat" in the Social Revolution. It is precisely this dictatorship that is now making history in revolutionary Russia. The dictatorship of the proletariat refuses to recognize any "rights" of the non-proletarian class; it breaks completely with the institutions, ideology and superstitions of the bourgeois regime; it uses dictatorial measures, the dictatorship of a class, to promote and establish the revolution and the new society, in which dictatorship will be incompatible with the actuality of full and free democracy.

Armistice and Peace

Resolutions adopted at a mass meeting held in Arlington Hall, December 20, under auspices of Local Greater New York, Socialist Propaganda League

The workers of the world demand an immediate general peace, a peace that shall alter the imperialistic status quo ante in accord with the international aspirations of the revolutionary proletariat of Russia.

The governments of the imperialistic belligerents are determined upon a continuation of the war in the interest of their particular imperialism; the proletariat alone as a class is interested in and can hasten an immediate peace that shall promote civilization and progress.

The class interests of the American proletariat make necessary the adoption of an immediate program of action:

1. We demand that the government accept the proposal of the *de facto* government of Russia for the immediate conclusion of a general armistice on all belligerent fronts.

2. We demand that the government insist that Great Britain, France and Italy shall equally accept the armistice.

3. We demand that the negotiations for an armistice shall not include the discussion of peace terms, the discussion and formulation of those terms being left to the peoples of each belligerent nation.

4. We call upon the class conscious workers to prepare the organization of a proletarian peace congress, which shall discuss our action in co-operation with the international proletariat and in accord with the peace principles of revolutionary Socialism.

The proletariat must organize as an independent factor in the process of securing peace, separate and distinct from all other social groups. The proletariat alone is international in its interests, and it alone can determine the conclusion of an international peace upon the formula of revolutionary Russia.

We affirm our solidarity with the proletariat of Russia, and express our fraternal appreciation of its intrepid class conscious activity.

The first count in the government's indictment charges that the I. W. W. is a revolutionary organization that seeks to secure for the working class "complete control and ownership of all property, and of the means of producing and distributing property through the abolition of all other classes of society (by the members of said organization designated as 'capitalist,' 'the capitalist class,' 'the master class,' 'the ruling class,' 'exploiters of the workers,' 'bourgeois,' and 'parasites'); such abolition to be accomplished not by political action or with any regard for right or wrong but by the continued and persistent use and employment of unlawful, tortuous and forcible means and methods, involving threats, assaults, injuries, intimidations and murders upon the persons and the injury and destruction (known in said organization as 'sabotage,' 'direct action,' 'working on the job') of the property of such other classes, the forcible resistance to the execution of all laws and finally the forcible revolutionary overthrow of all existing governmental authority, in the United States."

This count in the indictment is as stupid as it is illuminating of the motives of the prosecution in making the indictment.

The individual who framed this indictment is certainly an original sociologist, a genius in assinity: just imagine the

But the wording of the indictment is mere camouflage, a cloaking of the real purpose. Of course the prosecution could not charge the I. W. W. with having a revolutionary objective alone, since the Declaration of Independence provides and sets a precedent for revolution. It had to be done "by tortuous means without any regard for right or wrong."

The purpose is plain. It is to strike at revolutionary unionism. This could not very well be done in the days of peace, so the opportunity of war (that patriotic pretext for all sorts of capitalist infamy) had to be used instead.

Now there can be no Socialism without revolutionary unionism and its correlated general mass action of the proletariat. Revolutionary unionism and mass action are the great forces for surmounting the capitalist mode of production; moreover, revolutionary industrial unionism will constitute the structure of the new Socialist society. It is upon the basis of unionism and mass action that revolutionary Socialism builds. And in the trial of the I. W. W. is involved precisely the action of the proletariat as expressed in revolutionary unionism and mass action.

The task of the revolutionary Socialist is clear. The I. W. W., with all its imperfection, is a revolutionary organization, an expression of the vast mass of