

The Case of the I. W. W.

By JUSTUS EBERT

A Word of Optimism!

LORIA, in his book on the economic foundations of society, names three institutions as performing the work of blinding the masses in favor of the capitalist control of such foundations, viz, the Law, Church and Public Opinion, as expressed and moulded principally by the press or newspapers. The first two, he declares, are waning in influence; the last alone, being the bulwark of oppression. But then "public opinion," as represented by the newspapers, seems to be losing power too. A case in point is the recent municipal elections in New York City, where the voters rallied successfully to the cause of the candidates opposed by the press. Throughout the world, in the convulsions attending the war, the ability of the press to guide so-called public action is completely destroyed. Organization and its dependent means of communication of the operation of compelling social forces, has destroyed "the power of the press" and made of it a thing of ridicule and contempt—a chip sent swirling in the modern whirlpool. The press may lie, but there is no dodging the stern realities that come home to us all through a thousand mediums other than that of the printed word.

The press, just now, is doing much lying regarding the Industrial Workers of the World. Coupled with the campaign of vilification there goes much incitement to riot and a justification of lawlessness against the I. W. W. Yet, it is a question if this campaign is not at all successful; if the press hasn't, in other words, failed once more in its policy of moulding "public opinion." The indications that cause this questioning are well worth consideration. First there is the response to the I. W. W. defense appeals. Much of this is of a private, rather than of a public character. Organizations approached have almost invariably responded to the appeals. They have donated funds, taken up collections, placed address lists and directions at the disposal of the I. W. W. and otherwise helped the work. Many of their officers have condemned the newspaper attempts to prejudice the I. W. W. cases, as the evident expression of a well organized plan that must be apparent to all intelligent persons. This view, that the press, in this, as in other matters, is actuated by a policy rather than the truth, is entertained by many. Accordingly, the funds collected by the I. W. W. defense to date are unprecedented. Seven thousand dollars for October, the first month after the beginning of the persecutions, is a new record that surpasses the financial achievements of even Lawrence and Everett. In Seattle, Wash., the heart of the Northwestern I. W. W. activity, five thousand dollars were collected up to November 16. The promise of one thousand a week there is more than fifty in the near future. Other cities exhibit a similar enthusiasm, and best of all, I. W. W. membership increases.

But more indicative of the waning influence of the press is the lack of lawlessness resulting from its incitement to riot. Make no mistake, there has been much outrage against the I. W. W. The lynching of Frank Little, the Bisbee deportations and the Tulsa outrages have been numerous and revolting. But have they been proportionate to the continuous press campaign? Have they not been the works, not of infuriated and aroused populations, but organized corporate gangs of thugs and cut-throats—the work of interested parties rather than a people envenomed and stirred to lawlessness? When we think of the words from high places

about shooting traitors at sunrise; when we recall the torrents of abuse against the I. W. W. and note that no traitors have been shot, either at sunrise or moonrise, and that the vast majority of Americans refuse to follow the example of corporate thuggery, we are inclined to question "the power of the press" and to believe that were it not for the greater power of profit, no lawlessness at all would take place against the I. W. W. It is the profiteer, not the press, that is getting results against the I. W. W. He is interested and organizes accordingly.

In all of this there is much room for encouragement. Make no mistake, the I. W. W. is terribly outraged. There is no law, no justice for it, especially in the calculations of the profiteer and his tool, the press. But make no mistake also, about the attitude of the great American working class. They are the victims also of present-day terrorism and, being such victims, many understand the I. W. W. situation well, instinctively, intuitively, if not consciously, and many more of them live in a world of grim realities that the press unsuccessfully tries to hide from them. They, too, understand instinctively and intuitively, if not consciously. The press cannot lie down social forces. It cannot stem the tide of evolution and revolution. That is as much apparent as its lies. Why, then, should the I. W. W. fear this crooked and impotent thing? Why then should it not proceed certain that, in the end, it will again triumph over it, as at Lawrence, Everett and elsewhere?

So, then, you members and friends of the I. W. W. everywhere—don't despair! Present day factors work for us even when they appear most to work against us! Lincoln Steffens, in his New York lecture on "The Russian Revolution" cited that event to prove that the seeds of activity blossom into life when least expected. And who will deny another fact, after what Russia has taught us, namely, that oppression is least secure when it is most firmly entrenched.

Socialist Party Pledges I. W. W. Support

THE National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, at their recent session, passed the following resolutions:

"The Socialist Party repeats its declaration of support of all economic organizations of the working class and declares the lynching, deportation, prosecution and persecution of the Industrial Workers of the World is an attack upon every toiler in America, and we now call attention to the fact that the charges of incendiarism, the burning of crops and forests and of vicious destruction of property made by the public press against the I. W. W. have proven pure fabrications wherever put to legal test.

"The Socialist Party has always extended its aid, material and moral, to organized labor whenever and wherever it was attacked by the capitalistic class, and this without reference to form of organization or special policies; therefore, we pledge our support to the Industrial Workers of the World now facing trial in Chicago and elsewhere, and demand for them a fair unprejudiced trial and urge our members to use every effort to assist the Industrial Workers of the World by familiarizing the public with the real facts, to overcome the falsehoods and misinformation with which the capitalist press has poisoned and prejudiced the public mind and judgment against these workers,

who are now singled out for destruction, just as other labor organizations and leaders have been singled out for destruction by the same capitalist forces in the past."

Victorious Despite Oppression

IT is pleasing to record that, despite the severe hostility with which they are being persecuted, the Industrial Workers of the World are achieving some notable victories. In the Northwest they have won the eight-hour day, better camps, more food, wages, and rights for thousands of lumberjacks. They have also caused action that may result in national legislation beneficial to the workers in all branches of the lumber industry of the entire country.

The press of the Industrial Workers of the World has recorded for weeks the eight-hour and other victories achieved in numerous lumber camps throughout the Northwest. How the I. W. W. men gave up the old style strike of off the job, and went back to work for the purpose of striking on the job. How they refused to work more than eight hours a day, were discharged; and then got more members on the same job to repeat the same methods until victory was won. How, by the same means, they also secured better bunk houses, shower baths, more and cleaner bedding, more and better food, more wages, and the right to meet in the bunk houses, elect committees on grievances, and otherwise get a greater share in the products of their own labor and a greater voice in the control of industry.

Now, after the I. W. W. press has been printing these reports with increasing and more frequent detail, comes the press of the Northwest with a couple of important announcements. One states that the Western Pine Manufacturers' Association, with 16,000 employees and a membership in Oregon, Montana, Idaho and Washington, will establish an eight-hour day with no reduction in wages. The other states that the Loggers' Club of Spokane, Wash., an influential body of employing lumbermen, will petition Congress for "a basic eight-hour day for all branches of the lumber industry of the United States."

Thus does a twofold victory perch on the banners of the Industrial Workers of the World amid the most savage persecution—one actual and economic; the other prospective and legislative.

The Industrial Workers of the World are not placing much faith in either victory. They still rely on themselves as organized workers. In November, the lumberworkers' union secured 1,000 new members and did \$18,000 in business. They are out to do even better than this, with the aid of the aforementioned press reports.

The Industrial Workers are also winning other victories, despite unprecedented opposition. In Arizona, the courts at Tucson have acquitted E. S. Embree, who was arrested for inciting to riot at Bisbee, Arizona. This acquittal destroys the excuse of the copper barons, to the effect that the "incitements to riot" of Embree before the Bisbee deportation justified that event. In Idaho, the courts at St. Maries have also acquitted Neil McGuiney, and released scores of others, held on the "charge of criminal syndicalism." In these cases also an attempt was made to justify lawlessness against the I. W. W. Charges that the I. W. W. set fire to forests and committed violence were overthrown by forest wardens and deputy sheriff in charge of strike precincts. The former testified that the I. W. W. members were instructed by the organization

to be on the lookout for forest fires, that fire-fighting gangs were composed 90 per cent of I. W. W. men under the leadership of I. W. W. foremen, and when so composed were the most efficient gangs. The latter testified to the peaceful character of I. W. W. strikes and the absence of drunkenness during them. And so the I. W. W. won out again. In the courts of Minnesota, also, some cases have been won, in which "criminal syndicalism" was the charge.

The I. W. W. have not only advanced labor's interests in general, but protected its members in particular. They still have a hard fight ahead, in which the opposing odds appear overwhelming. Nevertheless, they fight on, cheered by these victories and confident of working class aid and the final triumph of the industrial democracy for which the Industrial Workers of the World stand.

The Bolshevik Terms of Peace

THE Russian delegates to the preliminary peace conference at Brest-Litovsk, have, under instructions of the Bolshevik government, presented the following peace terms:

- (1.) The evacuation of all Russian territory occupied by Germany, and autonomy for Poland and the Lithuanian and Lettish provinces.
- (2.) Autonomy for Turkish Armenia.
- (3.) Settlement of the question of Alsace-Lorraine by plebiscite, with a guarantee of perfect freedom of vote.
- (4.) The restoration of Belgium and indemnity for damages to be provided by an international financial fund.
- (5.) The restoration of Serbia and Montenegro, with indemnity for damages to be taken out of a similar international fund. Serbia, moreover, to have access to the Adriatic; Bosnia and Herzegovina to have complete autonomy.
- (6.) Other contested territory in the Balkans to enjoy temporary autonomy until a plebiscite is taken.
- (7.) Rumania to recover all territory within her previous frontiers, after promising to grant autonomy to the Dobrudja, and to give effect to Article III of the Berlin Convention concerning the equality of the rights of Jews.
- (8.) Autonomy for the regions of Trent and Trieste, inhabited by Italian populations, until a plebiscite is taken.
- (9.) Germany to receive back her colonies.
- (10.) Restoration of Persia and Greece.
- (11.) Neutralization of all maritime straits leading to inland seas, including the Canals of Suez and Panama; freedom of commercial navigation, the cancellation of all charters during war time of enemy ships, and the torpedoing of commercial ships on the high seas to be forbidden by international agreement.
- (12.) All belligerents to renounce war indemnities under any form or disguise whatsoever, and all contributions exacted since the beginning of the war to be refunded.
- (13.) All belligerents to renounce definitely any commercial boycott after the war, or the institution of special customs agreements.
- (14.) Peace conditions to be settled by a peace congress composed of delegates chosen by national, representative bodies, diplomats to bind themselves to sign no secret treaties, which are to be declared, by their very nature, null and void.
- (15.) Gradual disarmament on land and sea, and the re-establishment of militia to replace standing armies.