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December, 1918

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Drawn by Maurice Sterne

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(See page 49 for order blank)

**TO A PAGAN POET**  
**S**ITTING in your stuffy room,  
 Strewn with cigarette stubs  
 And empty beer bottles,  
 Stale evidence of dingy carnival,  
 You write . . . in verse  
 More or less free,  
 Of "Fawns" and "Purple Grapes"  
 And "Brown-limbed Bachantes,"  
 While the lusty wind rattles  
 Your closed window,  
 Unheeded. . . .

Mary L. Gruening.

**LAWN PARTY**  
**M**ATRONS, massive,  
 Peerlessly gowned,  
 Converse with other matrons  
 Of varying circumferences,  
 On the suave and flawless lawns;  
 Exchanging middle-aged amenities,  
 Sprinkled with light laughter,  
 Never too loud or too real.  
 They form the nucleus, solidly static,  
 Of the encompassing confusion.  
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 They seem to chaperone the very trees.

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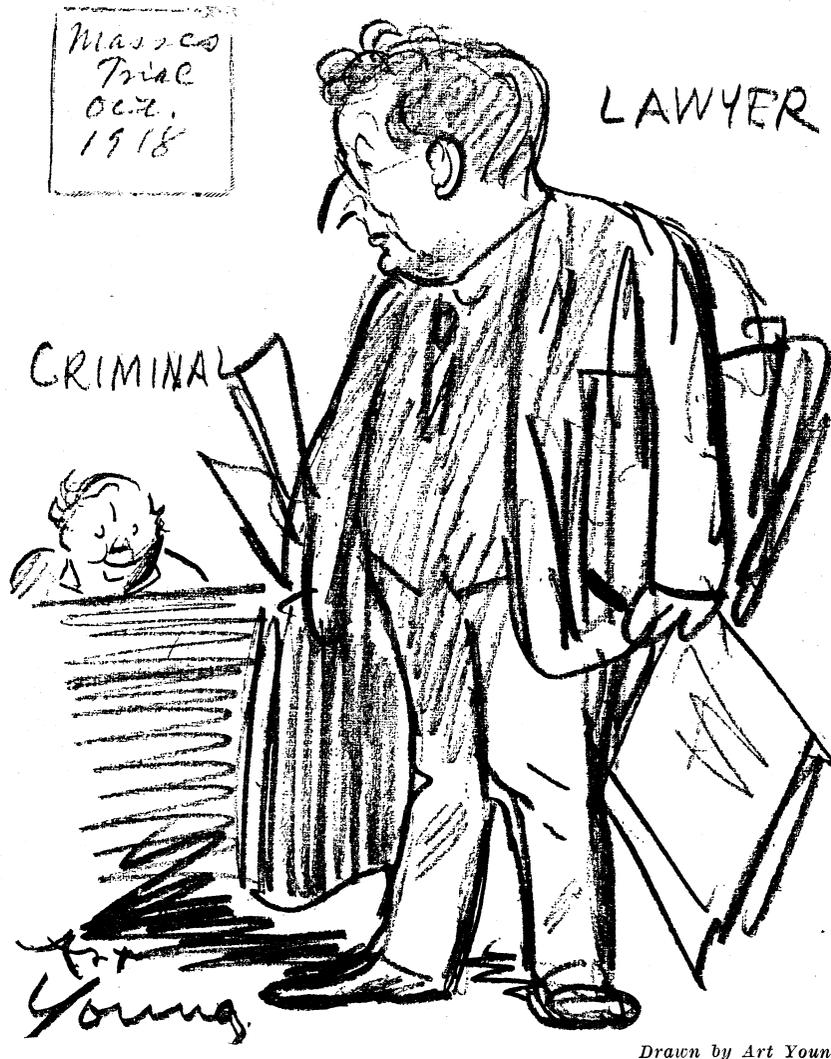
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*Drawn by Art Young*

## A Reminiscence of the Second Masses Trial

SEYMOUR STEDMAN, attorney for the defense, in his eloquent summing up, referred as follows to the fact that the *Masses* editors asked an injunction compelling the Post Office to mail the very magazine for publishing which they were later indicted:

"Do men who are committing a crime go into a Federal Court and face a District Attorney and ask the privilege of continuing it? A strange set of burglars! A strange set of footpads! A strange set of smugglers! A strange

set of criminals! I ask Mr. Barnes to tell you when before in his experience, men in the City of New York came in and filed an appeal, opening all their proof and all their evidence and all their testimony and said, 'If the Court please, we insist on the right to continue this deep, dark, infamous conspiracy, and have it sanctified by an advocate of the United States Court.' History finds no parallel that I know of in any criminal procedure which has ever taken place."

# THE LIBERATOR

Vol. 1, No. 10

December, 1918

## EDITORIALS

“THE hour of the people has come.” With these words Karl Liebknecht greeted the thronging revolutionary workers of Germany whose power had liberated him from prison. That he was there to speak to them is proof of the truth of his words.

The hour of the people has come in Austria also, it appears, and perhaps also in Hungary. Friedrich Adler, whom Lenin referred to as “my right hand man in the Social Revolution,” has been liberated from prison by the revolutionary workers in Vienna, and elected by them as their leader. Within the last two years he has written a book on the philosophy of science, and assassinated a tyrant. He too is a statesman of a new order!

In Bulgaria, even more certainly at this date (November 8th), the people are in power, a peasants’ republic having already been formed, with the Bulgarian Liebknecht, Stambuliwsky, as Premier. Stambuliwsky was sentenced to life imprisonment for anti-military activities when the war broke. He told King Ferdinand to his face that if he wasn’t careful he would have his head cut off by the people.

We read of the formation of a soviet of workmen and soldiers in Bohemia, too, and we can even imagine that the little bourgeois liberal Arcadia that was arranged to be born there, with Professor Masaryck for its father and Professor Wilson its godfather, may turn out a black sheep, and make friends with the Bolsheviki. And we speculate with pleasure upon the highly abstract patriotism that will have to be displayed by the Czecho-Slovak armies in Siberia in order to continue their war for liberty against the Red Guard, if that should be the case.

In Central Europe, the hour of the people has come.

In the Allied countries two things retard the coming of that hour, and make the duty of the Socialists and the labor parties hard to perform: One is victory. The other is Woodrow Wilson. It will be difficult indeed, in the hour of nationalistic triumph, and crowing at the fall of hostile kings, for weary men and women in the Allied countries to remember that Karl Liebknecht relies absolutely upon *their* fidelity to make this the hour not only of the German people but of the people of the world. And it will be difficult for them to withstand the mesmeric effect of President Wilson’s liberalism and business internationalism. He has so in-

genious a talent for weaving the language of liberty, and even of industrial democracy, into his pronouncements of good capitalist policy, and he has Colonel House, whose gift is the gift of agreeing with everybody, and he has the traditions surviving in Europe that America is an extreme and romantic democracy, almost eccentric in its devotion to the equality of men—all these things add to the prestige of the mesmerist. And one still greater thing—the fact that the change he advocates, from a system of national imperialistic rivalry, begetting war, to a system of international imperialism, a business organization of the exploitation of the world, making peace perhaps almost permanently secure, is in very truth one of the great events of history. It is the crowning achievement of the age of business efficiency. And so many of the simple human ideals that are beautiful naturally attach to it, that a severe revolutionary intelligence is required to perceive its essential nature, and not confuse it with the achievement of human liberty or international democracy.

### The League of Nations

It seems almost certain, upon psychological as well as historical grounds, that a League of Nations will make international wars less frequent. It will make the world more orderly, and a fitter dwelling-place for intelligence. But we need not deceive ourselves that this is the essential reason why such a league will be established. It will be established because it will make the world more productive. It will increase the wealth of those who possess wealth. The League of Nations is good business. It is but an expression in the political sphere of something that has already happened in the business sphere. Business has become international. Capital is internationally owned. It is inevitable that an international state should be formed, to express and defend its interests. At the same time war has become destructive beyond the bounds of safe speculation even for nationalistic capital, and so the chief opposition to a guaranteed peace is removed. Only the dull and the unprogressive in the business and political community are opposed to the League of Nations. I think we can say that it is the next natural step in the development of capitalism.

Professor John Dewey, the most knowing of those who

are satisfied with capitalism as a basis for democracy, in advocating a League of Nations, has these true words to say of it:

It "means that a system of ideas and activities which expresses contemporary industry and commerce is being substituted for the ancient system which ignored and despised business and magnified the ethics and politics of dignity, honor, aggression, and defense. It is no accident that the formulation of the new order came from this country, which by the fortune of history and geography escaped most completely from the ethics of maintaining a status of established dignity, and which has committed itself most completely to the ethics of industry and exchange."

Other things, of course, can be said about the League of Nations, things both interesting and true, but in relating it to the problem of progress toward democracy this is the important thing. "A system of ideas which expresses contemporary commerce and industry" is to be substituted for the old "glory" system. The ethics of business is to be the international ethics.

I believe that we can carry this truth farther into the concrete by saying that the League of Nations will be a gigantic commercial, industrial and financial trust. Its controlling motive is similar to that which begot the trusts; its achievement will be similar. The trusts were formed in order to put an end to a suicidal competition between individuals or small groups of business men within the nation. The League is to be formed in order to put an end to a competition that has become suicidal between nations, or large groups of business men expressing themselves through political forms. So we must understand it, and so mould our attitude towards it—we who consider the ethics of contemporary business sufficiently arrived at and ready to be outgrown.

In the conclusion of his article (published in *The Dial* for November 2nd) Professor Dewey remarks that, "given such an agency of international regulation, defined and authorized by the Peace Conference itself, and there exists in effect a new and international type of government. Can anyone believe that once such an agency were in existence it would not inevitably tend to be employed for all sorts of new purposes not expressly contemplated in its original constitution?"

There is no doubt that it would be so employed; and many of these purposes would be humane and reasonable, and express justice as between nations. And yet, for one who is determining its relation to democratic progress, these humane and reasonable ones would not be the most important of its incidental uses. The most important would be the use suggested by Lord Bryce when he pointed to the problem now existing in Russia as one which the League of Nations would be quickly able to solve. What exists today in Russia is a first experimental attempt of the wage-workers and the poor farmers of a whole nation to arrange the business of the

nation in such a way that it will feed, clothe and make happy and make free all of the people. The experiment has been to an amazing degree successful, to an amazing degree orderly and merciful. This can be read between the lines even of the violently antagonistic and slanderous news despatches which alone are given to the press about Russia. Thus the "problem" presented here is the typical problem of a future supposed to be consecrated to the safety of the growth of democracy. And the way in which a League of Nations would solve that problem can be approximately inferred from the present conduct of the leading nations who will compose the League. Germany, France, England, Japan and the United States are invading Russia with a view to stimulating the business classes there to overthrow the government of the workers and the poorer peasants—an immense majority—and establish a monarchy or a business republic. And they are not only invading the country with armed forces, but they are conducting all over the face of the world, from the Arctic circles into the heart of Africa, a systematic, organized, exclusive and completely controlled campaign of libel against the government of Russia and against the men who have been elected to conduct it.

The condition of the newspapers and the pulpits and the theatres and the organs of government throughout the world, in their relation to revolutionary Russia, is an exact reproduction of their condition in any city in which a successful industrial union strike occurs. And we who knew Lenin and Trotsky and Gorky and Spiridonova, either by personal or political association, long before this condition arose, feel today exactly as we felt when we used to return from Paterson, New Jersey, after a day with the devoted leaders of that great strike in the silk-works, and then read the bloody and monstrous tales of them in all the great newspapers of New York and New Jersey. We knew that the institutions which "express contemporary industry and commerce" were engaged and committed, by forces of obscure and unchangeable instinct, to *break that strike*. And we know that the League of Nations, great imaginative deed of statesmanship though it is, will be engaged and committed to put down revolution and oppress the forces that move towards industrial democracy in no matter what part of the world they appear. The League of Nations will be the most gigantic strike-breaking agency that the ethics of contemporary industry could conceive. Its power unresisted would ensure the world against Socialism.

The Socialist republics will hardly be able to prevent the formation of a League of Commercial Nations, any more than they were able to prevent the formation of trusts. They may have to welcome it—as one welcomes the battle-array of an enemy—but at least they will not be deceived, or wheedled, or mesmerized by the rhetoric of soft-headed idealists into believing that its internationalism is socialistic, or its democracy industrial, or its freedom free.

The League of Nations will be a Capitalist International. We must meet it, and prepare to fight it over the whole

width of the world, with a new and more vigorous and more sophisticated and more audacious Socialist and Labor International. And our Socialist and Labor International must assemble and begin work on the day that the commercial nations gather at the council table. It is a mistake to demand representation at their council. The Soviets will have none. We must hold our own council, and, with the help of Russia and what other nations may with good luck establish the Republic of Labor, make our council more important than theirs. It is our task to make the world democratic before they make it safe.

## A Warning

ONCE had the social pleasure of explaining to Colonel House the principles of revolutionary socialism, emphasizing especially the doctrine of the class struggle. He confessed, when I was done, that they were practically his principles. The conversation passed to international matters, and I expressed my dread of the influence of Arthur James Balfour, who had just come over to arrange things with the President.

"O, you needn't worry," said the Colonel, "I know him well. He's one of us." I had no answer. Colonel House is so charming—and so good. I give the incident, however, as a warning to those who imagine that the world can be saved for democracy by fine feeling.

## About Solidarity

FROM *The Labor Defender* for November 15th, I quote the leading editorial, entitled "The Future I. W. W.":

- More constructive propaganda.
- No more talk about sabotage.
- More democracy in the General Administration, by means of special departments for special work.
- Systematic organization work, and job control.
- More toleration toward non-I. W. W. organizations, i. e., Socialists, Anarchists and Trade Unions.
- A greater and better I. W. W. press.
- An educational auxiliary to work in harmony with the Industrial Unions.
- Higher dues and the establishment of Strike and Defense funds.
- Short strikes, and better organized machinery for the conducting of strikes.
- Technical education, and the enrollment of executives as honorary members without voice or vote in business meetings unless by special permission.
- Closer international affiliation.
- A better understanding of the Social Vision, as per Preamble of the I. W. W.

The paragraph, "more toleration toward other organizations," suggests that the I. W. W. has learned an important lesson from events. It is to be hoped that the other organizations have learned the same lesson, and have made the same good resolution toward the I. W. W. I am sure that if the author of that editorial had heard Eugene Debs, with a twenty-year prison sentence over his head, addressing a jury of hard-shell, respectable, retired merchants and rich farmers, pay an entirely gratuitous and sympathetic tribute to the I. W. W., he would be encouraged to feel that the generosity and good sense is not all on one side. I would like to see the Non-Partisan League mentioned also in this connection.

The social revolution in Europe, following substantially the same form thus far in each country, has scrapped all sorts of theoretical squabbles—and among them the most barren, that between advocates of "political" and "direct" action. It is plainly evident that the industrial parliament is the essential organ of the revolution, that it naturally numbers among its members leaders of the left wing of the political parliament, who have done great work through their position there, and continue to do so until the political form is sloughed off by the industrial, and the revolution reveals its true nature as a dictatorship of the proletariat. Therefore there is no further excuse for *intolerance* between those whose present activities (and gifts) are industrial, and those whose activities and gifts are political or educational.

It is also plainly evident that some people who lack revolutionary imagination possess revolutionary courage. Many who are Menshevik so long as they are not confronted by actual facts, go through in complete loyalty to the working-class wherever a concrete issue is drawn. Others who fill abstract treatises with extreme revolutionism in the serene days of theory, take flight into patriotism when the hour of reality comes.

Therefore the line cannot be clearly drawn long in advance against *persons*, or *organizations*, whose *creed* is fundamentally revolutionary.

It can only be drawn against the *ideas* of "social patriotism," "moderate socialism," coalition, or pleading for bourgeois recognition, and against those individuals whose acts or sayings definitely align them with these ideas in opposition to the revolutionary power that is to be born. Against those individuals, after what has passed in Europe, our intolerance can have no bounds.

## Upton Sinclair

THERE is a moment at which Upton Sinclair can come back into the Socialist movement, leaving us convinced that a reasoned belief about the relation between autocracy and political democracy in the evolution of capitalism was the cause of his withdrawal. The moment is now.

His assertion that the *Masses* editors—and Eugene Debs and Rose Pastor Stokes too—have been "irritated and nagged" by legal prosecutions "into a state of continual op-

position . . . to an Administration that is doing its best to carry out their ideals in the world!" is about as uncomplimentary to our characters and our minds as it could be. But we will forgive him that, if he himself shows the clarity of mind and force of character to break with the economic and emotional forces that surround him, now that his original reason for joining them is removed.

## A Gradual Recovery

**W**ILLIAM MARION REEDY still suffers from the *dementia bellicosa nationalis*, but the derangement of his splendid faculties is less pervasive than it was. He is able to admire the cover of the *LIBERATOR*! He is even able to quote without adverse comment long paragraphs from us, and from Nicolai Lenin, before the frenzy comes on. And the quotations last longer, and actually seem to interest Reedy more, than his own unimaginative newspaper rant about Lenin's betraying the Russian people for German gold.

It would be helpful if we could get Reedy thinking about Maxim Gorky — "whose genius and intellectual probity are the honor of European literature," to quote Romain Rolland. After holding off and mercilessly criticizing the Bolsheviks for twelve months, because of differences of revolutionary philosophy and method, Gorky joined the government last spring in the high and intimate post of chief of the bureau of propaganda. Won't somebody in St. Louis ask Reedy if he really believes Maxim Gorky is a tool or a dupe of mercenary traitors to the Russian people? It might moderate his symptoms, at any rate, to think about Gorky for a while.

## A Vote of Censure

**I**HAVE been much criticized by patriots of the new Czecho-Slovak Republic for speaking in uncomplimentary terms of the behavior of their armies in Siberia. I am told that at the instigation of one of these patriots "one hundred and fifty artists" in the Salmagundi Club adopted unanimously a vote of censure against me on account of what I said. It is a terrible thing to be censured by one hundred and fifty artists—for a work of art. But to be censured for a political opinion, and without even a perusal by the artists of the article in which the opinion was expressed, is not, I confess, devastating to my self-respect.

It is my earnest desire, however, to correct any impression my words may have conveyed of nationalistic prejudice against the Czecho-Slovaks. I honor their culture and their hopes. I rejoice in their liberation from the Hapsburg dynasty. I wish them a greater liberation. I gladly recognize, moreover, that significant numbers of their soldiers, and not a few of their officers, have gone over to the Bolsheviks, and are fighting on the side of freedom in Siberia. Reading the news as intelligently as I can, I am firmly convinced that a majority of the citizens of the Czecho-Slovak Republic are of my opinion as to the justice of what their

armies are doing—or being done with—in Siberia, and not of the opinion of the artists in the Salmagundi Club. The future will tell.

## Some Simple Truth

**A**MID all the dull wash of slander and malicious hypocrisy and thoughtless, credulous nonsense that floods the journals of the world about conditions in Russia, it is hard to find any way to wisdom. I recommend first of all, as most simple, direct and self-proving of what it asserts, Louise Bryant's book—"Six Red Months in Russia." Louise Bryant was in the very inside of the Bolshevik movement, both in Petrograd and Moscow, as things in her book abundantly and interestingly prove. And she retained a calm, natural, human and American heart and judgment about what she saw and experienced. If you are somewhat natural and a little American, too, you feel in reading her book as if you were over there yourself. And you stay as long as she will let you!

## "Just Democracy"

**O**N the very day President Wilson announced that "everything for which America fought has been accomplished," and "it will now be our fortunate duty to assist by example . . . in the establishment of just democracy throughout the world," his Attorney General announced that the censorship of information and opinion under the amended espionage law, instead of being relaxed, would be tightened throughout the period of settlement. No more open violation of "just democracy" than this censorship has existed in any democratic country since the American revolution.

# THE LIBERATOR

*A Journal of Revolutionary Progress*

Editors, Max Eastman  
Crystal Eastman  
Associate Editor, Floyd Dell  
Business Manager, Margaret Lane

### CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:

Cornelia Barns, Howard Brubaker, K. R. Chamberlain, Hugo Gellert, Arturo Giovannitti, Charles T. Hallinan, Helen Keller, Robert Minor, Boardman Robinson, Alexander Trachtenberg, Louis Untermeyer, Art Young.

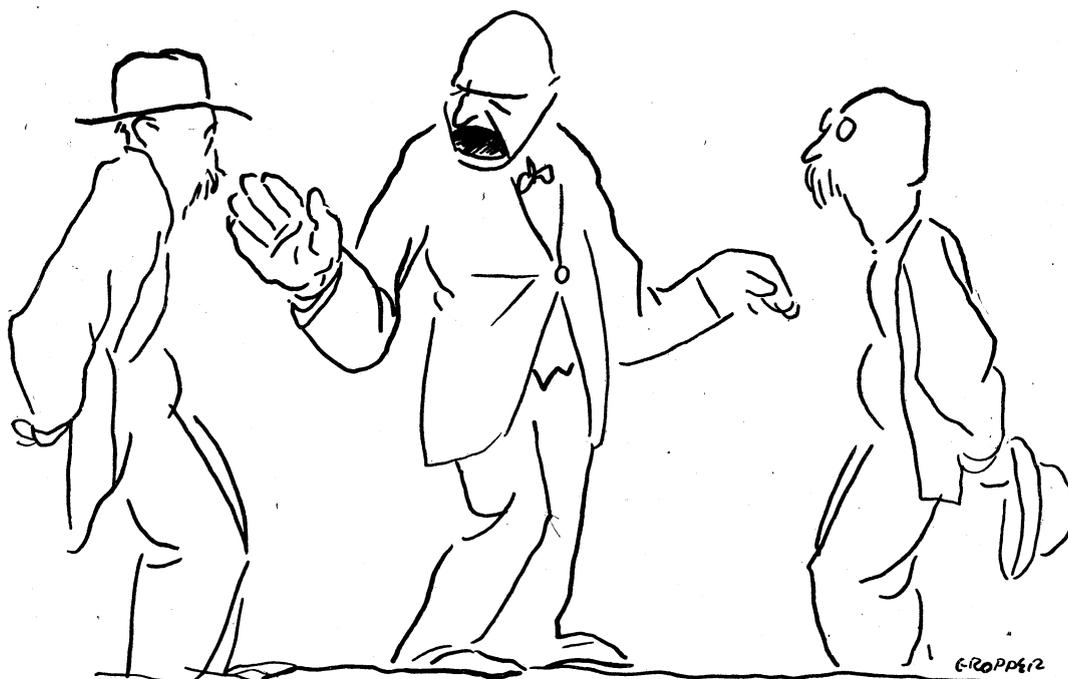
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"Aw—Shut up! This is a Free Country!"

## MAKING EVERYTHING CLEAR

**T**HE net result up to date of Wilson's correspondence with the Teutons has been to cause dissension in Germany, to weaken their military defense, to hasten the dissolution of Austria, to strengthen democratic sentiment among our allies, to save some evacuated towns from destruction and to modify the U-boat war.

**O**THERWISE Roosevelt and Lodge are right; it was a mistake.

**T**HE Kaiser generously offered the last drop of German, Austrian, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Turkish blood in defense of Alsace-Lorraine, but Bulgaria held out a drop or two on him.

**R**OOSEVELT'S Montana speech makes everything nice and clear. If the Nonpartisan League wants the Colonel's support in its fight against oppression, all it has to do is to move to Armenia.

**M**AJOR GENERAL MAURICE says that the Allies should center now upon victory rather than vengeance. If the armies will give us victory, vengeance may safely be left to the *New York Tribune*.

**I**T now appears that Ambassador Gerard has got his Maxes mixed. He put his O. K. on Prince Max of Baden under the supposition that he was the same Max as Prince Max of Saxony.

**C**HANCELLOR MAX seems to enjoy high favor among the southern German kings and princes and dinky little dukes, but otherwise is about as popular as the Spanish influenza.

**T**HAT Long Island girl whose auto killed two men and injured two others is making bad use of her talents. She ought to be running a tank.

**A**CLOSE student of the Armour reports has discovered that after all the race is to the Swift.

**"G**ERMAN Defense Has Stiffened Overnight," admits the *New York Times*. This is not a pro-German sentiment; almost anything would have stiffened in those cool October nights.

**G**ERMANY is moving toward responsible government; Austria is coming apart and Poland is coming together.

**D**OES everything change except the United States Senate?

HOWARD BRUBAKER.

# The Seventh Tier Soviet

By Roger N. Baldwin

*On Oct. 8th, Roger Baldwin, Director of the National Civil Liberties Bureau, refusing to comply with his summons for physical examination, gave himself up to the authorities as a deliberate violator of the draft act. On Oct. 30th he appeared before Judge Mayer, and in a brief statement, remarkable for intellectual clarity as well as warm human faith, set forth his position as a conscientious objector to all wars and to every form of conscription—an absolutist. He is now serving one year's imprisonment in the Newark penitentiary. This sketch was written for THE LIBERATOR during the weeks Roger Baldwin spent in the Tombs awaiting trial. "I feel myself just one protest in a great revolt surging up from among the people—the struggle of the masses against the rule of the world by the few," he told the Court. "Their protest is my protest. Mine is a personal protest at a particular law, but it is backed by all the aspirations and ideals of the struggle for a world freed of our manifold slaveries and tyrannies."*

**E**ARLY morning on the federal tier—the seventh story of the iron cages of the Tombs. The rattle of heavy keys in grated doors, opening for our two hours' exercise; the bustle of prison help up and down the corridors with tins of breakfast "coffee," half sour bread and sodden mush; the ringing announcement of "barber on seventh"; the white-coated waiter from the prison restaurant taking orders for real food from those with real money.

And then the forty or fifty of us "federals" tramping up and down in little groups along the narrow corridor between cell bars and gratings. We are a mixed lot these days of federalization—when theft from railroad, telephone or telegraph property is a federal crime, and stealing khaki as against black goods brings you to Uncle Sam instead of Father Knickerbocker. But only a few of us steal for a living. We are for the most part aristocrats in crime, "war criminals" whose offenses range from too much patriotism to too little.

Wearing uniforms when you shouldn't, selling drugs to soldiers, registering too frequently in the draft—too much patriotism; talking against the war, the government or England, or neglecting the draft—too little patriotism. One of us is a man of Irish-German parentage held for seditious remarks (when drunk), and doubtless to be convicted on his birth certificate. Another, a British Socialist, a sailor with international socialism resplendently tattooed all over chest and arms, waiting to do eighteen months for bringing over a letter on his person (in violation of the international postal regulations). A young Hindu—graduate of the University of Calcutta with a scholarship at Harvard—is held under \$25,000 bail for nine months still without trial, for advocating the freeing of India from British rule. Four Bolsheviks of the East Side await transportation to Atlanta to serve twenty-year sentences—their crime, circulating handbills attacking the President for military intervention in Russia. (And the Republican leaders still out of jail.) Two brothers—self-styled gangsters, heroes of a hundred crimes—let us in to the inner life of a world known before only through the movies.

Two or three groups detach themselves from the morning parade. They edge into my cell—and the daily meeting of the seventh tier Soviet is on.

"Found a new kind of bug last night—six kinds in all," announces one of the Bolsheviks.

"Well, the old original is still with me," quoth I, lifting the two sets of blankets off the wire spring bunk. "One of you fellows get the bed-bug gun, and let's shoot these blankets. I used to think I knew something about prisons and jails. Been in dozens of them as an investigator and visitor. But no one can really know what prison means until he's been in himself. It's the difference between looking at a show, and real life. I used to think prisons could be reformed——"

"Aw, to hell wid de reformers," says Tony, the gangster, settling down on the bed for a smoke, "They was the woist bunch we ever had. All the guys was against them. The Mitchel crowd was just for show—to see how good they could make things look. They never got down to the men. Take Osborne at Sing Sing. He was different. He let the men run the place. Every guy was on the square. But no prison don't help nobody. It makes more crooks. Look at us. Most of us young fellers—and see all them kids downstairs, sixteen to twenty-one—and one of them in short pants, don't look over twelve. Well, what you don't know when you get in you learn before you get out."

"I tell you," says the little Bolshevik, in Russian-Yiddish accent, brushing back a mop of long hair and adjusting tortoise shell spectacles, "if the object of prison is betterment of human beings it is a failure. If it is to protect property, it may be some success. But every year it eats up and makes useless thousands of youth all over the world. The only way is to abolish prisons altogether. For people who are dopes or weak-minded, hospitals are enough. But no punishment anywhere, only cure. Russia will abolish them. And Russian prisons are not so bad as American. There we had fresh air, outside windows, food from outside and visits at our cells. We did not pay, pay, pay all the time as here, for everything we need. Here it is all graft. You can

break all the rules if you pay the keepers, and you get nothing if you don't. Yesterday the head keeper——"

"It is not the graft," interrupted the young Hindu revolutionist, in eager broken English. "It is the—monotony—twenty hours in the cell day after day—it kills the soul, the spirit. You cannot concentrate. You cannot read long. No exercise, no fresh air—the mind, the soul dies. But you will have prisons many years. The great struggle will come now after the war—many more will go to prison for political offenses, for labor troubles. Peace will be only a white-man peace. The imperialists will still rule to exploit the non-white races. The conflicts will keep the prisons full. As long as there is conflict in society, there will be prisoners." This with the finality of a challenge to the Bolsheviks and dreamers.

I take up the cudgels, groping for something "practical." Well, there are a lot of reforms that *could* be made so that prisons would be hospitals. The main trouble is not the prisons, but the criminal law. The idea of punishment is at the bottom of it. But the great crime is poverty. Rich folks don't often get caught, and when they do, everything is fixed for them, bail, lawyers, appeals, politics and even the newspapers. Lack of bail is what keeps this place full. All here are poor. And they are just about like the folks outside. Those in here are just the ones that happened to get caught. You could swop 'em for an equal number outside picked off the streets at random—and society would be no worse or better. Even take Tony and his gang. They are crooks, and proud of it—guilty of everything in the code from murder down, and yet I leave it to you all if there are smarter, squarer or better-hearted fellows here. There are thousands of gangsters in New York and the police never get but a few. Prison doesn't cure gangs.

Tony, who had been translating into his own language (which is unprintable—and here edited), got up, on fire. "You've got de idea. The gangs is jist natural. They are all over New York. That's the way every few blocks gits organized. They fight each other—and they fight the police. And the police are just as big crooks as the gangs. Yes, and the reformers can't change them from the top. They was the same under Mitchel—except the highbrows at the top. Locking up the gangsters don't stop nothin'. I tell you how to fix it. Have the whole city organized into neighborhoods. Each one pick its own leader, see. The leaders get together and make the rules and settles the trouble. You won't need no police then. Everybody would be in on it. The regular fellows everybody agrees on would run things—not the cops."

"Say, what's this?" puts in Bolshevik No. 2, from the doorway. "New York divided up into Soviet gangs? I did not know you are so ready for revolution!"

"Well, Tony's right," I decide. "You can't control organized crime from on top. Only the gang itself can change its purpose. Give them a chance for another purpose is Tony's idea. That's good democratic dope. And you've got to do the same with individuals who go wrong. Give

them the chance to change their habits—prison never does that. Reforming courts and prisons can't do it. Here in New York after years of reform and work for children, there are almost a hundred kids under twenty in here now—treated like crooks, learning crookedness. Nothing but a new system outside will ever keep them out. We manufacture them now regularly as part of the present system. They are part of the tribute we pay to a world run for money."

"There you 'ave it. There you 'ave it—just as I was telling 'you!" cries the British sailor, excitedly waving an arm tattooed with socialism. "It's all greed, greed. Prisons is just a blasted device of the capitalist system to keep the poor in their places. And the big crooks never gets in. 'Ere's this war for democracy, and never a blasted bit will we get till we've turned the capitalists out. Look 'ow they do 'em. 'Ere's this bloody soldier," pointing to a lad by the door in overseas uniform, "gassed and near dead, sick as a dog now, and they locks 'im up 'ere the first day back. That's all they cares for those who fight for 'em."

Tony jumps up again from the bunk for a speech, kicking over the wooden stool—the sole article of cell furniture. "Say, I thought you Bolshevikki and Socialists was a bunch of stiffs. But you got the right idea. When I do this bit, I'm going out on the soap-box and talk to the regular guys. Youse are for us—I'll get my gang for youse——"

The gong rings for locking up.

"Look here a minute, all of you," and our Bolshevikki friend of the long locks draws out of his pocket a slip of paper. "Our comrade who died this week—the police beat him up, and he had heart trouble—the prison doctor neglected him—he left this little unfinished note in the cell while we were at court. We never saw him again."

We all bent over it.

"Farewell, comrades," it read. "When you appear before the court, I will be with you no more. But struggle on, without fear. Fight bravely. I grieve to leave you; but this is life itself. Comrades, after your long suffering——"

"All in!" called the keeper, jangling the big keys. "The next stop is West Philadelphia."

## To a Black Soldier Fallen in the War

O EARTH, lie light upon him  
Deep pillowed on thy breast;  
O Winds, blow soft above him  
And gently lull to rest.

O questioning Heart, be silent,  
Allay the bitter cry—  
"Why should *he* thus perish?  
Why, for freedom, die?"

Mary Burrill.

# The War Labor Board

EVERY revolution in modern history has been ushered in by a revolt on the part of the middle class. One great function of this class is to serve as a barrier to the torrent of revolution either by damning it absolutely or by letting it trickle through in such measure as to keep the flood within control. But when it too, becomes oppressed, and turns against the established order, Revolution finds its opportunity. And this is true, I suspect, quite as much of industrial as of political revolutions.

It is the cant of daily conversation that we are in an age of upheaval, that "nothing will be the same after the war," that "a silent revolution is taking place within this country." If this is true, it is the agencies of the present regime which are initiating the change.

Ask any business man you meet what is the most revolutionary institution in the present Wilson administration and ten to one he will answer, "The National War Labor Board." To him it is just plain revolutionary, a "bunch of Bolsheviks," because it raises wages, shortens hours, protects trades union organization, and even institutes unions of a kind where none existed before. Good Socialists and revolutionists will distrust any middle class institution, even when it comes bearing the gifts which they eagerly receive. And they are right. The War Labor Board has certainly not been revolutionary in intent. It proclaimed only the intention of "increasing production, and preserving industrial peace" to the end that the war against Germany might be more speedily and thoroughly won. Nothing revolutionary in this, not even anything which aims at improving the condition of the working class! But some of the things which the Board has been forced to do in order to achieve these worthy objects have been of an almost revolutionary character.

For example, if I were to run over to the steel mills of Bethlehem, Pa., to-morrow, I could see the workers of a bitter labor-hating corporation voting by secret ballot, on "company time," for a shop committee of trade unionists nominated by the union. I could see union organizers taking memberships in their respective internationals just outside the gates. I could see the elected representatives of the men actually passing through that sacred door which leads into the office of the general manager, there to make their wage demands officially and in person. This in a city where a few months ago the police department, acting under orders from the Mayor, vice-president of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, forbade the use of any hall in the city for a union meeting!

Or if I were to go to the office of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company, another famous anti-union corporation, I could witness the employment of men who a few weeks ago were discharged and blacklisted for belonging to a labor union. And I should perhaps see these same men, standing

unmolested about the company's property, soliciting memberships in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

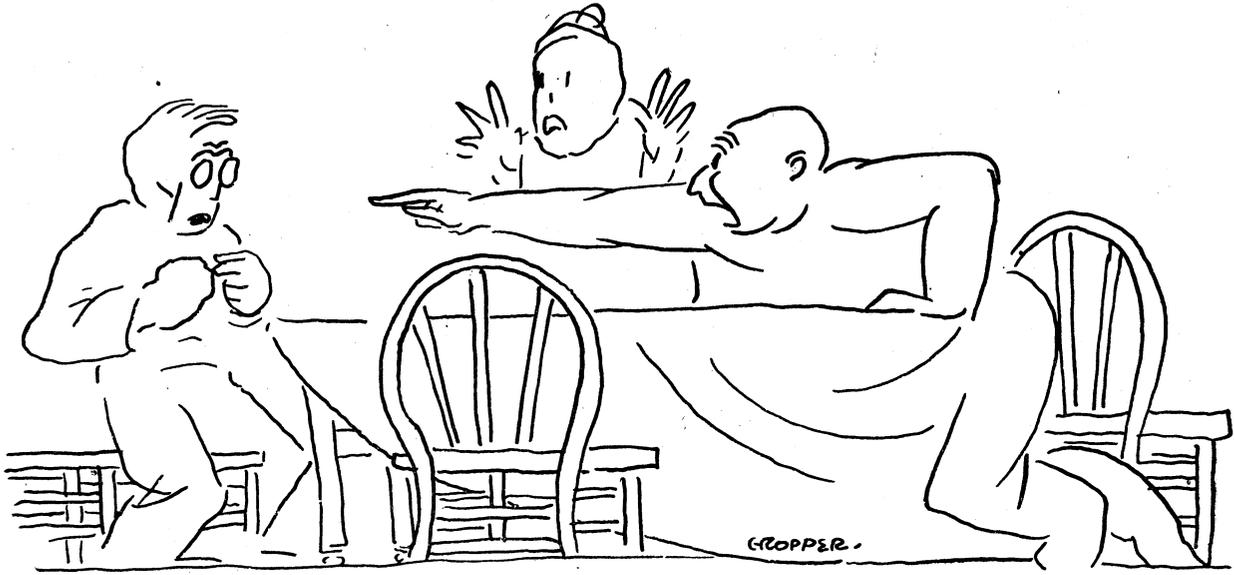
Or if I made a well-timed visit to Wheeling, West Virginia, I could see a committee of two workers, elected by the men, actually telling the company whether or not it might order its employees to work overtime.

I don't pretend that committees make a revolution. But I am sure that a revolution needs committees. And I like to think that I see in these officially instituted shop committees new types of organization which are destined to invigorate and alter the sluggish and smuggish American labor movement.

On paper, the principles and policies of the Board, drawn up by duly appointed representatives of employers and workers, make the smoothest compromise imaginable. Each side is surrendering a right here in return for a privilege there until the scale balances to a hair. Labor surrenders the right to declare the closed union shop; so, of course, capital surrenders the right to declare the *closed non-union shop*. Labor is granted the right to associate itself into labor unions, and in return for this it concedes to the employer the right to join manufacturers' associations and the like, an act of generosity for which it will surely go down in history. Again, the two sides are alike granted the right to bargain collectively through chosen representatives, which is to say that the workers, if permitted to delegate power to elected committees, will not interpose the slightest objection to their employers' delegating power to Boards of Directors, Executive Committees and General Managers. Or again, labor admits that capital should have a fair and just return on the money invested, so *mutatis mutandis* capital grants that the laborer should receive a wage sufficient to support himself and his wife and family in health and reasonable comfort. The tit for tat is perfect. It is all fair, just, reasonable, equitable and patriotic.

There is one compromise in all this give and take that particularly deserves to be noticed. The worker is granted the right to join the union of his trade (provided everything is done peaceably and without coercion) in return for the declaration which the employers most of all desire—that they should not be obliged to recognize or deal with any union not recognized before the war. In other words, the workers may form unions provided the unions are guaranteed useless. On paper this provision is, on the whole, a victory for the employers. The workers may join unions as clubs, fraternities or lodges. They may not join them as unions. So far as I am concerned, says the employer, these unions do not exist. Very satisfactory—but the joker turns up later.

There is one more of these compromises, the most splendid of all, that must be mentioned. Some representative of the employers, while the Board's principles were being drawn up, observed that, although he refused to have any dealings



“You’re a Liar!”

with labor unions, he would be quite willing to meet with representatives of *his own men*. And some one else on the Board, perhaps Joint-Chairman Frank P. Walsh, took him at his word. That observation has made more trouble for anti-union employers than anything else the Board has done. It was this provision for collective bargaining *with the employees themselves* that made possible the shop elections at Bethlehem. It was this that turned the previously mentioned compromise concerning the free and functionless labor union into the most powerful weapon labor acquired during the war, as will appear presently.

But what can a poor employer do? Can he state over his signature that he believes in paying the worker a wage *less* than sufficient to support his wife and family in health and reasonable comfort? In this day, when democracy is everywhere in the air and in the newspapers, can he refuse to meet his own employees to discuss their grievances? Hardly. But it is a great deal to have persuaded him to agree to these fair and just and reasonable principles in black and white. For then he can perhaps be obliged to live up to them. After all, the joint chairmen of the Board were compelled to write awards in accordance with the Board’s principles and policies; to have reversed them in the Board’s decisions would have been to assume that the employer members did not mean what they said. So when certain employees of the Western Union Telegraph Company represented to the Board that they had been discharged solely for membership in a union, there was but one thing to do, and Mr. Taft and Mr. Walsh did it loyally. They recommended, in accordance with the principles of the joint agreement between labor and capital, that the men be reinstated. True, the employer members of the Board voted against the recommendation. But that did not absolve the

joint chairmen from applying the principles. And then, when the Western Union company defied the recommendation, and thus threatened to provoke a strike, there was but one thing for the President of the United States to do. And he did it. He took over, through the exercise of his executive power, the Western Union Telegraph Company in the name of the United States Government, and through the Postmaster General issued orders for the reinstatement of the discharged men.

All this as a result of committing men to fair-sounding abstract principles!

But, of course, it was not abstract principles alone that put teeth in the decisions of the War Labor Board. Things don’t happen in that way. The teeth were in reality the teeth of organized labor. Beneath the fine show of mutual confidence and accommodation there was always the knowledge that labor, if it were nourishing a sense of unfair treatment, had the power to tie up the war programme of the country. The employers knew it, the government knew it, labor knew it. And a strike is a terribly fluid thing. It baffles the military mind and the military technique. If an employer goes on strike it is easy to seize his plant. A squad of soldiers can do it, because the plant cannot run away. But send a squad or a regiment of soldiers to force strikers back to work and things are very different. Strikers can run away. Moreover, they can run in different directions. To keep men at work by sheer force would require nearly as many soldiers as workers. This obvious truth has not prevented our military authorities from urging and actually planning measures of the kind. But it happened that the men in control of the government’s labor policy were too intelligent for such suicidal tactics.

And they had experienced one first-rate scare to convince

them of the wisdom of velvet glove methods. William L. Hutcheson, president of the carpenters' international, raised the spectre of labor's power when he called a strike of his men on the ship yards and publicly defied the government day after day. This, coming from one of the most conservative unions in the country, looked menacing. A few thousand men who happened to hold a monopoly of a certain article that the government needed were able, it appeared, to stop the whole economic process of the war. It is true that the carpenters subsided and went back to work after President Wilson sent his stinging letter to Hutcheson. But formally they did not submit and did not capitulate. On the surface it was a defeat for the men. But it was a defeat more valuable than many victories. Revolts of the workers cannot forever be quelled by stinging letters. Labor, if sufficiently goaded, has a weapon more stinging than a typewriter, indeed even more convincing than a gun. It became necessary to "co-operate" with labor. So the government presently outlined its sweeping labor policy, and the walking delegate was invited to put his feet under the table with the captains of industry. Labor, with Mr. Walsh's help, cashed in its chips of potential power.

But this was not enough. The government dared not rest when it had persuaded the unions to be good. It found it actually could not get along without them. The war was a wholesale problem. It had to be handled, so far as possible, through central agencies. Mr. Baker, being a modern business man, saw the economy of signing a contract with one official of a union instead of trying to sign a thousand contracts with the individual carpenters on his cantonments. Other government servants, and finally even the business men on the Board, gradually came to see this truism of business. Where a trade union exists there is always the possibility of a speedy and permanent agreement. Where there is no union there is chaos. If the workers of America had really wished to obstruct the war programme, they could not have done it better than by accepting the advice of certain employers and disbanding their unions. Labor organized did indeed invite trouble. But labor unorganized invited catastrophe.

So it came about that the War Labor Board protected unionism, encouraged unionism, and actually instituted unionism where none existed before. For to institute collective bargaining between the employer and his men it is necessary to institute shop unions. If the workers in an industry elect a shop committee to represent them, they take on a corporate function. If they agree to act together in accepting a wage bargain, they agree by implication to act together in rejecting it. And even though they promise not to strike during the war they may later present their bill with accrued interest.

This is what the employers did not see when they so eagerly offered to meet "their own men" in order to keep the walking delegate at a distance.

No one can say very confidently how things will go after the war. But this is the way it works at present. There is an inclusive, somewhat inchoate "shop union" composed

of all the men and women employed in the plant, and it exists for the sake of the shop committee which it elects. *Within this industrial union* there flourish several tight craft unions, free to do all lawful things so long as they do not seek recognition for themselves. What happens? The very thing that an employer would have foreseen had he been penetrating enough to understand that a labor union is not an institution, but an organism: the tight craft unions seize the leadership of the shop. Precisely because the shop union is inchoate it cannot direct itself. Inevitably it follows the leadership of those who have proved themselves leaders. On each floor of the shop there is one man who is known for his aggressiveness and independence. Ten to one, if there is any union there at all, he is in it. He can command the solid majority of his union brothers; the vote of the other workers sprawls all over the shop. If but one worker in ten is a union man, you can be pretty sure of a majority of unionists on the shop committees. These men have the habit of working together. They have the habit of taking orders from their international office. So the "walking delegate" presently appears on the scene. In the union office, across the street from the plant, he directs the whole campaign, passes upon debatable points, outlines the wage demands. His organizers are taking new membership applications just outside the shop, or hiring halls for union meetings. The non-union workers flock into the craft organizations, which rapidly approach one hundred per cent.

This is inevitable, provided the principles of the Board are faithfully observed. An inchoate body must articulate itself. It is bound to seek a backbone, a brain, a voice, a set of arms and legs, and all the other organs which a live organism needs. In doing so it will follow the line of least resistance. And the line of least resistance in this case is to agglomerate about the skeleton craft unions already there.

In Bethlehem there were some 6,000 union men out of some 27,000 workers. The shop committees are almost solidly union. In Bridgeport there were perhaps 7,000 unionists out of 60,000 workers, and most of the union men were on strike when the elections were held. But the handful of union men still at work furnished a large percentage of the delegates elected. And when these delegates, the majority of them non-unionists, finally came to elect a central committee of three, they chose the three union leaders who had been the most vehement in the strike.

It is this phenomenon which, it seems to me, is likely to mark the work of the War Labor Board as something of permanent importance in the history of the American labor movement. That it has raised the wages of fully a million wage-earners directly and perhaps twice that number indirectly; that it has pounded the concept of the living wage into the head of the nation; that it has given public recognition to the principle of equal pay for equal work, and with reasonable diligence enforced a decent status for women; that it has placed a considerable weight of influence on the side of the basic eight-hour day and has materially shortened the daily labor of many thousands of workers—these are gifts which are admirable in themselves and rather to be

expected of a benevolently disposed government, but liable to contain a dangerous narcotic for the workers who receive them. That the Board should have forced certain conspicuous labor-hating employers to eat dirt and reinstate men discharged for union membership; that it should have broken down the opposition to unionism in several large corporations; that it should have been directly instrumental in increasing the membership of the established international unions by 200,000 or more in the six months of its existence—these are things which might have been gained by fighting, if there had been no Board. It is a tenable theory that they would be more precious to labor as prizes of combat than as prizes of good conduct. But, on the whole, I am glad to see these things come to labor as speedily as possible. The work of getting higher wages and building stronger unions is only preliminary, and I for one like to see it accomplished with as little fuss and fireworks as possible. The proper business of the labor movement is not to protect itself against recurrent injustice; it is to seize and administer the capital wealth of the earth.

A Lawrence strike or a passionate mob revolt against the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company must stir the blood and make the heart beat faster. But the thrill of it cannot nearly equal the depression of it. Such things should not be. Eighteenth century feudalism like that in Colorado must, of course, be cleared away, but it is disheartening to have to wait for the world to catch up with itself. What makes my mental eye gleam is to see, as I fancy I see in the work of the War Labor Board, the creation of some machinery by means of which the solid work of the twentieth century labor movement will be done. When I see the beginning of an industrial union being organized at Bethlehem, I fancy I see a good steel sword being forged for labor's right hand. And when, as in Wheeling, I see the workers' committee deciding the length of the work-day from time to time, I am sure I am witnessing some things not dreamt of in the old A. F. of L. philosophy. It is one thing to claim a share of your employer's money; it is quite another thing to tell him, in certain matters, how he shall run his shop. And this is just what the shop committee of today is coming to. It is taking a kindergarten lesson in proletarian administration of production.

But this is not all. In grasping the shop union the old A. F. of L. organizations have grasped industrial unionism, denounced by many of the conservative labor leaders for two years past as an invention of the Kaiser. For the unions which the War Labor Board has organized for the purposes of collective bargaining in Bethlehem, in Pittsfield, in Bridgeport, in Waynesboro, are industrial and nothing else. A machinist, a carpenter and an electrician vote together for the same shop committee delegate to represent them. They do different work, but they have the same boss. Reason enough! What comes next? In a few months these shop committees, or a central shop committee, will be bargaining for wages, perhaps with their eye on a war melon lying on the "undivided surplus" shelf. But how shall this melon be subdivided

as between the crafts? Shall the carpenters get a larger percentage of increase than the machinists? Shall the skilled be permitted to use their monopoly value to defraud the unskilled? Such matters are likely to go up to international headquarters, and the various craft headquarters had better come to an understanding with each other. For, whether they like it or not, the power which they have in this industry is that of an industrial union! Let them once turn to fighting each other as crafts and this power vanishes.

The old unions, when they face this situation, will be facing the structure of the new world. For here, within the harmless-seeming collective bargains of the War Labor Board, are both industrial and craft unionism, the warp and the woof of the coming society. If the workers can solve the problem in a single industry, say in Bethlehem, then they can go on to greater and greater achievements. If not, the new world is not yet. They must learn by concrete experience how necessary both elements are if labor is ever to rule. Industrial unionism cuts squarely across craft unionism, true. But it is precisely because the warp runs at right angles to the woof that the fabric holds firm.

And one thing more. The employers have not accepted the decisions of the Board willingly. They have expressed their horror, sometimes with a pretense of good grace, and sometimes with a wowl of pain. But they have explained to themselves that the decisions of the Board were made possible only by the shortage of labor. They are counting on the time when three million soldiers shall return to claim the jobs of the men now joining the unions. If these men were to be thrown on the labor market all at once, without governmental control or restriction, the unions would lose in six months more than they have gained in three years. Powerful forces in Bourbon Washington are at work. It is only too probable that the workers may see what it is not to have a government of their own in power to protect them.

H. M.

## OUT OF WHITE LIPS

**O**UT of white lips a question: Shall seven million dead ask for their blood a little land for the living wives and children, a little land for the living brothers and sisters?

**Out of white lips:—**Shall they have only air that sweeps round the earth for the breath of their nostrils and no footing on the dirt of the earth for their battle-drabbed, battle-soaked shoes?

**Out of white lips:—**Is the red in the flag the blood of a free man on a piece of land his own or is it the red of a sheep slit in the throat for mutton?

**Out of white lips a white pain murmurs: Who shall have land? Him who has stood ankle deep in the blood of his comrades, in the red trenches dug in the land?**

Carl Sandburg.

# Russia in America

IN a play of Tolstoi's now running in a New York theatre there is a scene laid in the corridor outside a court-room. A man about to enter is stopped by the attendant.

"Are not trials open to the public?" the man asks in surprise.

"Who are you?" demands the attendant.

"I am the public."

"Then you can't get in."

The corridor outside the federal courts in the old post-office building here in New York is rather like that sometimes. It is particularly hard to get into a court-room when people are being tried for violating the Espionage Law. If somebody in authority doesn't like your looks, you stay out in the corridor. Nevertheless, the corridor is a place where one may hear, in the interludes, interesting comments on the solemnities within.

\* \* \*

"Why, they are just children!"

\* \* \*

"The police say they didn't beat them! Listen: I saw a man who had been arrested along with them, and 'questioned,' and finally let go. *He* had been beaten—he showed me. I didn't understand how anyone could be beaten up the way he was and live. . . . He? Oh, *he* had nothing to do with these people. He just happened to be standing in front of their house when the police made the raid, and they took him along. . . ."

"One of them didn't live."

"Yes, Schwartz. The day after they were arrested, I saw a girl who knew Schwartz; I told her about the beatings. She covered her eyes and cried, 'Oh, are they beating him, too? He can't stand it! It will kill him!'

"Have you seen Schwartz's last letter? Here is a copy. The original is in Yiddish. *'Farewell, comrades. When you appear before the court I will be with you no longer. Struggle without fear, fight bravely. I am sorry I have to leave you. But this is life itself. After your long martyrdom, comrades. . . .'* He did not finish the sentence."

\* \* \*

It was a trial under the Espionage Act. Seven young Russians had been arrested charged with distributing handbills on the East Side denouncing intervention in Russia. Six of them were on trial—Mollie Steimer, Jacob Abrams, Samuel Lipman, Hyman Lachnowsky, Hyman Rosansky, and Gabriel Prober. The seventh, Jacob Schwartz, was dead.

\* \* \*

"The theory of the defense," a clergyman was explaining to someone, "is that these people were within their rights in protesting against intervention in Russia, and in criticising

President Wilson. The defendants' lawyer, Harry Weinberger, will undertake to show that all the statements made in the handbills are strictly true. He will put in evidence President Wilson's statements and promises concerning Russia. He will point out that intervention contravenes these statements and violates these promises. He will also go into the question of the truth of the reasons given for intervention. . . . Raymond Robins is to be called as a witness this afternoon. He was in Russia as the head of the American Red Cross Mission, knows the truth about the Bolsheviki and is said to have proof that the Creel documents are forgeries."

\* \* \*

A newspaper reporter, the next day: "The Robins testimony? My paper would only print a paragraph about it, but I have almost the whole thing here, typed out, want to see it?" These are the questions Major Robins was asked:

"Did you have a letter from Ambassador Francis, authorizing you to represent the United States as an intermediary between Mr. Francis and the Bolshevik government?"

"Did you ever have in your possession some of the documents published by Mr. Sisson, known as the Sisson Documents?"

"Did you investigate those documents, and did you reach the conclusion that they were false?"

"If your name was signed to the telegram sending those documents to the United States, was that name signed with your permission or by your direction?"

"Did you show these documents to Mr. Sisson, and did not he agree with you that they were forgeries?"

"Didn't you go officially to the Kerensky Cabinet, in respect to some of these documents, and did they not admit to you that the documents were forged and unreliable?"

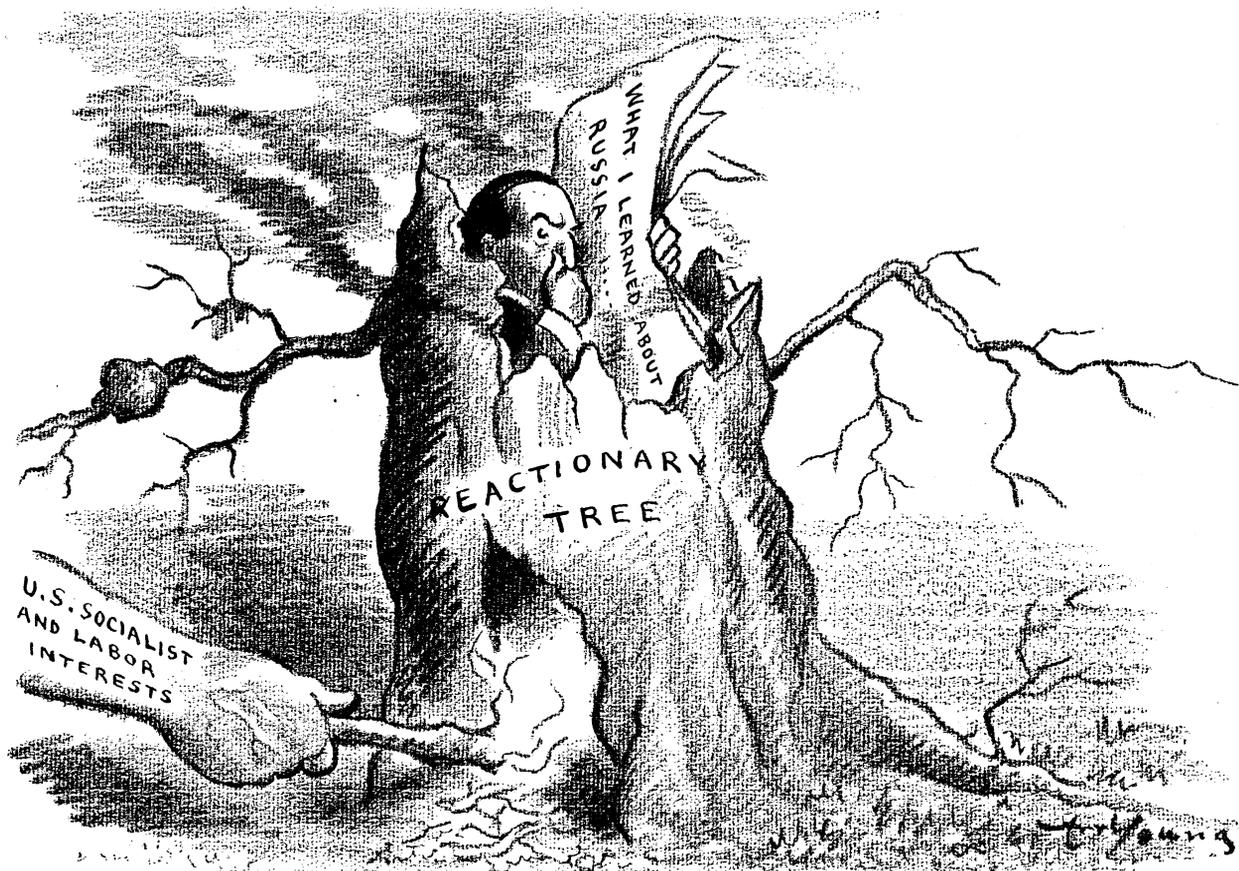
"Is it not true that the Soviet Government, particularly before the ratification of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, asked you to bring about an understanding with the Allies, with a view of continuing the war, on the part of the Soviets against Germany, on condition of material aid, and that was to consist of transportation, instructors for the army, materials and food?"

"Have you not a protocol or document to that effect in your possession?"

"Was not that protocol drawn in your office as a conversation between you and Mr. Trotzky, and was not that put in the form of queries put forward by the Bolsheviki Government to the United States?"

"Isn't it true that the Russian Government never received a reply through you or from the Allies or from the United States in any way in answer to those queries?"

"Haven't you been told by officials in Washington, that that offer was received by the Government of the United States and never made public?"



### “ Will Raymond Robins Please Come Out? ”

“ Who was the public official or public officials who told you that? ”

“ As far as you know, was any answer ever made by the United States to the offer of co-operation by the Bolsheviki Government against the Germans? ”

“ Don't you know that the Soviets offered to put the railroads under the control of the Americans, so that no material of any kind could get into Germany? ”

“ Was not a similar offer made to the English and French, to put the railroads under control of the Allies? ”

“ In the case of England, did not the Soviets offer to put the Black Sea fleet in the hands of the British navy so as to save it from the Germans? ”

“ In the case of the French, did not the Soviets offer to trust the reorganization of the Red Army to the French officers to enable them to continue the fight against Germany? ”

“ Isn't it a fact that the French and Belgian Ambassadors and the Czech-Slovak leaders agreed that they were to be transported by the Bolsheviki through Siberia and then shipped from Vladivostok to the Western front, and isn't it a fact that these promises were made to your knowledge? ”

“ Isn't it a fact that the French and Belgian Ambassadors and the Soviet Government agreed to arm, equip and feed

and transport these Czecho-Slovaks to Siberia—or through Siberia to Vladivostok, and then they were to be transported to the Western front? ”

“ Isn't it a fact that a promise was made by the French and the Belgian Ambassadors and by the Czecho-Slovak leaders that they were going to go straight to Vladivostok, and from there to the Western front, and would not stay in Siberia or in Russia? ”

“ Isn't it a fact that there is absolutely no evidence that there were any armed German or Austrian war prisoners operating in Siberia as alleged by the American statement on intervention? ”

“ Isn't it true that at the request of Mr. Trotsky, the members of the American and British Military Missions made a trip to investigate the situation in Siberia, and they made a report that Austrian and German armed prisoners were not in control of the Bolsheviki forces in Russia? ”

\* \* \*

An innocent bystander: “ But where are the answers to all those questions? ”

“ There weren't any answers. The judge instructed the witness not to answer. ”

"Of course the jury will find them guilty; you see—they're foreigners. Their accent—the way they wear their hair—the way they gesture when they are on the witness stand—all that is against them."

\* \* \*

"They let one off—the lucky stiff! All the rest found guilty."

"What will they get?"

"Abrams said he got three months in Russia for doing the same thing."

"And Karl Liebknecht got four years in Germany for trying to overthrow the Kaiser and set up a republic."

"It all depends on the judge. . . ."

\* \* \*

"I don't think you understand Judge Clayton," a school teacher was saying, while we waited for news of the sentence. "I've been watching him very closely all through the trial, and I think I know pretty well what he's like. To him this case is quite simple; the defendants distributed those handbills, and so they are guilty—he really doesn't see what affairs in Russia have to do with it. But at the same time I don't think he considers the offense a grave one. He is a good-natured old Southern gentleman, proud of his position, and a little testy sometimes in behalf of its 'dignity' when attorneys are fractious, but after all a man who temperamentally dislikes the fuss and tedium of a court-room as much as any of us do. He thinks this case has been unnecessarily prolonged; he could have settled the matter in ten minutes. He regards people of the defendants' views as fools—that's plain enough. But what he would like is to give them a scolding and thirty days in the workhouse to learn better sense. . . . You don't think so? But remember how he has taken the case all along—how he has made use of every opportunity to lighten it up. I don't think a man who had in mind sending those boys and that girl to prison for a long term of years, would have joked with the jury, quoted 'The Mikado,' and entertained the audience with scraps of his own autobiography from time to time. Especially I don't think he would have questioned the defendants in the way he did, asked them if they hadn't ever thought of going out West and doing real work on a farm, showed so plainly his general contempt for their opinions. No, he *couldn't* do that sort of thing if he were going to give them the limit!"

\* \* \*

"Listen!"

Someone was screaming in the court-room. The door opened, and a woman was led out. It was the aunt of Lipman. She had just heard the sentence—twenty years, and \$1,000 fine.

Abrams, twenty years, and \$1,000 fine.

Lochnowsky, twenty years, and \$1,000 fine.

Rosansky—because he was said to have given information to the Government—only three years, and \$1,000 fine.

Mollie Steimer—fifteen years, and \$1,000 fine.

From the newspapers: "As Judge Henry D. Clayton read the successive sentences, the assembled radicals turned wide eyes to one another. It was as if they could not believe their own ears. . . . The prisoners themselves heard the verdict with apparent nonchalance." (*Tribune*).

"Each of the defendants was interrupted as it seemed likely he would launch into a speech. . . . Jacob Abrams, the first of the defendants to have his say, remarked: 'If it is really a crime to stand up for the people you love, if to believe in ideals is criminal, then I'm glad to be a criminal.'"

"I'm glad you got that out of your system,' remarked Judge Clayton dryly." (*Globe*).

"And when Abrams cried proudly: 'I do not ask for mercy—'

"That makes my task somewhat easier,' was the comment of Judge Clayton.

"Mollie Steimer had spoken only a few words when the judge interrupted.

"I'm not going to permit you to make a soap-box oration, Mollie,' he said." (*Globe*).

"It was not the prisoners who occupied the spotlight at the end of their own trial. It was Judge Henry D. Clayton, of Alabama." (*Tribune*).

"Judge Clayton . . . . launched into a two-hour address which frequently threw the court into gusts of laughter." (*Globe*).

"In long, rolling sentences, Judge Clayton thundered forth his contempt for 'those miserable Anarchists who speak from soap-boxes.'" (*Tribune*).

"Judge Clayton's address, in which he affirmed the constitutionality of the Espionage Law, abounded in references to the speeches of President Cleveland, Shakespeare, classic writers, and in references to his own career as a district attorney and judge in Alabama, Texas, and elsewhere." (*Globe*).

"They call others non-producers, parasites,' continued Judge Clayton. 'I asked each one what he had produced. Not one of them had produced even one potato.'" (*Globe*).

\* \* \*

Twenty years in prison for calling President Wilson a "hypocrite"?

Or—twenty years in prison for being a Russian and believing in the new Russia?

The first is a grave enough crime in our democracy—the crime of disrespect for constituted authority. But it is not so great as the crime of disrespect of capitalism. Roosevelt can call the President worse names than "hypocrite"; he can call him "insincere," "meaningless," "mischievous," and say that his war policy "borders on treachery," and still stay out of prison; for he does not, like these rash offenders, blaspheme against private property.

Another Russian, Samuel Nikition, has just been sentenced in the Magistrates' Court to six months in the workhouse, after being beaten up by a crowd in a theater because he

refused to buy a Liberty Bond. He was accused of saying: "To hell with Liberty Bonds; to hell with America"; this he denied, and the charge was not proved. We quote the words of Judge Francis X. Mancuso in sentencing him:

THE COURT: Nikition, you have been in this country, according to your own statement, two and a half years or close to three years. This country has given you every opportunity that it gives to free men. You have enjoyed the liberty and the opportunities given by this country even probably better than a citizen. You are getting six dollars a day, which is perhaps many times more than you could ever earn in the country where you came from. Notwithstanding the fact that you are getting these opportunities and benefits from this country, when you were asked to buy a Liberty Bond you condemned the country and refused to buy it. Don't you think you owe something to this country?

THE DEFENDANT: I do.

THE COURT: That is the way in which you appreciate its

bounteous gifts by saying, "To hell with Liberty Bonds; to hell with America." I am surprised that the people in the theatre permitted you to come out at all. They *should have taken you and lynched you* right then and there. If anybody was brought before me on a charge of that kind, I would send them away *with the commendation of the Court*. Workhouse, six months. (Court record).

Russia! They hate you and wish to destroy you. They hate you because they fear you. And so they wreak hysterical and savage vengeance upon the poorest and weakest of your children.

THE LIBERATOR will be glad to receive funds with which to appeal the case of Mollie Steimer and her fellow defendants, or for bail pending such appeal. We believe there are those in America who will wish to show in this way their friendship for Russia and the quality of their own Americanism.

# The Italian Workers and the War

Carlo Tresca

EUROPE is swept today from one end to the other by an irresistible and purifying revolutionary spirit, which will triumph over hate and greed and create social justice.

The proletariat of Italy is aroused, alert and vigilant. When the "social democracies" of the old world were furling the red flag of the class struggle to raise the yellow flag of class harmony towards the sun, the proletariat of Italy remained steadfast at post, almost alone, but faithful to the principle of "no compromise." The bourgeoisie thereupon seduced the leaders. The Socialists' faith reposed in Benito Mussolini, the editor of *L'Avanti*, the brilliant daily organ of the "Official Socialist party" (Partito Socialista Ufficiale), and the syndicalists had centered around Alcide De Ambris, the demagogue of pungent and facile phrases, who is now reported to be in America on a governmental mission.

Mussolini had assumed the Jacobin pose, popular with the masses; time after time in the columns of *L'Avanti* or on the platform his voice thundered like that of Blanqui. De Ambris had successfully revived the ranks of the organized workers, attacking conservative unionism and leading the young, daring, fighting syndicalist organization.

Mussolini and De Ambris resolutely opposed war—but when it was the Italo-Turkish War. At the very beginning of the European conflict De Ambris became a "turncoat." On the occasion of Italy's entrance into the war he donned a military uniform, and, although he never went to the front, he "fought heroically" to carry with him the "Italian Syndicalist Union" (Unione Sindicaliste Italiana), but they abandoned him to his destiny. Mussolini, however, remained

at his post for a short period and contributed considerably to maintaining Italy's one year of neutrality. But he, too, soon joined the war party, resigned from *L'Avanti*, and within twenty-four hours founded a new daily paper, *Il Popolo*. He admitted that 500,000 francs were donated to him for this purpose by the Italian bourgeoisie. The Socialist party membership was shocked. The change was too abrupt. But the party remained unreconciled to the war and the government.

To appreciate the attitude of the Italian Socialist party, the Syndicalist Union and also the general Confederation of Labor, representing as they do the class conscious workers of Italy, it is necessary to bear in mind the treachery of these two men. The Stokeses, Wallings and Spargos of America are doctrinaires without followers; they were never identified with the masses, who ignore their existence. But De Ambris and Mussolini were thoroughly identified with the working class. They fought in the greatest labor struggles, they served faithfully and sincerely for many years, and the workers had loved and appreciated them. But when the moment of a supreme test came and the two leaders turned their backs upon their organizations, the workers of Italy compelled them to surrender to the bourgeoisie as two generals stripped of their armies.

\* \* \*

It is a mistake to speak of a "coalition government" in Italy, even with Bissolati, Bonomi, Canépa and others in power. These men are considered Socialists by many in America, although they left the party long before the war.

But, in order to justify their participation in the government as representatives of the people, their followers organized the "Unione Socialiste Italiana," which was poorly represented at the Inter-Allied Socialist Conference of London, and was there denied the right to vote. This so-called Socialist organization is comparable with the "American Alliance for Labor and Democracy."

In spite of this, the Official Socialist party continues to represent the mass of the Italian workers, both numerically and in spirit. It shares the leadership with the Syndicalist Union, whose most active organizers are either in prison or interned like Armando Borghi. But the organization's work continues silently and successfully. During the war the Syndicalists have doubled their membership, reaching the 200,000 mark at present. Their attitude towards the war remains unchanged and they are devoted to the rebuilding of the international.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

When the Italian government was preparing the country for war every student of world politics asked, "Will there be a revolution in Italy?" The workers were actually ready. One year before the proclamation of the war against Austria the workers had declared a general strike against the Italo-Tripolitan War. For over a week Italy was swept by the flames of revolt and the Republic was proclaimed in many cities. If in 1915, as in the year prior, the same cohesion of radical groups had existed and a leader like Malatesta had appeared, another story might have been written. The desertions of Mussolini from the Socialists, De Ambris and Masotta from the syndicalists, Tancredi and Rigier from the anarchists, created enough temporary confusion, discouragement and indecision among the masses to give the government the advantage at the psychological moment. But revolution was greatly feared a year later, just prior to the military disaster of Caporetto. In America this disaster was discussed widely, and the capitalist press unanimously fixed the responsibility upon "Socialist defeatists." In Italy it is generally accepted, however, that the causes were principally of a military nature. In December, 1915, a large number of soldiers were allowed home on leave. But it is admitted by the Italian government that a large number refused to return, and in consequence and to avoid a repetition, further leave of absence was denied, forcing the soldiers to remain at the battle front for two years without relief. The soldiers naturally became tired, and the military command attempted to revive their exhausted spirits with rapid and repeated attacks of a political rather than military significance. In the secret discussions of the Chamber of Deputies it was proven that officers had encouraged the combatants by promising peace after the attack. Another psychological factor must also be considered in a thorough understanding of Caporetto. Italy as a nation felt herself

<sup>1</sup> One of the reasons given by the official Socialist Party for declining to participate in the last Interallied Labor Conference, was because it was called at the request of Samuel Gompers, whom they consider opposed to the principles, tactics and ideals of International Socialism.

neglected by her allies at that time. The newspapers had openly expressed this feeling and editorially had made covert threats of separate peace with Austria. Undoubtedly the Socialist opposition contributed in part. But it may be possible (though here we cannot, of course, express ourselves freely) that a reason for Caporetto could be found in the fact that an impending revolution was thereby checked.

We are not discussing revolution here in an academic sense. Minister Nitti, speaking in the Chamber of Deputies before Caporetto pleaded on behalf of the government with the Socialists to abandon the idea of a revolution in Italy at this time.

With the enemy on Italian soil, the government, urged on by the reactionary bourgeoisie, the military party and the "Socialist nationalists," attempted coercive methods against the radicals. Constantine Lazzari, an old communist and now secretary of the Socialist party, *was tried and convicted of treason and sentenced to two years*. Menotti Serrati, present editor of *L'Avanti*, was tried as "accessory before the fact" in connection with the revolt in Turino, where workers fought on barricades for a week, and regiments of Alpini and Bersaglieri, sent to quell the disturbance, joined the revolt. In these trials the strength of the Italian workers was again revealed. Serrati, who faced the military court with the utmost courage, was sentenced to only three years in prison, and continues from his cell, "No. 48" (which is also his pen name), to edit *L'Avanti*.<sup>2</sup> The government obviously feared to go too far with him because the Official Socialist party Congress of Bologna re-affirmed their confidence in him and applauded his extremist attitude.

\* \* \*

The depressed spirits of the bourgeoisie were relieved slightly after Caporetto when Filippo Turati, the leader of the Socialist Parliamentary group of forty-two deputies, made a flowery speech in which he weepingly declared he would sacrifice his Socialist principles for the safety of the country! His fellow Socialist deputies applauded him, but *L'Avanti* and the party protested vehemently. Dissension grew, and the government hoped to see its strongest opposition divided. The question of a Governmental Committee on Reconstruction aggravated this dissension. This committee was organized on a large scale, and men of every party were invited to join, including De Ambris, Mussolini, etc. The Parliamentary Socialist group and the leaders of the Confederation of Labor accepted the invitation promptly. But *L'Avanti* as promptly objected from the viewpoint of an uncompromising working class party. It contended that to participate in such a committee would not only violate party tactics and lend a friendly hand to the government responsible for the war, but it would be a virtual "whitewashing" of Mussolini, De Ambris and company.

<sup>2</sup> When Congressman La Guardia debated with Scott Nearing he asserted that "*L'Avanti*" had been proven guilty of accepting "German gold." As a matter of fact, "*L'Avanti*" insisted upon a public accounting compelled by law, from every newspaper. The proposition was strongly opposed by all the capitalist papers, so that "*L'Avanti*" remains the only paper in Italy actually willing to have a thorough investigation of its finances.

Turati took exception to the rigidity of the party's discipline. The capitalist press applauded him warmly and the government attempted to assist him by forbidding the Congress of the party called to discuss the matter. After a vigorous protest by the party, the government acceded, and the Congress met in Bologna in September, 1918. The "extremists" triumphed, with 14,015 votes in favor of a motion by Salvadori, criticizing the Socialist Parliamentary groups for their weak and vacillating attitude after Caporetto. The motion by Tiratoschi for the "moderates" received only 2,507 votes. (The Socialist party is much stronger, however, than these figures indicate, since it carries with it nearly 500,000 votes.) As a consequence of *L'Avanti's* agitation and this motion, the Socialist deputies, with the exception of Turati, resigned from Minister Orlando's "Committee on Reconstruction."

The same question was discussed within the range of the Confederation of Labor with similar results. Their leaders also resigned.

Thus the latest attempt in Italy to produce compromise between the classes was foiled by the ever vigilant vanguard of labor.

In connection with the problem of reconstruction, *L'Avanti* said: "We have our programme of reconstruction and it is advisable to insist upon its application." This programme was formulated in the Convention of Milano in 1917 and included numerous social reforms similar to those promulgated in London at the Inter-Allied Labor Conferences. But there had unobtrusively been inserted into this reconstruction programme a paragraph in which the necessity for a republic in Italy as a basis of all reform was affirmed.

Turati, who wrote the original resolution of the Milan Convention, now claims that the word *Republic* was added by someone else. But the magic word Republic has now been discussed with increasing animation for many days. The word Republic symbolizes a state of mind throughout Italy. The workers, who have postponed the revolution, first because of the desertion of some leaders, and second because of the invasion of the country, do not want further postponement of the dream of Mazzini and Garibaldi—a united Republic of Italy!

## SOLDIER-MOTHER

**S**HE used to knit things for him—  
His stockings, shirts and all—  
And as she worked she always sang  
When he was small.

She's busy now with knitting—  
She took it up last spring;  
She's making things for him, but now  
She doesn't sing.

Hazel Hall.

## THE CHALLENGER

**I** SHALL give you the keys to the gates of the four winds,  
To the temple of the sun.  
The ocean arches  
Will fall,  
The night will crumble.  
Cities of men will lie, puny toys, to your hand.

In the palpitant earth  
In the clashing of waters  
Crying in the quenchless skies  
Rises your will.  
Red, a leaping fire;  
Cold, a sword.

Am I a god that you worship?  
A lover, that you pant toward me?  
Am I death, whose lap is slumber?  
You do not know me.  
In the void you seek,  
In the furtive darkness,  
In pain, glory, adventure.

I cast time behind me, the rind of the fruit.  
I go naked and happy  
To the fearless peaks,  
The brooding.

You do not see  
The night of the womb.  
You do not hear  
The voice of the lightning.  
You do not clasp  
The body of war.

I shall bring you to the gates of the four winds.  
I shall open to you the temple of the sun.

Babette Deutsch.

## WE WILL GO DOWN TO CORINTH

**D**EAR, we have built no altars,  
Nor sown the green hillside  
With votive roses carven,  
And haughty towers enskied.

Let them return at twilight!—  
We will not be afraid  
To meet the gods of Hellas,  
By never a stone betrayed!

Let them rise up at dew-fall  
From out the Aegean Sea,  
Lovely and white and gleaming—  
Foam-given again, and free!

With vine leaves and with myrtle,  
And never a tower begun,  
We will go down to Corinth,  
Forgetting Babylon!

Leslie Nelson Jennings.

# November Seventh, 1918

## A Speech in Commemoration of the Founding of the Soviet Republic in Russia

By Max Eastman

COMRADES and friends, this meeting is called to celebrate two of the greatest events in all the history of mankind. It is the anniversary of the achievement of social revolution in the Empire of Russia, and it is the date of the dawn of social revolution in the Empire of Germany. Today the German fleet is in the hands of the revolutionary working-class, and the red flag flies at Kiel. Tomorrow the army. Then Berlin and the old empire!

And we are not only met to celebrate the establishment of the Socialist republics, but we are met to demand that the capitalist republic of the United States keep its hands off those republics.

The war is over now, and there is no excuse left. We want our soldiers who are invading the territory of the Russian Soviets under the command of a Japanese general, in order to make the world safe for English, French, American and Japanese capital, called off.

And we want our army of libellers and scandalmongers, who are vilifying the name of the Russian Soviets throughout the width of the world, under the command of an unreliable yellow journalist, George Creel, called off.

George Creel boasts that he has the full backing of the United States Government in sending out documents purporting to prove that the leaders of the Russian Soviets are pro-German agents and traitors to democracy. But what is there in the behavior of the United States Government since this war began to show that it knows how to estimate the character and motives of revolutionary Socialists?

George Creel had also the full backing of the United States Government in sending out documents purporting to prove that the leaders of the Socialist party and the I. W. W. in this country were pro-German agents and traitors to democracy. I read one of these documents, and I know that it was the deliberate lie of the man who wrote it. What reason is there for Socialists to believe better of the Sisson documents? They prove that the United States Government has the same opinion of Lenine and Trotsky that it has of Eugene V. Debs and Bill Haywood, and that is all they prove, and the opinion rests upon the same basis of fact, namely, that these men were loyal in the utmost extremity to the interests of the international working-class.

When the Sisson documents fell rather flat, a more plausible scheme was devised for discrediting the government of Russia. A bloody and indiscriminate "Reign of Terror" was devised, and Lenine and Trotsky were denounced throughout the nations of the world as outlaws and whole-

sale murderers. This scheme is more plausible because it rests upon a certain basis of fact. It is no doubt true that a number of people have been officially put to death for conspiracy to overthrow the Soviet Government and assassinate its leaders. A report through Amsterdam, giving the official organ of the Bolshevik Government as its authority, says that the exact number since August is 68.

It is also no doubt true that a number of people have been unofficially put to death by mobs of the Russian people for the same crime, although we are assured by the British envoy, Lockhart, that Lenine is using every effort to bring such things to an end.

Sometimes when I read the New York papers I am almost convinced that they may be taking as many lives over there in this way as one in every four days. And one in every four days is the number of people that are lynched, burned, tortured or strangled to death by mobs in the United States as a regular routine part of our civilization in times of peace.

Whatever reign of terror exists in Russia today, and whatever extreme measures may have been taken by the Russian Government to protect itself against conspiracies, are the direct inevitable result of the invasion of Russia by foreign armies—an invasion whose commonly expressed purpose is to stir up among the Russian classes conspiracies to overthrow that Government.

I want you to imagine what would happen in this country if an imperial Kaiserdom was invading our territory from the south, and five imperial republics were sending expeditionary forces down through Canada, all of them opposed to our form of government, all with the open purpose of overthrowing it, and if at the same time thousands of seditious Americans were plotting to assassinate the President and dynamite the Houses of Congress. Would not Woodrow Wilson declare martial law all over this land in a hurry, and would not its execution be more prompt than discriminate? And martial law is the respectable name for a reign of terror.

If they give Eugene Debs ten years in the penitentiary for intellectually disagreeing with the policies of President Wilson on a public platform, what would they give Theodore Roosevelt if they caught him in a back cellar in Washington with a bomb in his pocket for the assassination of the President, and a knife to stick in the bowels of the Postmaster General? That is exactly the situation in Russia. I venture to say that considering the comparative serious-

ness of the crimes being committed, there is a more unscrupulous reign of terror in this country at this moment than there is in Russia.

Withdraw the invading armies and leave the Russian people free to develop their own destiny as they must, and not one-millionth part of the blood will be shed by them in the cause of liberty that these armies are shedding now in the cause of capitalism.

I understand that they maintain in the District Attorney's office and the courts that it is unlawful to denounce the invasion of Russia by Woodrow Wilson. I maintain that it is unlawful for Woodrow Wilson to invade Russia. Just before I came here I was regaling myself with that delightful old romance, the Constitution of the United States. And I notice that the constitution locates the power to declare war in the representatives of the people. And it nowhere delegates to the executive branch of the Government the right to ship citizens out of the country, and half way round the earth, to wage war on a foreign power without a declaration of war by the representatives of the people. I am told by a distinguished lawyer in this community that President Wilson is waging his own private and personal war on the Government of Russia, in direct violation of the spirit, and even of the letter, of the United States Constitution.

There is one thing that this war has done in this country—it has killed the Constitution. It has deeply destroyed the force and honor of its provisions which guaranteed liberty and the rights of man. And what are we going to do about this? Are we going to try to pump new life and new blood and meaning of liberty into that old document? We are going to leave it lying among the honorable dead, and go forward to the day of power when we will establish a new constitution with new life and a new meaning of liberty. And the essential principle of that constitution, as of the constitution of Russia, will be this, that no man or woman is a citizen entitled to vote, who does not live upon the income of his own labor.

A hundred years ago throughout the countries that were called democratic there was a *property qualification* for the franchise. Only those men could vote who lived, in part at least, upon the profits of capital. With the growth of the conditions of democracy that system was broken down, and by the end of the last century almost all men, and even women, were entitled to vote, both those who lived upon the wages of labor and those who lived upon the profits of capital. And now the next step—the twentieth century—there has been established in Russia a *labor qualification* for the franchise, and only those men and women are entitled to vote who *do not* live upon the profits of capital, but live by the actual service of their hands and brains.

In that change of sovereignty is expressed and ensured the death of all caste and privilege and the birth of industrial democracy—the greatest revolution and creative political act in the history of mankind. And to that change we must go deliberately and doggedly forward, if we are ever again to awaken liberty, and make true in this country, as our

comrades are making true in Europe, the words of Karl Liebknecht to those millions of revolutionary workers whose strong hands had opened his prison doors, "The day of the people is come!"

I was thinking of this meeting as I walked in the happy streets today. I was thinking that we here tonight must pledge our hearts and hands that before we die these pavements of old New York will again be thronging with the joy of the people, and it will be a joy that lasts longer than a day. We will hear the same horns, and the voices, and the streets will be flying with banners, because the men and women who walk in them have come into possession of the sources of joy forever.

## Signs of the Times

THE thing that confuses Samuel Gompers at these great European conferences, is that the words "Socialist" and "labor" are continually hyphenated—used almost interchangeably to describe the same forces. This confusion he finds bad enough in England, worse in France and absolutely complete in Italy.

Two recent events indicate that this understanding and co-operation between the industrial and political movements of the working class, which is the strength of European Socialism, is beginning at last in America. Miners and lumbermen have been striking in the Northwest to demand the release of political prisoners, not merely the I. W. W., but *Eugene Debs, Rose Stokes and the other convicted Socialists*. And the striking machinists of Bridgeport, when they were forced to yield to the War Labor Board's decree in September, organized an *American Labor Party* "for the express purpose of exercising their political rights as an instrument of *industrial emancipation* thus paving the way for an autonomous Industrial Republic (*shop control in the factories, mines, mills and other establishments wherein workers are employed*)."

The "American Labor Party" is only two months old, and it did not elect any of its candidates to office. Perhaps before the next election it will discover the Socialist Party.

C. E.

## THE OFFICE BUILDING

WE kissed there in the stone entrance,  
In the great cool stone mouth of the  
building,

Before it took you.

We kissed under the granite arches.

And then you turned and were gone

And high about and above were the hard  
towered walls,

The terrible weights of stone, relentless,

But for the moment they had been kind to  
us,

Folding us with arms

While we kissed.

Helen Hoyt.

# Recent Impressions of Russia

Verbatim Report of a Conversation with Albert Rhys Williams



Drawn by Art Young

Albert Rhys Williams

MR. WILLIAMS: No, I don't think they need the excuse today of wiping out German influence in Russia. It is wiping out the Bolsheviks, and no excuse is necessary. They are talking about taking the army over there after peace is made.

MRS. STOKES: There "ain't going to be no peace."

MR. WILLIAMS: Not if Lenin is right. Lenin says we have entered upon an era of wars that will last fifteen years—wars and the social revolution. And Lenin is a great prophet among the Bolsheviki. They always say, "We vote against him in the secret conferences, and then we find he is right. Lenin insisted that the first thing to do was to get Kerensky and arrest him. We said No, and of course he was right as usual."

Q. Did you see this portrait? Does this look like him?

A. That makes him look like a wolf. He looks more like a nice bourgeois—the mayor of a small French city. He does not impress you very much at first. He is stocky, rather inclined a little bit to be robust, but gives the impression of solid strength; always talks with his face right up near you; the most courteous man I think I ever met in my life—and, of course, his enemies call him the most vitriolic. I presented him when I first came, at the time of the uprising, with my credentials from the Socialist party. He

kept them for about an hour, and gave them back to me but wouldn't give me a pass on the basis of them.

The second experience I had with him was in Michaelovsky Manege, when he was making a speech from the top of an armored car. When he finished he asked me to speak to the crowd. He talks English very well, and he said, "I will be your interpreter." "It is not necessary," I said, "I will try it in Russian." And so I tried in Russian, and whenever I floundered he would throw me up a word. Well, from that time on I began to have a pleasant relationship with the man, and he got interested in my learning the language.

The next time I had a little talk with him was at the Constituent Assembly, and he was rather bored with the whole thing, and, instead of trying to urge me to work for the cause, he began to ask how I was getting along with the language. He became excited about it—got himself all worked up, in fact, about *my learning Russian*. That shows how human and sympathetic he is. He had the simplest and most ingenious devices for learning it, too. I remember his saying, "Don't talk with any Americans. It won't do you any good anyway!" He always had a little touch of humor in him.

Q. You did learn it?

A. I learned it fairly well. That was the second time I had any personal conversation with him. Another time was when the Germans were driving on Petrograd. You see, I had stood up on that armored car and said that I would join the Red Army and fight with the proletariat if the Germans came, and, having made speeches to that effect all over Petrograd, I could not very well crawl. And so, when the Germans came within two hundred miles of Petrograd, and most of the Americans and the whole foreign crowd left town on one excuse or another, I had to stay! I really could not think of any good excuse! So I went up to join the Red Army, and on the way I met Bucharin, who wanted to prove to Lenin that there was a great deal of fighting force left there. He hustled me up to Lenin, to prove that here was the whole foreign community ready to join the army! Lenin said, "We have no fighting force. The people at Pskof gave up all the munitions there without firing a gun."

"We ought to have the President of that Soviet shot on the spot," he added.

Well, Lenin gave me a note to Krylenko, and then he got very much interested in the International Legion I was forming to fight for the Revolution and the Soviet. After that I generally had access to him. And, of course, I was always thinking that the Revolution was going to fail every ten minutes, and I would get up elaborate schemes for

Note—Albert Rhys Williams, war correspondent, author of "In the Claws of the German Eagle," returned from Russia in the early autumn as an authorized messenger to the American people from Lenin and the Soviet Government.

injecting a little new life into it. He never would reject them, absurd as they often were, but I can see now how he took out of that mass of stuff the only little things that were any good. There was some scheme for getting American technical experts out there—he was always harping on that. The best thing about Lenin is that he is a realist. Instead of trying to get you over to his side of the game, and get your support for his party, he will say, "The points for us are 1, 2, 3, 4; and the points against us are 1, 2, 3, 4." He said to me, "Three months, it looks as though we can hold on now"—March, April and May—he was figuring it all up—"unless something big happens." He was always explaining to the people just how many chances they had of existence—just what the chances were of their going down; he never injected one note of bluff or voodooism.

Q. Was that the Trotzky appeal?

A. Trotzky was always more inclined to see things red and rosy and glorious. I had a good many experiences with Trotzky, too,—one very lurid experience.

I will tell it to you, to give you a little sidelight on Trotzky. Trotzky had just written some great appeal to the workmen of the world. Raymond Robins read it, and he said, "That ought to go into Germany. I'd put down one hundred thousand rubles this moment to put a speech like that into Germany." I went up to see Trotzky—I had spoken on the same platform three days before in the November uprising, so I knew him pretty well. He said, "Come right in." I said a few general things, and I had to talk in German because he speaks hardly any English, and my German is not very fluent—luckily. In talking to him I spoke about Robins, how enthusiastic he was—"why he would give one hundred thousand rubles to put that paper into Germany!" He was sitting there,—you know Lenin always treats you in a sort of little, incidental, humorous way; but Trotzky has more of a ministerial attitude, due to his sense of revolutionary dignity. I repeated to him, "One hundred thousand rubles!" He just simply let a siren shriek out of him! Then he talked, very fast; I understood him to say that Robins gave two million rubles to Breshkovskaya, in order to put patriotic dope into the people, and was now trying to bribe the Bolsheviks,—and that he was using me as a medium for it. He called the guard—an honest little sailor and soldier—and delivered a terrible speech in Russian; the word "Breshkovskaya" came in every moment, and I understood enough to gather that, after having worked for the Bolsheviks from the time I arrived there, because I saw they were the only party that could save the people from ruin, I was going to be sent to prison! I grabbed him by the arm and made him sit down in a chair and we talked for an hour. "The Americans believe that they can do everything with money," he said—"this man for a hundred dollars, that man for a thousand and some other for a million."

Q. You convinced him that he had misunderstood you?

A. Naturally. Now, of course, I don't need any further proof of his honesty than that incident. If he had been cunning at all he would have got me to lug this one

hundred thousand rubles up, and just led me on a little, and said, "Yes, that is very interesting," etc., and then he would have got me right in the act and grabbed that one hundred thousand rubles, and then he could certainly have had some great meeting—showing the American Imperialists at work. But his instinctive revolutionary honor and integrity is oversensitive. He couldn't do that sort of thing. That is only an example. But that is why I say, from what I know of these men—fellows like Volardarski and Neibut and Peters, men who are mentioned in those Sisson documents—I found them in my personal relationship with them so absolutely square, having such integrity, having such honesty, even about little things, so much more than we have who were brought up as bourgeoisie—that all these stories are to me merely vapid falsehoods.

Q. Who is the popular one, Lenin or Trotzky?

A. Lenin didn't get much applause at the time I heard him speak; I suppose the people were tired of waiting eight hours, and besides he gave them a very general and abstract speech. Trotzky's speeches were always metallic, always full of pep and wonderful stuff. Robins said Trotzky was the greatest platform orator he had heard in twenty years.\* Of course, the revolution got Robins; although he always maintained he was not a Bolshevik, they had faith in his honesty and integrity—and he thought Lenin the greatest man in Russia.

But Lenin does impress you in the end. He works eighteen hours a day. He is never tired. He is always sane, always reasonable, always has a smile, always courteous, and he has such an amplitude of knowledge. For example, he asked me about the two divisions in the Socialist Propaganda League in the United States—in other words, about certain currents in our own Socialist movement, that I did not even know existed! He knew every fine point of distinction between the Socialist Labor party and the Socialist party.

And he knew a whole lot about psychology. It is easy enough to make a god of your hero, but Lenin really does deliver the goods.

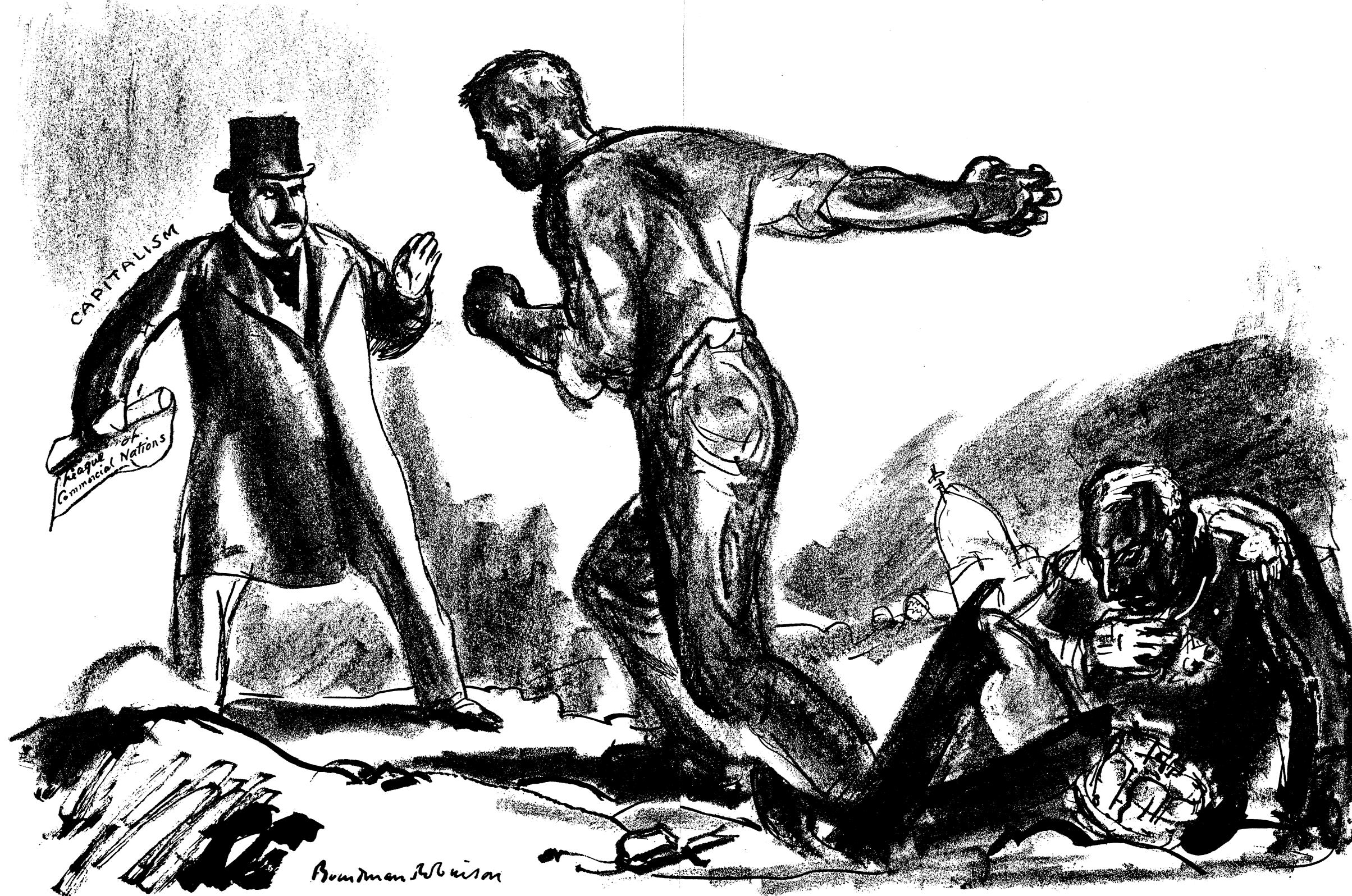
Q. When did you see him last?

A. I saw him the day I went away. At that particular time the Americans were playing in very good there, and America stood high with the Bolsheviks. They were ready to make many concessions to Americans. So they allowed me to collect a lot of literature to take to America; and they also prepared a moving picture reel, showing the creative and artistic side of the Socialist revolution, and they printed these in English—they spent hundreds of thousands of rubles on these reels to show America—

Q. What became of them?

A. Oh well, of course, they were never allowed to come over. Lenin knew it would happen. He said, "I'm afraid they won't allow this literature to get into America. It is pretty bad literature, really." That is the last time I talked with him.

\* Raymond Robins was the head of the American Red Cross and an unofficial representative from the United States Government to the Bolsheviks.



“You Too!”

Drawn by Boardman Robinson.

Q. Did he give you any message to deliver to American Socialists?

A. Well, I asked him if he had any message, and he wrote me a letter. I will give it to THE LIBERATOR as soon as I get my papers from the State Department.

### "Bolshevik Dictatorship"

MR. STOKES: The claim is being made here in certain quarters that only a very small number of the people support the Bolsheviks, and that the overwhelming proportion are with all the other Socialist parties.

A. Well, it is impossible to reply to that with statistics, but there are some indisputable facts. For instance, what happened at Vladivostok? You know what happened there last July—the results of the election. Before the election I had a talk with Admiral Knight, the American admiral. He said:

"I know what a bad crowd those Bolsheviks are. At the same time I respect them, and not this gang who are claiming to be the Government of Russia and don't dare put their foot on the soil. But as for the City of Vladivostok, I believe that this is really not a Soviet city." And I said, "I agree with you. I don't think it is a Soviet city for a good many reasons. It is an officer city, a big industrial and bourgeois city."

The Bolsheviks were going to have an election of the Soviets on July 4th and they had told me they expected to lose some of their seats in the Soviet, because some working men wanted intelligentsia to represent them from the shops. Then the intervention came, and the Allies declared that they could have an honest election; I think the Allies really believed that they were going to show up in this way the falsity of the Bolshevik claims. It was held the last Sunday in July.

There were two big parties, the Moderate Socialists—a *bloc* of all the Socialist parties—and the Cadets. The big fight was supposed to be between these two parties. There were fifteen other parties—seventeen tickets in all, and the Bolshevik ticket was No. 17. There was a terrific campaign, and it was conducted, remember, while the Bolshevik leaders were all in prison, and they had no newspaper, and their enemies thought they had them terrorized. And when the election was held, the vote was 4,000 for the Cadets, 5,000 for the Moderate Socialists, and 12,000 for the Bolsheviks. The 17th party got more than the other 16 parties put together. The elections were declared "irregular" because the people had voted for the Bolsheviks!

Thereupon the workers struck. The Allies have broken the strike by importing coolies. And now—well, I would venture my five years in prison that if they took a vote in Vladivostok now, the Bolsheviks, instead of getting 54 out of 101 seats, would get 80 out of 101.

Now of course it may not be fair to offer Vladivostok as an example of Bolshevik strength, because there it was a question of the popular feeling about intervention. But the

same feeling has been aroused all over Russia—as I know from reports since I left. The Allies have given the Soviets the distinction of martyrdom. All the people of Russia think of now is that those who fought and died for them are Bolsheviks. What is happening over there is not bad from a socialist standpoint—I mean the attempt to smash the Bolsheviks—because it fills the Russian people with the most intense feeling of loyalty towards Bolshevism. It will increase class-consciousness to a terrific degree; nothing could have happened better for the strengthening of the class-conscious feeling.

The feeling is certainly strong. I asked Rodzianko, the man who was President of the Duma—a great big elephant of a man and awfully fine, too, in his way—I asked him, "Why don't you play the American game and beat the Socialist party to the working class by offering them a lot of reforms and take the edge off this class war?" He said, "Yes, but we have been aligned with the old Czaristic regime, and we are associated in their minds with it to such an extent that it is a sheer impossibility for the masses to believe anything we say, they distrust us so thoroughly."

Even from a self-interested standpoint, America's intervention is a mistake. Whether the Bolsheviks are in the majority or not, they are the liveliest people in Russia; the aggressive, able, keen, thinking class who have energy and daring are Bolsheviks, or at least of the Soviet crowd, and all the leaders are between twenty and thirty-five years old—nine out of ten of them—and they are the fellows who are going to make Russia. They were first of all kindly disposed towards America. Even the emigrants from America, who have reason to hate American capitalism, were more kindly disposed toward America than toward any other nation in the world. Now we have turned them all against us. How foolish that was! I am speaking from the standpoint of the capitalist now. When I told this to Colonel House he said, "Yes, it is true."

QUESTION: Is it your impression that at the present time the majority of the Russian working people do support the Soviets?

ANSWER: Well, I left at a certain time, and I only have certain facts to deal with. But I can read something between the lines of the cable dispatches; the last thing that Arno Dosch wrote was that everybody is saying the condition is "hopeless" because the Bolsheviks are growing stronger every day. That is a little indication of what is going on. I know also the effect of Japanese participation in the intervention; that sending of a few hundred Japs over to the Volga River, is just playing into the Bolsheviks' hands. Trotzky would gladly have paid a million rubles apiece for those hundred Japs sent over. I know now there is not a chance for any other party in Russia; all you have to say is "Jap," and everybody is a Bolshevik!

How deeply that will affect the whole situation I don't know. The whole thing hinges ultimately upon the peasants, as you all know. The Bolsheviks have given them their land. And now all the new anti-Bolshevik governments that are formed are repudiating the land decrees and restor-

ing the land to its former owners. All that the Bolsheviks need do is to point that out in Central Russia, and they are going to get the support of the peasants. I think that before the intervention the Bolsheviks were probably losing their ground in some cases; but from what I hear now they are in majority control everywhere. A newspaper correspondent who left Russia on September 2 told me that the Bolsheviks could hold their power until the spring even if they had no support from the left social revolutionists. If the left social revolutionists supported them, they could hold the support indefinitely, unless they were physically overwhelmed by Allied arms.

### Spiridonova

QUESTION: What kind of an impression have you of those women that figure so largely in Louise Bryant's story—Spiridonova, for instance. Did you meet her?

ANSWER: The last time I saw her, she was trying to get me to get her certain passports in order to go down to Germany and murder Hindenburg. She was working twenty-two out of twenty-four hours a day, and she was just wild, frenzied with lack of sleep and overwork. There is nothing like Spiridonova, I think, in the whole world.

QUESTION: Is she with the Bolsheviks now?

ANSWER: Well, that is the question. We don't know.

QUESTION: I was told only last Saturday that she was dead against them.

ANSWER: Of course her party, the Left Social Revolutionists, are all the time giving their support and withdrawing it. They have done it three times. Now, whether they have gone back or not I do not know, but I have heard the report that she has gone back. She broke with the Fifth Congress upon her refusing to take the class war into the villages; she would not take the class war into the villages, and the Bolsheviks insisted that the class war must go into the villages, that they might suffer temporary setbacks, but the revolution must be absolute, and they must get the poison of private property out of the minds of the peasants. She withdrew from the convention. And that is the time the big fight came between the Bolsheviks and the left Social Revolutionists. They came to open battle in Moscow. That was the issue. And also there was another issue. The second one was the immediate abrogation of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Those two—and the Bolsheviks refused to compromise with the Left Social Revolutionists, and the Left Social Revolutionists went out.

QUESTION: Were the social revolutionists responsible for the killing of the German ambassador?

ANSWER: Yes. I know the whole story very well. It is very interesting, too. The Committee for the Suppression of Counter Revolution—I am not sure whether that committee or another committee—well, it does not matter—the secretary of it wrote a letter—or helped in the preparation of a letter to Mirbach, and signed the name of the Bolshevik president, and these fellows took the letter to Mirbach and sat down.

What the letter said was, "Count Mirbach—a plot for assassinating you has been made by certain persons," and while he was reading it, they shot him right there. Well, of course, there it was! It looked like a Bolshevik governmental killing of the ambassador. This was recognized by the Bolsheviks and so they just went out and found that secretary—I don't know the committee—and brought him up for trial, and I think he was the one who fired the shot. They shot twenty-three social revolutionists. That is the "Red Terror" so much talked about. The "bad man," Peters, whom I know—well, I know him better than anyone in this room—the man who is supposed to write out death warrants until his hand tires—he said to me at one time, "The only time they will ever introduce the death penalty into Russia will be for Bolsheviks who had been untrue to Bolshevism."

QUESTION: You mean not applied to others?

ANSWER: Of course he has now been driven to apply it to others. I think he signed those death warrants, but I know he never has signed one without deeply feeling it, because he is a man of wonderfully sensitive spirit. I could tell you wonderful stories about him. In other words, my reaction is this: I have known a good many idealists that belong to different sections of society—I mean I know the church idealists. I know the "uplifters" and social workers. I know our general line of socialist idealists, and so forth. But I never met a bunch of men—I often try to correct myself and be honest, because it is so easy to be inanely partisan—I never met a set of men who made me feel unclean—absolutely unclean, as that group did over there, as I met them in action.

QUESTION: How do you explain the intense feeling on the part of the old revolutionists—Tchaikowsky and Kropotkin and Plekhanov, and all those revolutionists of 1905?

ANSWER: Well, take the case of Tchaikowsky. Maybe you can formulate his psychological reaction. He speaks English well, and I used to talk with him. He said, "Well, it has been a terrible experience for me. Two weeks after the Soviet was formed I went up there and made a few speeches." Now, mind you, these were in the Menshevik days, because the first Soviet had eight Mensheviks to one Bolshevik. "And," he said, "they just simply laughed me out of it—I who spent my life in the revolution!—they said I was a 'patriot' and that I belonged to the Middle Ages and that I was captured by the bourgeoisie. Now," he said, "I am with the peasants, and if that same poison gets into the peasant mind, I am going to wash my hands of the whole thing." I saw him a month afterwards, when the peasants had rejected him too, and thrown him out of the convention. I think, being a human being, he could not help but feel a sense—fine and noble though he was—a sense almost of hatred towards the usurping of his place by this gang of new revolutionists.

Kropotkin did not have that feeling of intense bitterness. I know a fellow by the name of Agursky. He was an anarchist, but he joined the Bolsheviks, and he went out to see Kropotkin very often, and Kropotkin would listen to him.

"Well," Kropotkin would say, "I don't understand it all." And the old man would shake his head, "It is beyond me what is happening." And yet he was so kindly disposed to Agursky that he took this man and kissed him and said, "Well, go on, but it is beyond me"—something like that. That is Kropotkin.

As far as that is concerned—it is easy enough for us outsiders to be enthusiastic about the Bolsheviks. It is a wonderful thing and you approve of it, and you say, "This is pure idealism." I lived in the National Hotel. When they took that hotel, one of the good hotels of Moscow, the first thing that they did was to cut out all luxuries from the menu, and make the standard meal there, which was served only twice a day, two dishes: Soup and *Kasha*, or soup and meat. In other words, they put the hotel on the standard of the working class. I myself used to slide off sometimes and have a good bourgeois meal. Now, I like travel and leisure and lots of comforts, and the good things of life; and I can have them—my Bolshevism does not cost me anything. But I think that if I were one of the Intelligentsia in Russia, and were not a leader of this movement, and it was endangering some of these things that I think a great deal of, I will be hanged if I am sure I would be a Bolshevik over there! But I really believe that, if the Bolsheviks had not taken the power, Russia would have slipped into horrible anarchy and chaos. How can you explain the demobilization of ten or fifteen millions of men? Why, we are thunderstruck here over the demobilization of one or two millions! They demobilized ten or fifteen millions in three months, and they demobilized them with no more than the shooting up of two or three stations, as far as I can really find out. And that is because the people trusted a government which was their own. There were all sorts of leaders in Russia as able as the Bolsheviks. The average Menshevik leader is much more eloquent, is much more educated. He certainly has just as great a prison record or sacrifice. But they rejected first of all the Milukoff crowd, then they rejected the Tschaikowsky crowd, and then that most eloquent leader, Tseretelli, who was just then out of prison, they rejected him. And why do they cling to the Bolsheviks? Certainly not because a handful of Bolsheviks superimpose their will on the masses of the people! A handful of these men could not disintegrate an army. It was simply because the people in Russia had certain views about land and about peace, and the Bolsheviks were the only ones who were willing to execute their desires and put them into action and carry out the program; and if the Bolsheviks had not done it and had not had some sort of a scheme or program of reconstruction, the Russian people would have gone on into chaos.

### Aristocratic "Anarchists"

QUESTION: You don't feel that the anarchists have any widespread control at the present time?

ANSWER: No, not at all—absolutely not at all. They are now working harmoniously with the Bolsheviks. You see, at first the anarchists were joined by the officer class. Fully eight hundred officers joined the anarchists in Moscow, and they "nationalized" about thirty-seven palaces and all the automobiles they could see around there.

QUESTION: What was the idea?

ANSWER: Well, of course the officer class in Russia is made up of men who are accustomed to privilege and idleness. They did not want to work. So they took advantage of the anarchist philosophy, and went out "nationalizing" pocketbooks and automobiles and palaces. It got the anarchists in bad. But the anarchists, the real ones, got up in the Soviet and pleaded, "Let us clean our own house. We admit all these things, but give us a chance again"; and they were given a chance again and now the anarchist group seems to work fairly well. They are an insignificant group. Out of twelve hundred representatives at the Fourth Congress, there were nineteen anarchists there.

QUESTION: How do you explain the fact that one week we get a story about Breshkovskaya being given a public funeral at the expense of the Bolshevik government, with all due honors, and the next day we hear that she is shot by the Bolshevik government, and another one that she died by starvation?

ANSWER. Because there are so many people interested in lying about Russia.

QUESTION: You mean that you explain this whole Red Terror that is spread all over the country—you think it is a deliberate conspiracy of lies?

ANSWER: Well, the Red Terror—how would we call what is being done over there? What is the legal name for what is happening in Russia, when people are found with revolvers in their hands, and when they find all sorts of documents on them, revealing plots to upset the legal government of Russia, which is run by regular representation?

MR. DELL: Preserving law and order.

MR. WILLIAMS: That is the Red Terror.

QUESTION: Is it a representative government?

ANSWER: That is the point exactly. How representative is it? Everybody wants to know that. Yet there are the rules of the Soviet if you want to read them. In the Soviet all parties are represented, and real elections can be held at any time, so that the complexion of the central Soviet is continually changing. In July, 1917, for instance, the time of the July insurrection, the workmen of the factories believed in some cases that this thing had been instigated by Germans, and they immediately withdrew their Bolshevik representatives, and the Mensheviks gained a great deal as a result of the July insurrections. Just as soon as they found out that the government had lied about the German connections with the Bolsheviks, then the reaction went against the moderate socialist parties; they just withdrew them by the scores and actually by the hundreds, and replaced them by Bolshevik representatives.

I think the Soviet is an advanced state apparatus—actually superior to anything that we have had in history, because it gives a government that is representative all the time. The men in a factory meet every day, and the changes of thought that are registered in the factory register themselves immediately in the delegate they send to the Soviet.

### A Workers' Government

QUESTION: What kinds of people cannot vote? Is it true that they let everybody send a representative who is a worker?

ANSWER: Of course. Let me illustrate that. On the streets I heard one of the young Intelligentsia saying, "What sort of government is this? I have no representation in the Soviet." And a workingman said, "Well, what do you do for a living?" "I am a teacher." "Are you a member of the teachers' organization?" You know very well, if you are a member of the teachers' organization, that the teachers have a right to send a delegate to the Soviet." Now, by not permitting individualistic representation and allowing representation only from groups which are organized, they are trying to drive organization into Russia, in order that their government shall be representative of economic groups and not merely of political groups—in other words, in order that the Soviet, instead of being a parliamentary talking machine, shall be an expression of the real economic interests of the people.

QUESTION: The admittance to the Soviets is limited exclusively to representatives of organized industrial groups?

ANSWER: Yes, and peasants.

QUESTION: How large a portion of the entire population of Russia do you suppose is organized into industrial groups?

ANSWER: Well, I don't know. There are some big unions, like the miners' which has six hundred thousand, and like the railroad workers, perhaps you can tell me the number. I don't know exactly how many there are there. But probably fifteen per cent industrial—possibly less—and then the peasants the rest.

QUESTION: That would seem on the surface to suggest that the Soviets actually represent a very small fraction of the total people?

ANSWER: No, they represent ninety-five per cent of the people, because the peasants have their representation and the workingmen have theirs. Whether some individuals take the trouble to join the Soviet and exercise their right or not is another question, just as it is here about voting.

QUESTION: Well, the thought that I had in mind was that here where we have such vastly superior facilities for effecting organization, for getting groups in contact with one another—the railroad facilities and the post office and the telegraphs and the automobiles, and so forth—people can get together and decide what they want to do. In Russia, a vast country like that, with hardly any railroads and no automobiles and no telegraphs or mails to speak of, I don't see how they could go very much further in organization than we have done here in America.

MISS EASTMAN: But is not the essence of it because there they are organizing about the vital things in life—economics—and here we organize about everything in the world except our livelihood? We organize about philanthropies, and tariffs and things like that that don't closely concern us, but there they are organizing about their wages.

### The Revolutionary Press

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, and you must remember that the people over there have a revolutionary fervor and spirit that is inexorable. I don't think there has ever been a movement so eloquent and spontaneous, with the possible exception of the Crusades, only this has some ethical reason behind it. It has seized every one. And then, as far as organization is concerned, the average Russian workingman always is so vastly superior to the American workingman in discussing any sort of a problem. All you have to do is to look at the literature that is produced, and is sold and is read to the workingman, even if he cannot read it. It is unbelievable—the stacks of good literature that are sent out to the people. I believe that the average workingman of Russia reads more serious sociological, economic articles every day, than the average business and professional man reads here in a month. If you could see the circulation of the papers of the Bolsheviks—they reach up to millions. For example, in Petrograd they have five daily papers. They have, for example, the *Pravda*, which has very serious articles. Bob Minor drew a fine cartoon for them, and they put it way over in the corner in an inconspicuous place; they thought it was too "light." But then, for the peasant who has just come into the working class, they have what is called "The Red Banner," which contains philippics and some jokes and a few cartoons and articles—very short—so that ignorant people can read them. And then they had, of course, the regular organ of the Soviet. Then they published a humorous paper—the *Red Devil*, as they call it. And then they have what is called the village paper—a very small paper, sent out, I would say, by the millions. And yet I might find out that they only send out half a million, but that is the impression I have. Then they have *The Red Army*, sometimes called *The Red Army and Fleet*. And in the days of the regular soldiers there they had what is called *The Soldiers' Truth*. There must be almost seven from a central organization in Petrograd, and they had about five in Moscow.

I saw the development of the Bolshevik press. I sat in one office, and there was an endless line of people bringing their offerings to the Bolshevik paper, some bringing two rubles, others five, and others from ten to fifty copecks. The revolution started in February, 1917. In July I was up in that office, and they said, "We have already sixty-five daily papers." And pamphlets—I have alone in my trunk which is confiscated or held by the authorities—I have alone there something like seven hundred pamphlets, and some of these were printed in the hundreds of thousands—pamphlets that explain in the most simple terms—if you read some of these pamphlets they would really make you cry—telling the

soldiers what to do on returning home. These pamphlets said, "Don't spend all of your time running around on the street corners, but go to the people who have charge of the village affairs. Talk with them. Try to get the literature they have. Upon meeting a workingman who is very tired after working all day, if he answers you in an angry voice, don't get angry with him, but remember that if you worked in a factory every day, maybe you too would feel like that. Then go up to the Soviets and see it. It is your government. You cannot talk with all the officers over there, because they are busy doing the work of your government, but see it." Then it says, "On the train, have a game of cards or two, but don't spend all your time playing cards. Look this literature over, and if you cannot read, get some one to read it for you. On arriving home, remember that you have been away for two or three years. You have seen a new world, and so go gently with the working people of the village, but at the same time be thoroughly revolutionary. Put through these ideas. Never mind hunting up the vodka," etc., and so it goes on all through with wise, sympathetic instruction. That is the secret of the Bolsheviks; it is simply that they understand the people. It is not that they understand the people. They *are* the people.

### Has the Soviet Made Good?

MR. STOKES: You said that the people know the Soviets have made good? I think that would be a terribly difficult proposition to establish.

ANSWER: Well, they feel they made good. They know they demobilized an army of twelve million people. They know they organized factories and made them more productive than before. They know they gave the land to the people, and they know that they organized thousands of new post offices. They know that they have thousands of workingmen's theatres that have sprung up all over the land. They know that they have organized an entirely new state apparatus. They know that inside of a year they have done a miracle of things that have not been done anywhere else in the world, in any other period of history, in ten or fifteen times the space of time. In other words, the creative forces of the Soviet have been so wonderful that they realize it themselves. And as far as the disorganization of society, they know the inheritance that they came into, and they have discounted that. They know just how much they are to blame. They know exactly how much the Allies are to blame. And they have finally come to the stage of feeling "Never mind your help, all we ask now is—leave us alone!"

QUESTION: Are they pretty well determined to fight intervention? Are they building up a sufficient army? Of course I don't expect you to know just what is the situation there now. But the spirit of the people—is it such that the army will be a great army if intervention continues and becomes a real menace? If in the spring, for instance, there is a big drive, do you think there would be a big army permitted?

ANSWER: I think there would be resistance. I don't want to prophesy how big the army is. The last I heard was half a million, and then Ramsome's dispatch quoted Lenine as saying that they would have three million by spring. But I don't want to underrate the disorder by painting fairy pictures of the organization of industry. If they can get the Ukraine, and if the Allies will only continue to do what they have, just simply play with the reactionary crowd, all the Bolsheviks have to do is to point this out, and they will get the support of the peasants.

### The Bolshevik Cabinet

QUESTION: What other big figures are there, besides Lenine and Trotzky? There must be other strong leaders that have stood up through it all?

ANSWER: The present cabinet is the most cultured cabinet probably in the history of the world. All of them are experts upon a great many questions. Several of them have written books upon philosophy and religion. Burch Bruevich, for instance, is an authority upon the sects of Russia and has written a number of volumes upon them. Lunarcharsky is the man who wept—resigned his chair when he heard that the Church of St. Basil had been razed. But he speaks insistently upon the creative force of the proletariat as far as art and literature is concerned. They have great plans. They have plans to publish all the classics, and they started doing that and giving them to the people at half the price of publication. Already these little book-stands are all over, in every post office, in every telegraph station, in order that the people shall have free access to the best literature. And of course you know of the monuments they have been erecting. They are going to have about 63 new statues to all the great humanitarians and all the great revolutionists of history.

QUESTION: I should think that the classics would be considered a rather dangerous thing—there is so much that is reactionary in the classics.

ANSWER: They are going to produce the best. You hear so much about the Soviet. But there are cultural organizations, meetings with hundreds of delegates attending, which are just merely considering the cultural side of the proletarian movement, and they have literally scores of magazines which only deal with the new proletarian culture.

### An Ex-Revolutionist

QUESTION: Did you meet Arthur Bullard, who used to be an editor of "The Masses," and who worked against the Bolshevik government over there?

ANSWER: I had some curious experiences with Bullard.

QUESTION: I am really intensely interested to know just what his reactions were?

ANSWER: I don't know just what they were, I am sure. When you go to try and analyze another man's mind, you don't *know* anything. Bullard was never invited to speak to any crowd but a Cadet crowd, and he moved in that circle.

QUESTION: He says he stayed at the house of a social revolutionist?

ANSWER: That may be, but I know that was his type of mind. He got more and more to the right, so that he was known in the American Red Cross crowd—he and the chauffeur—as the “extreme right” of the American delegation; he and the chauffeur, who always cursed the “damned Bolsheviks.”

When I first entered the Socialist movement in this country, I wrote Bullard a letter of appreciation for his goodness and fatherly counsel, etc. And so, over in Russia, I went to him, and thought that he would be able to give me some good pointers. I must say that every prophecy that Bullard made was absolutely denied by the facts. He said to me a few days before the Bolsheviks swept the whole country, “Of course the Bolsheviks don’t reckon on their strongest power.”

And I said, “What is that?”

He said, “That is the unwillingness on the part of the other crowd to just skrunch them—like that!”

I said, “Why, I thought they were stronger than that?”

He said, “No, no.”

“Why,” I said, “they have even been talking about taking the government?”

“Well,” he said, “that is a good one!”

He lived so isolated a life that he is not a competent judge. I still can keep my dogma that every man who went to the Soviet, who knew the Soviet leaders, was for the Soviets, or for the Bolshevik leaders. Bullard never went to the Soviets and he did not know any of the crowd.

QUESTION: He always has lived a secluded life, I think?

ANSWER: I know, but Bullard has a good record as a revolutionist—I mean, he has been very radical, and that is the reason he was so influential over here. They said, “What does Bullard think about it?”

QUESTION: Bullard was very intimate with the Socialist-revolutionary group—the Breshkovskaya group?

ANSWER: But Breshkovskaya was without influence, and so was her group. If any of them came to Vladivostok, there would not be a dozen workingmen turn out to hear them, because the workingmen had gone over to an entirely different view. I cannot explain it. They simply are going in for a new order of society.

QUESTION: One of the common beliefs is that the people of Russia have been prejudiced by the hundred and fifty thousand immigrants who have returned, and who have showed the scars on their heads from police clubs in strikes, etc.?

ANSWER: I don’t think that is true. I think a great deal of it is the reaction of the peasants themselves to what they know of America.

It is not only the evils of our civilization that they are against, but many of the things that we really call good, and they don’t want the thing repeated over there. They have an instinctive reaction against the thing. You know about the committee that sent over our great moving picture reels—of our early films, showing Ivan. Ivan is taken to see the

great warships in the harbor. Ivan is taken to see the billions of bullion in the vaults, etc. Well, they looked at it all, and they went back home and said, “that’s just exactly what our Bolsheviks have been telling us about America—a great, big capitalist country like that. It is even worse than they said.” And the next Allied propagandist that comes along is not going to accomplish anything there. They know what they want, and they know their power.

*(We publish on the two pages following, a recent statement issued by the Soviet government in reply to the protest made by the Neutrals in response to President Wilson’s suggestion. It leaves nothing to be said.)*

## The Socialist Vote

THERE is a pretty widespread impression that except in Wisconsin the Socialist vote on November 5 was discouraging. We do not find that impression borne out by the figures in New York City. It is true that London, Hillquit, Nearing and Lee were defeated for Congress, but in each of their districts it was a two-party fight; we cannot hope to defeat fusion in the first contest.

The important question is, how much did the Socialist vote increase? This question is complicated in New York, of course, by the new women voters. It is estimated that they added 40 per cent to the vote. Compare the highest vote given in Greater New York to any Socialist candidate on the state ticket in 1916—42,000—with the highest vote for any Socialist candidate on the state ticket in 1918—106,000. Allowing for the 40 per cent general increase, we still have a Socialist increase of nearly 50 per cent.

This increase is by no means limited to the five “hopeful” districts in which the campaign work was concentrated. It is a steady general growth, most striking in some of the most obscure districts. In the Seventh, for instance, the vote jumped from 452 to 5,500. Apparently there is no smallest district in which the vote has not increased. In 1916 the lowest vote in any Assembly district was 26, and there were six districts under 100 votes. In 1918 the lowest was 247, and there were only nine districts under 500.

The steady growth of the Socialist vote is always remarkable. This year it is amazing. A party which has consistently opposed what proved to be a popular war—in an election held at the very moment of victory—adds 50 per cent to its vote! Politically speaking, this is impossible. That it happened demonstrates once more that the Socialist party is only incidentally a political institution; it is something politicians cannot understand, a deep-rooted faith and a thoroughly understood intellectual conception which must grow because it satisfies the vital desires of real human beings. It also demonstrates the folly of those social patriots who went all over Europe saying that the Socialist party in America had destroyed itself.

C. E.

# RUSSIA'S ANSWER TO THE

THE note presented to us on the 5th of September by the gentlemen representing the neutral powers represents an act of *gross interference into the inner affairs of Russia*. The Soviet Government would be justified in ignoring this act. But the Soviet Government is glad to grasp any opportunity of explaining the nature of its political tactics to the masses in all countries, *for it is the spokesman not only of the Russian working-class, but of exploited humanity all over the earth*. The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs therefore gives answer, hereby, to the matter in question.

In their description of the treatment that is being accorded to the suppressed Russian bourgeoisie, the neutral powers are plainly trying to arouse the sympathy of the bourgeoisie all over the world. We do not propose to disprove the fiction of the gentlemen who represent the neutral nations. In their note they repeat all the slander that has been invented by the Russian bourgeoisie to discredit the Red Army. We will not refute individual occurrences, first of all because the gentlemen who represent the neutral powers have presented absolutely no concrete occurrences, secondly, because every war—and we are in the midst of a civil war—brings with it excesses on the part of individuals.

The gentlemen representing the neutral powers did not protest against the individual misdeeds of irresponsible persons, *but against the regime that is being carried out by the Government of the Workers and Peasants against the exploiting class*.

Before entering into the reasons why the Government of the Workers and peasants uses the Red Terror that has called forth the protest of the gentlemen representing the neutral powers, *permit us to ask a few questions*.

Do the representatives of the neutral nations know that *an international war has been raging for almost five years, into which a small clique of bankers, generals and bureaucrats precipitated the masses of the civilized nations of the world*? That in this war these masses are destroying each other, cutting each other's throats that capitalism may earn new millions thereby? Do they know that in this war not only millions of men were killed at the front, but that both belligerent parties have attacked *open cities with bombs, killing unarmed women and children*? Do they know that in this war one of the belligerent parties doomed *millions of human beings to death by starvation* by cutting off their food sup-

ply in direct contradiction to the tenets of international law, that the belligerent party hopes to force the other, by starving its children, to surrender to the victor? Do they know that the belligerent powers *have imprisoned hundreds of thousands of unarmed, peaceable citizens in the enemy's country, sending them to places far from home into involuntary servitude*, depriving them of every right of self-defense? Do they know that in all belligerent nations the ruling capitalist clique has deprived the masses of the *right of free press and assemblage and the right to strike*? That workingmen are being imprisoned for every attempt to protest against the *White Terror* of the bourgeoisie, that they are sent to the front that every last thought of human rights may be killed within them?

All of these instances of the destructive force that is being directed against the working-class in the name of capitalist interests, all these pictures of the *White Terror* of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat *are more than familiar to the neutral nations and their representatives in Russia*. Nevertheless, either they forgot their high ideals of humanity or they forgot in these cases to remind the blood-dripping belligerent nations of their misdeeds.

*The so-called neutral nations did not dare to utter a word of protest against the White Terror of the capitalist class, nay, more, they did not wish to protest, for the bourgeoisie in all neutral nations have helped the capitalist powers of the capitalist nations to carry on the war because they are earning billions in war contracts with the belligerent nations*.

We beg leave to ask another question. Have the gentlemen representing the neutral powers heard of the crushing of the Sinn Feiners in *Dublin*, of the shooting to death, without due process of the law, of hundreds of *Irishmen*, with *Skeffington* at their head? Have they heard of the *White Terror* in *Finland*, of the tens of thousands of dead, of the tens of thousands of men and women who are languishing in jail, against whom no charges have ever been, or ever will be made? Have they never heard of the mass murder of workmen and peasants in the *Ukraine*? Of the mass murder of *workmen* by the *brave Checho-Slovaks*, these hirelings of French capital? *The governments of the neutral nations have heard of all of these things, but never before did it occur to them to protest against the despotism of the bourgeoisie when it oppresses the working class movement. For they themselves are*

# CHARGE OF TERRORISM

*ready, at any moment, to shoot down workingmen who fight for their rights. In their own countries they stand ready, in the name of the bourgeoisie, and in defense of its interests to crush out every vestige of working-class uprising.*

It is sufficient to recall that labor demonstrations were recently routed by military force in Denmark, Norway, Holland, Switzerland, etc. The workers of Switzerland, Holland and Denmark have not yet revolted, but already the governments of these countries are mobilizing their military forces against the weakest protest of the working-class. *When the representatives of the neutral nations threaten us with the indignation of the entire civilized world, and protest against the Red Terror in the name of humanity, we respectfully call their attention to the fact that they were not sent to Russia to defend the principles of humanity, but to preserve the interests of the capitalist State; we would advise them further not to threaten us with the indignant horror of the civilized world, but to tremble before the fury of the masses who are arising against a civilization that has thrust humanity into the unspeakable misery of endless slaughter.*

In the entire capitalist world the *White Terror* rules over the working-class. In Russia the working-class destroyed that Czarism whose bloody regime brought no protests from the neutral nations. The working-class of Russia put an end to the rule of the bourgeoisie who, under the flag of the Revolution, again amidst the deep silence of the neutral powers, slaughtered soldiers who refused to shed their blood in the interests of war speculators, killed peasants because they claimed the land they had cultivated for centuries in the sweat of their brow.

*The majority of the Russian people, in the person of the second Congress of the Workmen's, Peasants', Cossacks' and Soldiers' Council, placed the power into the hands of the Workmen's and Peasants' Government. A small handful of capitalists who desired to regain the factories and the banks that were taken from them in the interests of the people, a small handful of landowners who wished to take back the land that had been given to the peasants, a small handful of generals who wished again to teach the workmen and the soldiers obedience with the whiplash, refused to recognize the decision of the Russian people. With the money of foreign capital they mobilized counter-revolutionary hordes with whose assistance they tried to cut off Russia*

*from its food supply in order to choke the Russian Revolution with the bony hand of hunger. After they became convinced of the futility of their attempts to overthrow the working-class republic that enjoyed the unbounded confidence and support of the working-class, they arranged counter-revolutionary uprisings in the attempt to crowd the Workmen's and Peasants' Government from its positive work, to hinder it in its task of ridding the country of anarchy that had taken hold of the country in consequence of the criminal policies of former governments. They betrayed Russia on the South, North and East into the hands of foreign imperialistic states, they called foreign bayonets, wherever they could muster them into Russia: Hidden behind a forest of foreign bayonets they are sending hired murderers to kill the leaders of the working-class in whom not only the proletariat of Russia but all the massacred humanity sees the personification of its hopes. The Russian working-class will crush without mercy this counter-revolutionary clique, that is trying to lay the noose around the neck of the Russian working-class with the help of foreign capital and the Russian bourgeoisie.*

In the face of the proletariat of the whole world we declare that neither hypocritical protests nor pleas will protect those who take up arms against the workers and the poorest farmers, who would starve them and embroil them into new wars in the interests of the capitalist class. We assure equal rights and equal liberties to all who loyally do their duty as citizens of the Socialist Workmen's and Peasants' Government. *To them we bring peace, but to our enemies we bring war without quarter. We are convinced that the masses in all countries who are writhing under the oppression of a small group of exploiters will understand that in Russia force is being used only in the holy cause of the liberation of the people, that they will not only understand us, but will follow our example.*

*We decidedly reject the interference of neutral capitalist powers in favor of the Russian bourgeoisie, and declare that every attempt on the part of the representatives of these powers to overstep the boundaries of legal protection for the citizens of their own country, will be regarded as an attempt to support the counter-revolution.*

People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs,  
G. W. TSCHITSCHERIN.

# About The Second Masses Trial

By John Reed

**I**N the United States political offenses are dealt with more harshly than anywhere else in the world. In the amendment to the Espionage Act it is made a crime equivalent to manslaughter to "criticize the form of government." The sentences in Espionage cases run anywhere from ten to twenty years at hard labor, with fines of thousands of dollars.

Nevertheless, in imposing sentences federal judges usually employ such words as these: "This is a free country. You enjoy here the rights of free speech and a free press. If you had committed this offense in any other country you would have been stood up against a wall and shot. This country protected you while you made a good living, and you were ungrateful. I am going to give you the limit, so that you may be an example to other malcontents and bad citizens." All of which is, of course, quite untrue. The facts are the opposite of those stated.

The harsh punishment of political offenses breeds revolution, as other countries know. In this country Socialists are the chief political criminals, as they were in Germany before 1870. Bismarck could not suppress them there; Burleson and Gregory will not be able to do so here.

The second trial of the *Masses* case, although a political trial, differed in many respects from the conventional Espionage case. All the defendants were Americans, of old American lineage. The Judge, Martin Manton, allowed them a good deal of latitude in proving their intent. The jury was open to impressions. The case was tried in New York City, where the hysterical war spirit has never got the hold it has in the more provincial districts of the Middle West. And, finally, the tenseness of patriotic feeling, kept at a stretch for more than a year, had begun to slacken.

This we felt immediately we entered the court-room. Outside, in City Hall Park, the Liberty Loan Band was playing the national anthem, as it had before. In the court-room the Marshal and his satellites, as well as Department of Justice operatives, moved around with menacing looks. When the Judge took the bench he seemed to have made up his mind; he interrupted constantly our lawyers' examination of talesmen. The jury panel looked hopeless; one man after another admitted prejudice against Socialists, and Socialism. A tall, pompous-looking gentleman, asked his business, replied self-consciously, "Wall Street."

Stedman asked if he had any prejudice against Socialism.

"I don't know what it is," he said, "but I'm opposed to it!"

How inevitably, how clearly in all these cases, the issue narrows down to the Class Struggle! District Attorney Barnes' opening address to the jury implied one chief crime—that of plotting the overthrow of the United States Govern-

ment by revolution; in other words, the crime of being, in the words of Mr. Barnes, "Bolsheveeka," addicted to what he called "Syndickalism." An immortal definition of the Socialist conception which he made to the jury remains in my mind:

"These people believe that there are three classes—the capitalists, who own all the natural resources of the country; the bourgeoisie, who have got a little land or a little property under the system, and the proletariat, which consists of all those who want to take away the property of the capitalists and the bourgeoisie."

We were described as men without a country, who wanted to break down all boundaries. The jury was asked what it thought of people who called respectable American business men "bourgeoisie."

In no European country could a prosecuting attorney have displayed such ignorance of Socialism, or relied so confidently upon the ignorance of a jury. . . .

I was not present at the first *Masses* trial. In prospect, it did not seem to me very serious; but when I sat in that gloomy, dark-paneled court-room, and the bailiff with the brown wig beat the table and cried harshly, "Stand up!" and the Judge climbed to his seat, and it was announced, in the same harsh, menacing tone, "The Federal Court for the Southern District of New York is now open . . ."—I felt as if we were in the clutches of a relentless machinery, which would go on and grind and grind. . . .

The first trial had taken place amid the excitement and patriotic hysteria which accompanied the Third Liberty Loan; the second trial was set for the Fourth Liberty Loan campaign. Morris Hillquit, our counsel, was ill; Dudley Field Malone, associated in the case, had to leave it just before the trial; and Seymour Stedman, who came from Chicago to the rescue at the last moment, tried the case without the possibility of preparation, and almost in a state of physical collapse.

But the attitude of the defendants in the second trial was different from what it had been in the first. Last spring Germany was invading Russia; this fall the United States was invading Russia; and Socialists were in a different frame of mind. Moreover, the persecution of Socialists had grown more bitter, and it had become more and more clearly a class issue.

I think we all felt tranquil, and ready to go to prison if need be. At any rate, we were not going to dissemble what we believed. This had its effect on the jury, and on the Judge. When Max Eastman defended the St. Louis Declaration of the Socialist Party, when Floyd Dell defended the conscientious objectors,\* when Art Young made it clear

\* And when Jack Reed defended the class-war.—Editor.

that he disapproved of this war and all wars on social and economic grounds, when Seymour Stedman boldly claimed for us, and for all Socialists, the right of idealistic prophesy, and repudiated the capitalist system with its terrible inequalities, a new but perfectly logical and consistent point of view was presented. The jury was composed of a majority of honest, rather simple men, the background of whose consciousness must have contained memories of the Declaration of Independence, the Rights of Man, Magna Charta. They could not easily, even in war-time, repudiate these things; especially when all the defendants were so palpably members of the dominant race.

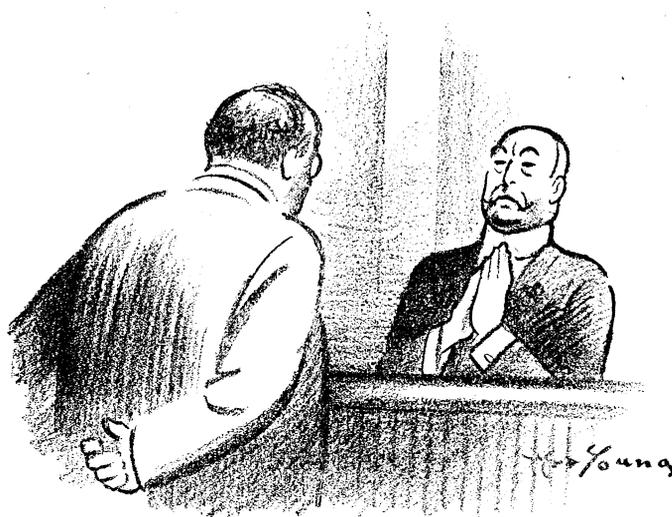
Two weeks later I saw in that same court the trial of some Russian boys and girls, on similar charges. They did not have a chance; they were foreigners. An official of the District Attorney's office was explaining to me why the Judge had been so severe upon these Russians, while our Judge in the *Masses* case had been so lenient.

"You are Americans," he said. "You *looked* like Americans. And then, too, you had a New York Judge. You can't convict an American for sedition before a New York Judge. If you'd had Judge Clayton, for example, it would have been equivalent to being tried in the Middle West, or in any other Federal Court outside of New York. You would have been soaked. . . ."

It has been said that the disagreement of the jury in this second *Masses* case is a victory for free speech, and for international Socialism. In a way this is true. International Socialism was argued in court, thanks to the curiosity and the fair-mindedness of Judge Manton; free speech was vindicated by the charge of Judge Manton, who ruled that anyone in this country could say that the war was not for democracy, that it was an imperialist war, that the Government of the United States was hypocritical—in fact, that any American had the right to criticize his government or its policies, *so long as he did not intend to discourage recruiting and enlistment or cause mutiny and disobedience in the armed forces of the United States.*

But the one great factor in our victory was Max Eastman's three-hour summing up.<sup>1</sup> Standing there, with the attitude and attributes of intellectual eminence, young, good-looking, he was the typical champion of ideals—ideals which he made to seem the ideals of every real American. I had attempted to bring in the case of the Russian Soviet Republic, to combat the insinuations of Mr. Barnes that the Bolsheviks were German agents and that we supported them in their corruption. With suspicious reluctance the Court ruled all that evidence out. But Max boldly took up the Russian question, and made it part of our defense. The jury was held tense by his eloquence; the Judge listened with all his energy. In the court-room there was utter silence. After it was all over the District Attorney himself congratulated Max, and it is rumored that Marshal McCarthy began to preach Socialism to his deputies.

<sup>1</sup>In response to many requests we have printed this speech in full as Pamphlet No. 1 in our new series of Liberator Pamphlets. Price, 10 cents.



Stedman: "Have you any prejudice against Socialism?"

Talesman: "I don't know what 'it is, but I'm opposed to it!"

I do not deny that this constituted a great victory for free speech, for Socialism. But at the same time this man Eastman, as the Judge himself is reported to have said, is a dangerous fellow; it did not make any difference what cause he was pleading—he would have convinced them just the same. . . .

A preparation for this climax was made by Seymour Stedman, both by his summing-up and by the effect of his personality throughout the case. Stedman is the kind of man that men listen to; he appears to be a shrewd, good-natured Yankee from the Middle West, who knows how to talk the language of the man on the street.

When he said, for example, "My ancestors were at Valley Forge when Americans at high prices were selling their goods to British soldiers in Philadelphia," the jurymen were jolted; they began to think. When he described how a mere handful of rich men own the entire resources of America, when he coldly and clearly traced the economic causes of the great war, and showed why Socialists did not believe that America ought to enter it, he was convincing. It was the way the Middle West used to talk a year ago; it was common sense.

"This republic," he said, "must not be threatened by any attacks upon Americans in expressing their views on any man and any law which may be adopted at any time."

I heard the jury talking this over, outside, in the hall, during recess. It hit them hard.

Barnes had the last say. Both Stedman and Eastman, preceding him, outlined to the jury what Barnes would say in his summing-up. So well did they prognosticate his very

language that when the District Attorney rose to speak he really had nothing new to say.

At the end of his speech he rung all the conventional changes on the patriotic motive, ending with the description of a young man, a lawyer of his acquaintance, who had died in the trenches abroad so that the world might be made free.

"Somewhere in France," said Mr. Barnes, "he lies dead, and he died for you and he died for me. He died for Max Eastman, he died for John Reed. He died for Merrill Rogers. His voice is but one of a thousand silent voices that demand that these men be punished. . . ."

Art Young, who had been quietly sleeping at the counsel table, awoke at this point. He listened for a moment, with growing perplexity. Then he leaned across the table.

"Who's he talking about?" asked Art. "Didn't he die for me, too?"

The jury filed out about three. They took one ballot—to determine the guilt or innocence of the corporation—the Masses Publishing Company. Not guilty. Then arose a hard-faced old man, one of the jurors, an ex-City employee.

"I voted 'not guilty' for the corporation," he said, "on condition that you would all vote 'guilty' for the individuals on each indictment. . . . I am a Catholic. My faith bids me never to let a Socialist go if I once get my hands on him."

There was only one more ballot. The jury disagreed—eight for acquittal, four against.

The second *Masses* trial was over. We await the third with equanimity. . . .



A Sketch of Judge Manton

# The Election Gains of the Nonpartisan League

By Oliver S. Morris

[*Oliver S. Morris, who compiled this early estimate of the Non-Partisan League's success in the recent elections for THE LIBERATOR, is the editor of the Non-Partisan Leader, a weekly magazine with 300,000 readers.*]

THE contest just closed is the second general election in which the Non-Partisan League has taken part. Its gains, made in spite of a campaign of mob violence and suppression in seven western states, can best be described by stating exactly what the organization won in 1916, and exactly what it gained over and above this in the election just held.

In 1916 the League, while still confined to North Dakota, where it was born, elected a full set of state officers, a majority in the Lower House of the Legislature and one of the state's three Representatives in the Lower House of Congress.

In the recent election the League re-elected all the state officers of North Dakota, re-elected its original Congressman and re-elected its majority in the Lower House of the Legislature. All League candidates ran as Republicans in North Dakota.

In addition to what it carried in 1916, the League, in its

second election contest, this time in seven states instead of one, records the following gains:

Capture of the North Dakota State Senate, which formerly had a majority against the League, and prevented the enactment of a large part of the radical programme in the 1917 session.

Election of two more Congressmen from North Dakota, making three in all from that state with the League stamp on them.

Displacement of the Democratic party in Minnesota and South Dakota as the chief opposition to the Republican party. The League candidates for Governor in these two states ran as independents against the regular Republican and Democratic nominees. Both states always have been rock-ribbed Republican, with the Democratic party constituting the chief opposition. On November 5 the independent League candidates for governor in these states gave the Democratic candidates a bad beating and, while defeated, gave the Republicans the closest race they have had in years.

The League elected its candidate for one minor state office in Minnesota.

The League elected its candidates for state treasurer and



A Sketch of Judge Manton

superintendent of public instruction in Idaho. The candidates for the long and short term for the United States senatorship in Idaho, who had the League indorsement, were elected. The League captured the Democratic party organization in Idaho in the September primaries, and its candidate for governor in that state ran as a Democrat, but was defeated by the Republican at the recent election.

In Montana, the League brought out and indorsed for the state Supreme Court a candidate who won an easy victory November 5. In this state, also, the League-indorsed candidate for railroad commissioner was elected. The Montana governorship and other state offices were not open for filling at this election, as the terms are four years and expire in 1920.

The League, however, lost its chief contest in Montana, which was for the United States senatorship. In the September primary election the League in this state indorsed Miss Jeanette Rankin, present Representative in Congress from Montana. Miss Rankin sought the Republican nomination, but was defeated by a narrow margin of 2,000 votes in the primaries. However, while she did not seek it, she obtained the nomination of the new National party for the senatorship, due to the fact that her supporters wrote her name in on the National party primary ballot. As the National party-Non-Partisan League candidate she opposed Senator Walsh, incumbent, and Lanstrom, Republican, in the election, but was defeated, largely due to the fact that she ran under the banner of the National party, which is, of course, hopelessly in the minority in Montana. Walsh was elected.

Probably the most important gains by the League in this election are the legislative gains in some six states. In Nebraska and Colorado the League is only organized in a few counties, but in each of these states sent a group of representatives to the Legislature.

In Minnesota the League, while it lost the gubernatorial contest, won a sweeping legislative victory in co-operation with the Minnesota State Federation of Labor. In some thirty counties of Minnesota the League has elected its candidates for the State Senate and House of Representatives, and organized labor in the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis has elected some sixteen legislators, pledged to the League labor political and economic programme. This farmer-labor group will hold the balance of power in the Minnesota Legislature, and will be able to force a large part of the farmer-labor radical programme.

In Montana and Idaho the returns from legislative contests are still meager at this writing, but indications are that the League has placed in the Legislature in these states a very strong minority of members, if not an actual majority.

By far the most significant event of the election is the adoption by the people of the State of North Dakota of a new constitution, framed and petitioned for under the initiative law by the Non-Partisan League. This new state constitution replaces the one written thirty years ago by the representatives of the railroads in the then new West. It permits the state to go into any sort of business it desires

and to finance such business as it desires to enter into by bond issues guaranteed by the state. This is to enable the League to enact its programme providing for the state ownership and operation of the means of transporting, storing, manufacturing and distributing farm products—in other words, state-owned warehouses, grain elevators, cold storage plants, flour mills and packing plants.

The new constitution also gives the state a new initiative and referendum law, probably the most liberal and effective in the United States; it permits the exemption of farm and other improvements from taxation, the establishment of state banks to give credit to farmers and finance the state-owned industries. The new constitution was necessary because the state was absolutely unable to pass any fundamentally needed reforms under the old constitution, due to the usual restrictions placed in state constitutions.



"You ain't big enough. Send your fadder."

One of the most encouraging features of the elections is the fact that the Non-Partisan League has demonstrated that farmers and workmen of the cities can get together on a political and economic programme and can and will stand together in an election, voting as a unit for that programme.

It must be remembered that these tremendous gains made by the Non-Partisan League in its second election have been made in the face of persecution and discrimination of the vilest sort.

The League organization work in Minnesota was practically halted a year ago by action of county councils of defense working under the domination of the state administration, which feared that the growing power of the League would upset the Republican control of the state. In several counties of Minnesota League organizers were absolutely prohibited from working and in some twenty other counties organization work was made impossible by the activity of mobs, which freely tarred and feathered, beat up and deported League organizers and prominent League members. In one county an attempt was made to deport all League members who refused to renounce the League, but this was stopped by the Federal authorities. The League was unable to get redress in the courts.

League meetings were not only made impossible in Minnesota, but in wide areas in nearly all the other states in which it was participating in the elections. Where these meetings were not suppressed by pretended authority of councils of defense or other local or state officials, they were made impossible through the organization of mobs by the League's political opponents. There were widespread mob outrages against League workers and members in South Dakota and Montana, and less widespread outrages of the same kind in all the other states where the League is active, with the exception of North Dakota, where the League was in power politically.

The League believes that it has made all the progress possible during the last two years under the war conditions which have existed. Had it not been for the war and the consequent suppression, intimidation and mobbing of League members and organizers and the fact that in most states League organizers were declared "non-essential" where everything else failed, and forced to take up other lines of work, the League membership in western states at the present time would be over half a million, whereas at present it is only a little over 200,000.

The prospects for complete and sweeping League victories in western states in 1920 are bright. There is every promise also that the League will be an important factor in the choosing of the next President of the United States, as it is organizing in thirteen states. With peace in sight and war hysteria diminishing, the League will take up its organization work for the 1920 elections at once and push it with all vigor and expedition. While in several states the political gangs in power have declared that the League is on the "down-grade," because it has failed to elect in this election three of the four candidates for governor it indorsed, these

politicians are far from believing what they say, and they are preparing now for 1920 and the most desperate political contests in which they have ever engaged.

Not a single daily newspaper in the larger cities or of any considerable circulation throughout the states where the League is organized or organizing has supported the League's candidates and programme. The League, however, is rapidly establishing its own daily papers, of which it has two already. It already operates some sixty country weeklies, co-operatively owned by League farmers, and in each state where it is active has a weekly state newspaper of wide circulation, besides a national magazine which goes to nearly 300,000 readers.

## Washington Letter

NOVEMBER 10TH.

A MAN who follows military affairs very closely remarked to me the other day:

"What recommendations are you Bolsheviki going to make when the big blow-up comes in our military establishment after the war?"

"Blow-up?" said I. "Tell me about it. We Bolsheviki take a tepid interest in military affairs."

"It is going to come over the question of the General Staff," he replied, "and it promises to be quite a row. It might afford you fellows your one big chance."

"You know, of course," he pursued, "that the Secretary of War has a council of military men known as the General Staff. Congress, jealous lest the General Staff assume the proportions of the European military machines, has always kept it purely advisory. But with the War and the breakdown of various old bureaus and so forth in the War Department, the G. S. has quietly annexed more and more power until today it fairly dominates the situation. You can't go around these parts without finding everywhere traces of its direct and indirect control."

"A trivial illustration will do as well as any. You remember that terrible story that 'Uncle Joe' Cannon pulled, about the young officers in Ordnance who wore spurs 'to keep their feet from sliding off the desks'? Well, it was on a withering tip from the General Staff, I understand, that Ordnance yanked its spurs off and, figuratively speaking, put its feet on the floor. Ordnance has already lost several of its biggest functions to the General Staff, and those 'in the know' tell me that the entire division is going to be absorbed by the Staff one of these days. *By the end of the war our military establishment will look very, very European.* Do I bore you?"

"Not at all," I said politely. "We Bolsheviki——"

"All right," he swept on, "now this tendency I have described is due for a head-on collision with American business and executive intelligence. You realize, of course,

that American engineers, experts and executives have, since the war, been brought into the closest possible touch with the war machinery. I don't mean merely in selling goods. I mean that they are *in* and *of* the War Department; they hold commissions; they are on the inside trying to get things done; they are up against the 'military mind' and they are very sore and very disgusted."

"Aren't they infatuated with the 'military mind'?" I asked. "Some of them are."

"Oh, I am not talking about the National Security League," he retorted impatiently. "I am talking about these colonels and majors and captains, with keen, intelligent faces, that you see everywhere in Washington. They aren't from West Point; they come straight from executive positions, trained in various techniques, and they are having one devil of a time.

"Most of those fellows—before they actually got down here on the job—were accustomed to blame Congress for our military shortcomings, if they were Democrats, or if they were Republicans they blamed Baker. But they don't any more. Today you will find them discussing, not Congress or Baker but the whole archaic system.

"Furthermore, this attitude is spreading all through American business circles. You go to a business men's convention in Atlantic City, for example, and you will hear in private conversation anywhere from six to a dozen stories of Army absurdities, of West Point stupidity, of expensive detours, of the eternal dodging of responsibility and the curbing of initiative which characterize the 'military mind.' These stories are being passed on.

"*All that is coming to a head in an investigation, either by Congress or by a mixed civilian and military commission after the war.* I know men who are confidently accumulating material for that investigation—carbon copies of letters and orders, diaries, memoranda of all sorts."

"That looks like a mere efficiency investigation," I cut in. "Where do the Bolsheviki come in?"

He checked off his remarks on his finger tips.

"It is your one chance," he replied, "to force the abandonment of the West Point tradition—which is essentially the Prussian tradition—and to bring in the democratic French tradition. It is your one chance to bring out evidence regarding military discipline, its military as well as its social and political failings, to force better conditions for the enlisted rank and file. It is your one chance to revise the Articles of War, to modify the oath, to regulate promotion. And if you fellows are not awake, that 'mere efficiency investigation,' when it has been ratified, as it will be, by American business, may readily fasten upon the country an efficient military system very hard to control."

"What can we do about it?" I inquired.

He mused a moment.

"Of course there will be no pacifists on that commission," he replied, "but I'd be satisfied, myself, if I could get three aggressive critics who come to mind, upon it."

"And they are——?"

"Frank P. Walsh of Kansas City, Walter L. Fisher of Chicago and General Nelson A. Miles."

\* \* \*

Secretary of the Navy Daniels has come out for a repetition of the three-year naval program of 1916, which must make our talk of "reduction of armaments" look pretty silly to tough-minded onlookers like Great Britain and Japan.

The publication of the announcement was a slip on the part of the Committee on Public Information, for it was recalled hastily with the explanation that it should have been held for release in December. However, the item has reached the service journals and was probably cabled abroad.

I should like to think that it was recalled at the instance of the President, but I have no real reason for thinking that. The President's cabinet is a go-as-you-please affair, and I doubt if Secretary Daniels has ever discussed disarmament with the President or the Cabinet for ten consecutive minutes. But it would be reassuring to discover that we took seriously ourselves the admirable suggestions we lay down for others. The very least this administration can do, with a decent regard for the opinions of mankind, is to re-enact in the naval appropriation bill the old Hensley clause, or a variation of it, indicating to the world our willingness to abandon our three-year program with its monstrous budget of \$600,000,000, whenever the great powers agree to partial or general disarmament.

\* \* \*

Senator La Follette, who has been out of the Senate for many months, at the bedside of his oldest boy, returned last month, as your readers know, in order to be on hand for the vote on the federal suffrage amendment.

The road of persecution which he has traveled has been a long and cruel one, but apparently it is nearing the turn. At any rate, the reception which he received on the floor of the Senate was generous and cordial in the extreme. Senator after Senator braved the quizzical stares of the press gallery to go up to the Senator from Wisconsin and shake his hand. Senators haven't much courage, and the incident has a wider significance than appears on the surface.

The Pomerene investigation into La Follette's "loyalty" has been thoroughly discredited; indeed, it has been months since the chairman could command a quorum of disgusted members, and it looks now as though the Senator from Wisconsin, easily the bravest, the most conscientious and the most intelligent public servant in Congress, would recover some measure of usefulness.

When the true history of this period is written, the lynching of La Follette by the press of the country will be described, in my humble judgment, as marking the beginning of the autocratic reaction, the end of which is not yet reached.

CHARLES T. HALLINAN.

# International Labor and Socialist News

By Alexander Trachtenberg

## Italy

### The National Congress

THE Socialist Party of Italy has consistently maintained its revolutionary and internationalist position since the beginning of the European war. It participated in the Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences and has generally allied itself with the left wing elements in the international Socialist movement. The last national congress in Rome, held under closed doors, September 2-5, showed the so-called right wing of the party to be more radical than the French minority under the leadership of Longuet, and it was the extreme left which carried the congress.

The chief point of difference between minority and majority resolutions was the matter of disciplining Socialist deputies in Parliament who transgressed party decisions.

The majority resolution took the following position: The work of the National Committee was endorsed, but its excessive tolerance toward certain groups and persons in order to secure unity in the party was deprecated. *Avanti*, the official party organ, which is now published daily in Rome and Turin, as well as Milan, which has maintained throughout the war a revolutionary internationalist policy under the editorship of Seratti (who is now in prison), was especially commended for "having sounded the alarm against class collaboration"; the parliamentary group was especially criticized for not having more thoroughly voiced the international position of the party as directed by the former congresses at Reggio-Emilia and Ancona; to insure a thorough observance of party decisions by individual members of Parliament, the National Committee was given power to expel Socialist members of Parliament who fail to express the sentiments of the party or participate in activities to which the party is opposed, the expelled member having the privilege of appeal to the membership through a referendum.

It was this resolution which received 14,015 votes, carrying the Congress by a clear majority of 9,000.

### The Inter-Allied Conference

Following this congress the reasons for the Party Executive's decision not to send delegates to the Inter-Allied Socialist and Labor Conference last July were made public, as follows: (1) Samuel Gompers, at whose request the conference was called, should not have been considered at all, since the American Federation of Labor, in whose name he acted, has no standing in the International Socialist

Movement, not having been represented at previous international congresses, and, in fact, being opposed to the Socialist movement and the international programme of Socialism; (2) another element was admitted which had no right to be represented—the so-called Socialist Union of Italy, an insignificant organization composed of resigned and expelled members of the Socialist party, with a strong mixture of reactionary and jingo labor and reform elements. The Italian Socialist Party, therefore, believed that no practical results could be achieved at a conference where legitimate organizations, such as the American Socialist Party and the Russian Socialists, were not represented and non-Socialist and even anti-Socialist bodies were admitted.

### The American Mission

The latest American "Socialist" mission utterly came to grief in Italy. By the time the mission reached Italy, after failing of its purpose in England and France, the European movement was thoroughly acquainted with its personnel, their relation to the Socialist movement in America, and the purpose of their journey to Europe.

On the eve of their arrival *Avanti* published the following, from its Paris representative:

"Last night left for Italy four magnificent antediluvian monsters, Spargo, Simons, Kopelin and Howat, delegates of a Social-Democratic League of U. S. of America . . . there is nothing more to say. Have pity on these poor devils, who, having slept four years in some museum, have now awakened with the mentality of August 4, 1914, and just discovered the war, the war of four years ago. Be pitiful, comrades of Italy. They are the Buontosaurus, Dinosaurus, Plesiosaurus and Diplococus of the social-nationalism; antediluvian monsters, a fortune for a museum." This "comradely" introduction was followed by a series of articles in the Italian Socialist press explaining the nature of the American mission's visit.

However, having set out to purify the Socialist movement of Europe in the fire of social-patriotism, the crusading party naturally would not be discouraged. They appealed to the Party Executive for an audience, in a letter both guarded and affectionate. The reply was laconic, omitting even customary salutations,—the audience was granted on the ground of mere courtesy. The conference lasted for three hours, during which the visiting Americans "explained" themselves, after which the National Executive Committee replied, stating simply that the Italian Socialist Party was in thorough accord with the position of the Socialist Party of

America on the international situation as expressed in the St. Louis resolution and other party declarations. We surmise that the conference did not last much longer.

## Ireland

The National Executives of the Irish Trade Union Congress and the Labor Party have issued a manifesto calling upon their various sub-divisions to put up labor candidates for Parliament in all districts. The parliamentary campaign is to be waged entirely independent of other parties—even the British Labor Party. “Independent of the Home Rule Party, independent of the Unionist Party, independent of the Sinn Fein Party, and independent of the British Labor Party, its nearest neighbor in the International, the Irish Labor Party will, therefore, enter the General Election with its own candidates, on its own platform, with its own principles, policy and programme.”

Irish labor considers the economic issue supreme, but will center its fight in the coming elections on national “self-determination,” since that is the great demand of the Irish people at this time. In explaining the principle of self-determination, its platform declares that the Irish Labor Party means thereby “that Ireland, no less than Belgium or Servia, Poland or Finland, Bohemia or Esthonia (and these no less than Ireland) shall have the right to decide its own form of government, to choose its own sovereignty, to determine its own destinies without limitations, except such as are voluntarily conceded or are common to all nations. We assert before the world that Ireland is denied this right by the power of armed force, and we call upon the democracies to make good their professions by their actions and set free the Irish Nation from its involuntary bondage.”

The ultimate aims of the Labor Party go far beyond this nationalist dream; they are defined as follows:

“To recover for the Nation complete possession of all the natural physical sources of wealth of this country.

“To win for the workers of Ireland, collectively, the ownership and control of the whole produce of their labor.

“To secure the democratic management and control of all industries and services by the whole body of workers, manual and mental, engaged therein, in the interest of the Nation and subject to the supreme authority of the National Government.

“To obtain for all adults who give allegiance and service to the Commonwealth, irrespective of sex, race or religious belief, equality of political and social rights and opportunities.

“To abolish all power and privileges, social and political, of institutions or persons, based upon property or ancestry, or not granted or confirmed by the freely expressed will of the Irish people.”

Among those nominated for Parliament for a Dublin district is James Larkin, an official of the Transport Workers' Union, now residing in New York.

## United States

On Nov. 4, the National Executive of the Socialist Party issued the following proclamation to the Congress of the United States:

“1. We DEMAND that in the coming peace the principles of self-determination of peoples be asserted to the fullest degree, with the right of all subject peoples and races of both the Central and the Allied Powers to determine the conditions of their own existence.

“2. We DEMAND that the people of Russia have complete freedom to solve their internal problems and that the integrity of Russian territory, as well as that of Finland, the Baltic provinces, Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and the other border provinces, be preserved.

“3. We DEMAND that the present preliminary and all subsequent peace negotiations be conducted with the strictest observance of the principle of open covenants of peace, arrived at publicly.

“4. We DEMAND that duly accredited representatives of subject peoples and of the economic and political organizations of the working class in all countries, participate in the final peace conference.

“5. We DEMAND that passports be granted representatives of Labor and Socialist Groups to attend International Conferences for the exchange of opinions between the labor groups of the belligerent and neutral nations.

“6. We DEMAND that this government refuse to consider any proposal for economic war after the war.”



A Sketch of Jim Larkin

# BOOKS

## Colors of Life

*Colors of Life: Poems and Songs and Sonnets,*  
by Max Eastman. \$1.25 net. Alfred A. Knopf.

### TAVARISH MAX:

One of the disadvantages of having been associated with you in editorial work for several years is that every time the authorities indict you for something they feel that they must indict me, too. We are, in fact, supposed to spend all our time conspiring together. I have often thought it would be interesting to conspire with you. I admire the quality of your mind, at once so hard and receptive, so scientific and yet so poetic, so cool and yet so eager; and if only we succeeded in finding anything upon which we were really agreed, I would gladly have conspired with you for the sheer intellectual pleasure of the thing. But, alas, we have never conspired about anything—not even about getting out the magazine! For the other disadvantage of being your editorial confrere is that one sees you so seldom; on those rare occasions when you are in the office, you are always hurrying to catch the next train back to the country to write poetry, or to read it, or to set down in cool and lucid prose your reflections upon it. And now that your newest book, a collection of poems and of prose essays upon the art of poetry, has been published, and I want to talk to you about the ideas which it has aroused in my mind, I am compelled to resort to this device to secure your attention.

At this point you will perhaps begin to suspect that, under the ingenious pretense of talking about you, I am really going to talk about myself. To lull your indignant suspicions I shall tell you why I like your poetry. I do not promise to explain to you why, when I read some of your poems—such as “Coming to Port,” “X-Rays,” and the sonnet to Isadora Duncan, there should come, with a premonitory icy thrill along my spinal marrow, that utter transport from the world of reality into a realm of the imagination, from which I emerge reluctantly as from a dream. . . . I suppose it is because these poems are beautiful. Beauty is a mystery, as yet unsolved by me. All I offer to tell you is why, when I come to your poems, not yet knowing whether they will prove beautiful, and not overconfident of that transcendent miracle, it is always with eagerness, with a relish for a specific quality in them which I have come to expect and of which I am seldom disappointed. You will perhaps be surprised to learn what that quality is; for in your prose you show predilection for a kind of scientific and happy paganism, and you may perhaps imagine that as a poet you illustrate these amiable virtues. It is not so. You have the foundation of such a temperament in a singularly childlike wholeheartedness of surrender to your emotions, and an equally fearless and naïf expression of them, whatever they may be; the reading of your poems is distinctly an adventure, for one never knows what emotion it will occur to you to cele-

brate next! But among all your moods, there are few of the clear pagan happiness which you admire. I know of only one poem in which that mood is perfectly sustained—your “Rainy-Song,” with its

“Happy, sweet laughter of love without pain,  
Young love, the strong love, burning in the rain.”

But this mood, in your book, is like one of those tranquil forest pools of which you speak in another poem, in which the “hunted runner dips his hand and cools his fevered ankles.” There is much of loneliness, as of a child, of unappeasement, of doubt, of torment, of all Baudelaire’s “*Bienfaits de la Lune*.” Your poetry, I think, will be most liked by those into whose soul doubt has entered; whose will is, as you say,

“Vague water welling through the dark,  
Holding all substances—except the spark”;

those “anxious hearts uptroubled from their beds”—“for no good reason”; those for whom “no journey has an end.” You seem to me most akin to those eternally restless spirits of the late Renaissance, who would have nothing or impossible things. It was characteristic of these that they seasoned all their thoughts of beauty with some sharp spice of pain. And when I read the strangest and most beautiful poem in your book, my mind goes back to them; I think of that beautifully strange poet, John Doune, and of how his ghost must wish there had been X-rays in his time, that he might have written—

“Your flesh was never warmer to my passion  
Than when, moving in that lumor green,  
We saw with eyes our fragile bones enamoured  
Clasping sadly on the pallid screen.”

Doune would have liked “A Visit”—better than I do; the poet of the “*fleurs malades*” would have understood, better, I fancy, than the gentleman who reviews poetry for the *Tribune*, the meaning of “The Lonely Bather”; Poe would have appreciated the poignantly unromantic candor of “Fire and Water.” And it is of such spirits, and of yourself, too, I think, that you write, in your “Coming to Port”—

“There is no nest for the unresting fever  
Of your passion, yearning, hungry-veined;  
There is no rest nor blessedness forever  
That can clasp you, quivering and pained,  
Whose eyes burn ever to the Unattained.”

I hope that all this does not sound like praise; for, I assure you, nothing was further from my intent. I was about to tell you how much I disapprove of this kind of poetry. It is true that I like these poems; I cannot help that. I always like beautiful things. But when they clash with my theories, I sternly disapprove of them. And I have a theory about poetry; I will not inflict it upon you here, but it requires me to classify your work—along with that of Shakespeare, Keats, et cetera—into the period of artistic creation dominated by the *pain-motif*. The other kind of art is that which is dominated by the *pleasure-motif*; of this art few convincing examples exist; but, according to my theory, it is the art of the future; and I want you to practise it. . . .

Is there any reason why a sad poem about death should be more beautiful than a glad poem about birth; why a pathetic poem about being jilted should be more beautiful than a gay poem about—let us say, *not* being jilted; why starvation should prove a better subject than a banquet, or suicide than the pleasures of tennis? I know it generally works out that way. But need it? Can't we take enough interest in pleasure to make poems out of it? I think we can. Let me remind you that Sappho wrote poems about marriage, and Pindar odes on the Olympic games, in exactly this spirit. I think the same Christian morality which preserved for us chiefly the tragic portion of Greek poetry has poisoned our taste, until we can hardly conceive pleasure as a motif of high art. Yet pleasure, as well as pain, can become so great as to demand the assuagement of art; pleasure, like pain, can fill and flood the soul to such an extent as to pour out inevitably into rhythmic sensual expression. Christian poetry has become Gothic, like its architecture; visibly full of the pain of stress and aspiration, and gargoyled with quaint neuroses. We need to learn to write poems which are like Greek temples, or, better still, like the dances and games of which those temples preserve, in frieze and statue, the joyous and lovely mementoes.

But this is not the only "praiseful complaint" (to adopt an Elizabethan phrase from your book) which I have to make against you.

I read this book with a curious feeling about you which I had more than once about myself during our recent adventures in the federal courts. I sometimes wondered then, in the midst of some legal argument, suddenly: What am I doing here? Why am I not at home writing a story? The scene became, in such moments, utterly unreal. The fact was that I was an artist—not a politician. How in the world did I come to be mixed up in this political *cause celebre*? And now I have the same surprise, as I read this book and think of you back there in that musty court-room. . . . For you are revealed by these pages as so pre-eminently a lover of beauty and so delicately sure-handed a creator of it, that your participation even in the most vital politics seems incongruous. For I am not ashamed to say that to me art is more important than the destinies of nations, and the artist a more exalted figure than the prophet. . . .

It is useless for people to say that it is a superior type of mind which can function both in politics and in art. It is a vain compliment, which but temporarily assuages the unhappiness of the type in question. For, strictly between ourselves, that superiority is a painful one, consisting in fact of a spiritual conflict between opposing impulses. There are signs of the pain of that conflict in your prefatory essay; you say:

"It is impossible for me, feeling and watching the eternal tidal currents of liberty and individual life against tyranny and the type, which are clashing and rearing up their highest crimsoned waves at this hour, to publish without some word of deprecation a book of poems, so personal for the most part, and reflecting my own too easy taste of freedom rather

than my sense of the world's struggle toward an age and universe of it." Yet what follows is apologia rather than apology. You have never found your "undivided being" in that struggle, but rather in those "moments of energetic idleness" when life attains self-realization through you—moments, in a word, when you are poet. "Life is older than liberty. It is greater than revolution. . . . And life is what I love. And, though I love life for all men and women, and so inevitably stand in the ranks of revolution against the cruel system of these times, I love it also for myself." And therefore you have feared and avoided that "monotonous consecration" which your friends have expected you to exemplify. . . . From this defiant apologia, and from the rapt lyric zest of the pages in which you do break away from your civic responsibilities I make no doubt that, were you free to choose, you would be as simply and wholly occupied with poetry as would be humanly possible.

But you are not free to choose. If you had to live your life over again, you would do just what you did; and so would your fellow artists of the Masses; not alone, if I may say so, because of the public need for the truths you had to utter, not alone because of the great black void of silence and cowardice into which some brief lightning-flashes of candor must needs rip their way, but for another reason also. It was more *interesting* to talk truth than to create beauty.

And that, I wish to complain to you, is the trouble with being an artist nowadays: other things are so damnably

## The Liberator Pamphlets

*In response to many requests we are printing a series of pamphlets on timely subjects. Some of these will be reprints of articles which have appeared in The Liberator. Others are new material not in print elsewhere. We announce three pamphlets now ready:*

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interesting—and promise to remain so! How can one be an artist in a time when the morning paper may tell of another Bolshevik revolution somewhere? . . . I have the utmost envy of those of my artist contemporaries who placidly ignore what is going on, or who patronizingly use these goings-on as “material” for their art. An explanation of their poise, it is true, is usually feebleness of intellect; if they had sense enough to realize what is going on, they would lose their airs quickly enough—one whiff of what is brewing would upset their placid psychic digestions for the rest of their days! Yet I envy them their singleness of purpose . . . and this brings me the heart of what I have to say.

I am going to propose to you, Tavarish Max, a conspiracy; a conspiracy on behalf of artists; a conspiracy which has for its purpose the achievement of the spiritual serenity necessary to the large, full-energied production of art.

Of the two ways to secure serenity, one is forever lost to us. The saying, “What people don’t know doesn’t hurt them,” is not true of us; for it is precisely what we don’t know that does hurt us. The unknown future disturbs us by the flickering and doubtful intimations of its approach. We are restless because our avid curiosity is teased incessantly, has been teased now for four years, by premonitions of vast social change. What I propose is quite simple: it is merely that we find out exactly what is going to happen for, say, the next fifteen years. That is all. Then we shall not have to be changing our minds every few weeks; we shall know what is in the morning papers without rushing out to buy them; and we shall be able to write poetry and fiction in peace!

I am no political economist; but purely as a suggestive outline of the mode of procedure to be followed in arriving at the desired conclusions, I offer the following text by Roger W. Babson, with my own interpretation:

“To return to pre-war conditions, as certain Republicans would like to do, is impossible. These conditions can never return. We must choose between the new democracy, led by President Wilson, or Bolshevism, led by the irresponsible. Republican victories will be sparks for revolutions.”

This brief paragraph seems to me to contain the history of the next fifteen years. It requires, however, to be expanded, which I venture to do as follows: “To return to the pre-war stage of capitalism in America would be to plunge the world into universal class-war. Russia is already a Bolshevik Republic, Austria seems on the verge of becoming one. Germany may be the next, and who knows what may happen in Italy, France, and even in the British Empire? These Bolshevik uprisings may be put down, but the menace of Bolshevism remains. The political and economic institutions whose disintegration has produced the Bolshevik menace are powerless to cope with it. Bolshevism must be held in check by the New Capitalism, of which the political and economic foundations have already been partly laid during the war, and which will take its completed form as a League of Nations to Prevent Bolshevism. Against this League of Capitalist Nations will be arrayed, if not an actual League of Bolshevik Republics, at least an international Bolshevik

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effort to create such a League. If the Russian or other Bolshevick Republics survive or revive, they will, while building up their own proletarian political and economic forms, endeavor to promote the disintegration of political and economic institutions in the Capitalist States; and such disintegration will be powerfully, though unintentionally, assisted in the European States by dynastic and aristocratic interests. The struggle between Bolshevism and the New Capitalism in Europe will be so precarious that the United States, as the one great State as yet unthreatened by Bolshevism, will become the rock against which the New Capitalism will have its back in the death-struggle with Bolshevism. We must choose between the New Capitalism and Bolshevism, between a League of Nations led by President Wilson and a League of Peoples led by Nikolai Lenin. Any defection of the United States from the economic and political plans of President Wilson will weaken the European States in their struggle against Bolshevism. The Republicans are disposed to return to the pre-war stage of capitalism. This would create an economic chaos at home, and precipitate Bolshevik success abroad. Republican victories will be sparks for revolutions."

If this is what Mr. Babson means, and I think it is, and if he is correct in his statement of the situation, there is only one question left to be answered before we know the history of the next fifteen years. For it will be noted that Mr. Babson's argument implies that military force alone will not suffice to crush the spirit of Bolshevism, but that it requires President Wilson's new democracy in full swing. The Republicans want to scrap the new democracy and go back to the old capitalism. The question, then, appears to turn on our domestic politics. And, judging by the recent election returns, the "sparks" have just begun to fly.

It is not, of course, specifically Republican, or essentially political, this desire to "go back." It is part of the psychology of the economic situation. The change from the old to the new capitalism, from stark competition to scientifically engineered and more or less benevolently managed production, is one which goes against the grain of the old-time capitalist mind. It will more and more require the foregoing of huge

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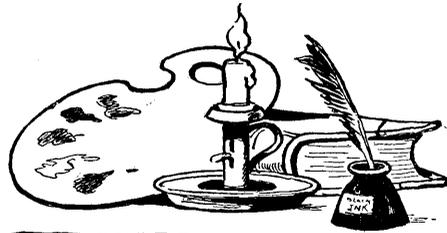
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profits which could be had under the old system of unrestrained grab; but, more important even than this, it will more and more push the old managing class aside in favor of a class of engineers and experts who know how to produce rather than how to compete. The Othellos of business do not see their occupations go without a protest. The new capitalism, in short, calls for either intellectual readjustment or patriotic self-sacrifice and self-abnegation from the capitalist class at large. The intellectual readjustment may be dismissed from consideration as an impossibility. The patriotic self-sacrifice and self-abnegation which served during the war in lieu of such intellectual readjustment has been a strain which only the atmosphere of war could be expected to maintain. The moment peace comes the business world of America will want to return to normal conditions, and, in spite of logic, necessity, and the Red Terror of Bolshevism itself, it may be expected to effect as soon as possible a political overturn which will, at the very least, seriously hamper and confuse the workings of the new capitalism, and at the most plunge the United States and with it the rest of the capitalist nations into Chaos and Old Night. In these well-meant efforts the business world may be expected to receive the support of the working class, which has notoriously, ever since the days when it first destroyed labor-saving machinery, been blind to its own "good"; for it may well be doubted if the greater comfort, security and wages it receives will serve to counterbalance the loss of freedom of movement and of "contract" which the regimentation fairly necessary under the new capitalism would perpetuate.

It only remains to discuss what attitude the American Socialists will take toward



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(Strictly speaking, this is NOT a complete directory of Greenwich Village. It is only a step toward such a directory. In time, and with the help of our friends, we shall make this as complete a directory of the Village as is possible in the advertising columns of a magazine.)—Harry Salpeter.

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This left nothing for us to do but to undertake the distributing business ourselves through independent magazine wholesalers in every town where we could find one who was not afraid. Already we have agencies in 235 towns, and every mail brings more orders.

It has been a good move in many ways. We are finding a number of radical dealers who have more than a commercial interest in pushing The Liberator. And we are reducing the number of returned copies to a minimum. Will you help us get more copies printed and every copy read? There are several things you can do.

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the situation. Interestingly enough, it seems possible that a large number will, for temperamental reasons, support President Wilson, and thus do their best to stave off the world-wide triumph of Bolshevism. But those of them who are still out of jail will hardly be a sufficient barrier against the tide of post-bellum discontent.

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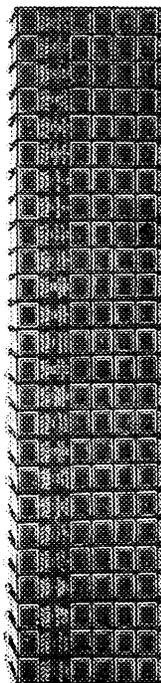
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