
The “Reds” in America

From the Standpoint of the Department of Justice

by Arthur Wallace Dunn

Published in *The Review of Reviews*, Feb. 1920, pp. 161-166.

Not until the people of the United States comprehend the full significance of what may be termed as the anarchist movement in this country — whether called Anarchist, Communist, or Bolshevist — will they realize that a great peril is threatening the free institutions of America, and that efficient and rigorous action must be taken to preserve the government of the United States.

No doubt the activity of the Department of Justice in rounding up the “Reds,” followed by many arrests and steps for the deportation of alien enemies of the United States, has made an impression on the public mind. But as yet most people have only a superficial knowledge of what has been going on; and it is doubtful whether the country as a whole has fully grasped the seriousness of the situation that has made necessary such drastic action by the government. The people of the United States are easygoing, content for the most part to attend to their own affairs, and it is only when something of great importance to the nation is pending, or when the country is actually in danger, that they become aroused.

At the present time there are comparatively few persons in the United States who really believe there is any danger to the government in the anarchist movement; consequently the people as a whole have not given attention to it. They have not been unusually stirred by the developments thus far, and have show little more than passing interest in the thousands of arrests made under the direction of the Department of Justice. There is surprise, but little real understanding, as to why the government should find it necessary, all at once, to being making wholesale arrests, and to deport aliens by the shipload.

Rapid Growth of the Anarchist Element Since 1914.

The evidence which has been collected by the Department of Justice is so conclusive of a gigantic conspiracy to destroy the government of the United States that it is really alarming. But the machinery of the law — once set in motion and backed by public sentiment — is sure to defeat the movement, which has for its sole purpose the overthrow of all organized governments in the world, and the establishment of oligarchies, communes, soviets — any or all of the anarchistic schemes with their sequence of bloodshed and ruin. Stripped of all subterfuge, and held up to the light of day in all its hideous aspects, the anarchistic movement is simply an attempt of the very few to control the vast majority.

In the United States the anarchists have found a fertile field and for many years they have been working without any particular opposition. The great war gave them encouragement, and recent events, not only in Europe, but also in this country, have confirmed them in the belief that a minority, active and well financed, can control the majority. They were given an example of the possibility and power of minority control by Germany. This was followed by the control of Russia by a comparatively few active anarchists, calling themselves Bolshevists, who have secured possession of an immense area and assumed to govern a large number of people under the name of Soviet.

In the United States the anarchists had the example of what can be accomplished by determined leadership of minorities in the success of prohibition and woman suffrage. It is already well know that the

so-called "mild" Socialists have determined to adopt the methods of those who succeeded with prohibition and woman suffrage, and by so doing turn the United States over to the Socialists. The leaders in this movement say that it may take from 25 to 40 years, but they point out that prohibition and woman suffrage struggled for a longer period before their advocates achieved success.

The anarchists have attempted a shorter cut. The leaders had no desire to wait a quarter of a century or more in order to secure control, and when they observed the success of the Bolshevists in Russia they increased their activities in this country, resorting to what they term "direct action," which means bombing and destructive tactics of every sort. The United States offered an easy field, because its lax immigration laws allowed any and all kinds of people to land in this country and to do about as they pleased after they were once within our borders. Anarchist leaders found a soil ready for their seed. There has been and still is very much discontent; high prices and high taxes create intense dissatisfaction among the people. The "IWW" and kindred organizations have preached the gospel of discontent, and labor has become restless; strikes have added to the general confusion, making it very easy for the anarchists to impress upon the minds of many people their idea of the overthrow of all government and the confiscation of all property.

The firm stand taken by Attorney General Palmer and those associated with him has met the approval of the law-abiding, government-loving citizenry of the United States. While the people are not fully aware of all that has been done to involve this country in anarchy, those who do know have a deep sense of gratitude toward the men who have boldly reached out and laid their hands upon their enemies of the country. It was during the war that the Department of Justice gained its first real knowledge of what the anarchists were doing in the United States. In fact, the movement of the anarchists on the present gigantic scale was a development of the war. Previous to that time there were comparatively few anarchists in this country — possibly 200 or 300 who might be classed as of the most dangerous types, and only a few of these were violent or would go to the length of destroying property and committing assassinations.

The Department of Justice Grips the Situation.

The war afforded them an opportunity of exploiting their ideas. The destruction of munition plants and other property in the United States previous to the entry of this country into the war gave them their cue. When the United States entered the war the anarchists were found to be anti-war, individually and collectively. They were easily able to gather about them the pro-German element, the anti-draft element, the pacifist element; in fact, all those who were protesting against the participation of the United States in the war furnished encouragement and many adherents to the anarchist movement.

It became the duty of the Department of Justice to enforce the laws against sedition, and to prosecute those who were interfering with the government in its efforts to prepare for and successfully wage the war against Germany. In nearly every case investigated the Department found that the lines of sedition led back to anarchistic groups. But so successful were the anarchistic leaders in spreading their propaganda and enlisting adherents during the war that they continued their activities when the war was over, taking advantage of the less rigorous enforcement of wartime sedition measures, and becoming bold to an extent theretofore unknown. By so doing they paved the way for their own destruction, at least in this country. For the heavy hand of the law has been laid upon them, and the general approval which has been given the Attorney General by the people will have a very wholesome effect.

Before he became Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer was Alien Property Custodian, and in that capacity he gained a wide knowledge of the anti-American propaganda that was being spread all over the United States. Carrying this knowledge into the Department of Justice he began a systematic search for the enemies of the country, with the result that many thousands of arrests have been made and many more thousands of anarchists sent into hiding.

What Is the Communist Party?

The principal activities of the anarchists in this country are through what is called "The Communist

Party." This party was the outgrowth of the split in the Socialist Party over the war. There were a large number of Socialists who supported the government during the war and who would not endorse the activities and declarations of the more radical Socialists who opposed the war and circulated propaganda all over the country against the draft and other measures which were so essential to the successful prosecution of the war. The Communist Party of America is identified with, and in fact a part of similar organizations in Europe, one of which is called the Communist Party of Russia, and which is really the Bolshevik party controlling the Soviets, with Lenin and Trotsky its leaders.

The Communist Party in America has been intensely active in sending out literature, much of which denounced the milder Socialists for their refusal to oppose the war and to espouse the radical doctrines of those who were foremost in the movement to overthrow all governments. From its inception the Communist Party has been a champion of the proletariat and denounced capitalism. Its literature furnished a vast amount of evidence, now in the hands of the Department of Justice, which led to the arrest and deportation of the aliens who are now on the road to the countries of their nativity. Membership alone, involving as it does acceptance of the teachings and doctrines of the Communist Party, is sufficient evidence to cause an arrest. Every case is made up separately and is complete in itself, with evidence against the individual showing that he comes within the class of aliens that should be deported under the law.

A member of the Communist Party subscribes to the following:

The undersigned, after having read the constitution and program of the Communist Party, declares his adherence to the principles and tactics of that party and the Communist International; agrees to submit to the discipline of the party as stated in its constitution, and pledges himself to engage actively in its work.

There are several restrictions to membership, one of which is that:

No person shall be permitted to join who is a member or supporter of any other political organization. Nor is any person who has an entire livelihood from rent, interest, or profit eligible to membership in the Communist Party.

A far more important restriction declares:

No person shall be accepted as a member who enters into the service of the nation, state, or local governmental body other than through the Civil Service or by legal compulsion.

The manifesto of the Communist Party, as well as its constitution, is also used as evidence against members of that party. Throughout the manifesto, as in all other documents and literature of the party, there are strong declarations against present governments, and particularly against capitalism. Frequent references are made to an endorsement of the Soviet of Russia. One of the declarations of the Communist Party is that:

Communism does not propose to "capture" the bourgeois parliamentary state, but to conquer and destroy it. As long as the bourgeois state prevails the capitalistic class can baffle the will of the proletariat.

And again:

It is necessary that the proletariat organize its own state for the coercion and suppression of the bourgeoisie. Proletarian dictatorship is a realization of that fact. It is equally a recognition of that fact that in the Communist reconstruction of society the proletariat alone counts as a class.

And still further:

The Communist Party prepares itself for the revolution in the measure that it develops a program of immediate action expressing the mass struggles of the proletariat. These struggles must be inspired with revolutionary spirit and purposes.

The very activity of the Communist Party, its establishment of branches, its enrollment of members, its signed cards, affords the bulk of the testimony which has accumulated in the Department of Justice and furnished clues to the agents of the Department for the many arrests which have been made.

How Evidence Was Obtained.

It was necessary for the agents of the Department of Justice to secure evidence of membership in the Communist Party, or of other anarchistic organizations, before making the arrests. All members of the Communist Party were supplied with cards, and these

membership cards have been regarded as *prima facie* evidence and sufficient for making an arrest. Quite a number of suspected persons have torn up their membership cards, and the Department of Justice has had to rely on records and papers captured in different raids at headquarters and branches of the Communist Party, and at other places where the "Reds" congregated, for evidence in making arrests. Participation in the meetings has also furnished the secret service men of the Department of Justice clues to follow up the agitators and locate persons who have been active in organizations which have for their purposes the overthrow of all governments, and particularly the government of the United States.

The Case of "Ambassador" Martens.

The methods of the Department of Justice in its endeavor to obtain evidence against the anarchists are interesting. As an example may be taken the case of Ludwig Christian Karlovich Martens, the self-styled Ambassador of the Russian Soviet to the United States, who for a considerable time maintained offices in New York City which were used for the spread of all kinds of propaganda looking to the destruction of the government of the United States. First, the Department found out all there was to be known concerning Martens. The agents investigating Martens' career learned that he was born in Russia 46 years ago, of German parents who had migrated from Germany 4 years previous to his birth. Martens was denied Russian citizenship because he had not served his time in the German army — the Germans under the old regime never overlooking a man who was due to give military service to the country. He was compelled to serve his time in the German army and was released in 1901. He smuggled himself back into Russia during the Russian Revolution in 1905, but a year later he left that country and went to England and has not since returned to Russia.

In 1914 Martens registered in England as an alien enemy born of German parents, and in 1915 he was granted permission to come to the United States, arriving here early in January 1916. It was not until re-

cently that he was granted Russian citizenship, which was extended by the Provisional Government of Russia after the revolution of March 1917, more than a year after the establishment of the Lenin-Trotsky regime in Russia.† Martens obtained credentials from that group making him the official representative of the government in this country.

After tracing Martens' career that far, the Department painstakingly and systematically looked into his activities, not only since his arrival in this country, but before he came to the United States. It was established beyond all question that he was a member of the Communist Party in Russia, as well as the Communist Party of America; and that both these parties were engaged in an effort to overthrow and destroy the government of the United States.‡ The evidence in this case also showed that the Communist Party of Russia, of which Martens was a member, was actively engaged in the circulation of literature and propaganda among the American soldiers in and about Archangel, Russia, trying to induce them to renounce the service of the United States and also to convince them that they should, upon their return to their homes, join the movement to overthrow our government.

The result of this investigation proved that Martens was subject to deportation under the Act of October 16, 1918, which provides:

That aliens who are members of, or affiliated with, any organization that entertains the belief in, teaches, or advocates the overthrow, by force or violence, of the government of the United States, shall be deported.

The official who prepared the case against Martens demonstrated that the Communist Party of Russia is an organization advocating the overthrow, by force or violence, of the government of the United States, and went into considerable detail to show how that party in Russia was operating, and also to show that Martens was a member of it.

In this connection it was stated that a call had been issued for what was termed the "Third International," a meeting of organizations advocating the overthrow of governments. Among the organizations listed in the call were the Spartacus Association of Germany,

†- This is an obvious error, the Bolshevik Party coming to power in a revolutionary upheaval on November 7, 1917.

‡- There is no evidence that Martens was a member of either the Communist Party of America or the Communist Labor Party of America.

the Communist Party of Russia, the Socialist Labor Party of America, the Left Wing element of the Socialist Party of America, the IWW of America, and the Workers' International Industrial Association of America. The "Left Wing element of the Socialist Party of America" is practically the Communist Party in this country. It is that element of the Socialists which became so prominently identified with anti-war activities in the United States. The case against Martens having been found complete, the Department decided to arrest and deport him.

The case of Martens is naturally more prominent than most of the others, but it shows the methods of the Department in obtaining the evidence in all cases where arrests and orders for deportation have been made.

There is a slight distinction between the anarchist and the communist, but it is a distinction without any particular difference. As stated by an official of the Department of Justice, the anarchist is for no government whatever, and the communist generally supports the Soviet system of government, which reduced to cold fact means anarchistic control as shown by the control of Russia.

Attorney General Palmer's Reasons for a Deportation Policy.

Beginning when he was Alien Property Custodian, and continuing the work when he became head of the Department of Justice. Attorney General Palmer has been gathering all kinds of evidence relating to the disloyal aliens in the United States, and particularly the anarchistic class that advocates revolution and violence. One of the reasons for the attempt upon the life of the Attorney General by the explosion of a bomb in front of his house was that this dangerous element, which has been making so much headway in the country, was well aware that the Attorney General has been using every possible means to gather evidence, and was making steps to destroy the anarchistic movement.

After the Attorney General collected an immense amount of information concerning anarchism and communism he became convinced that the best method of reaching this dangerous class, and stamping out the growing anarchy in America, was by arresting and deporting the alien portion of the various

organizations and groups. As 90 percent of those engaged in the anarchistic movement were foreigners, the Attorney General saw that the deportation of these persons would practically put an end to the nefarious work that was making such headway.

The Department of Labor Has Final Decision.

Before proceeding to round up this large body of alien Reds, the Department of Justice took up with the Department of Labor the subject of deportation, as under the law the Department of Labor has absolute control of the deportation of undesirable aliens. The Department of Labor was shown a summary of the evidence, and agreed to the conclusion of the Department of Justice that membership in the Communist Party, and other organizations which advocated the overthrow of the government, justified deportation under the law. Meanwhile, the Department of Justice had its nets spread, and the wholesale arrests followed.

It is not necessary of the deportation movement as regards undesirable aliens to originate with the Department of Justice. Any chief of police, or any other official — or any private individual, for that matter — can present to the Department of Labor information regarding anarchists, and request that they be deported under the Law of October 16, 1918. It is within the discretion of the Secretary of Labor, who acts through the Commissioner General of Immigration, to decide whether the facts presented warrant deportation under the law. The decision as to deportation is finally made by the Secretary of Labor. In the case of the recent roundup of "Reds" and their deportation, it so happened that the Department of Justice had the money and a large trained force of secret service men who were able to get the information and make the arrests. And whenever the proof was satisfactory to the Department of Labor deportations were made.

What if European Governments Refuse to Take Back "Reds"?

The deportation of the aliens who have been or shall be arrested will be ordered upon the conclusive

proof furnished by the Department of Justice that such aliens come within the prescription. The officials of the Department of Justice are in no way concerned over the report that the foreign countries will refuse to receive these aliens. Under international law a government is obliged to take back its own nationals when deported by another country.

In the case of Russia, for which a large number of the anarchists are bound, there is some doubt. The Soviet government and Lenin and Trotsky have not been recognized by this country. We have no diplomatic relations with Russia now. The Ambassador to Russia, the Hon. David R. Francis, is at present in this country. He was authorized to recognize the Kerensky government; but that was speedily overthrown by the Bolsheviki, and so far as there is government in Russia at this time, Lenin and Trotsky are at the head of it. Having no diplomatic relations with the Soviet government of Russia, the United States is not in a position to carry on negotiations for the return of the Russian "Reds." But they will be left upon Russian soil without regard to whether or not they are acceptable to those who are in charge of Russian affairs.

Officials of the Department of Labor, under whose direction the *Buford* sailed for Europe, are absolutely confident that her passengers will be landed, and probably on Russian soil. As this is written the *Buford* is still on the seas; but before these pages are published she will have reached her destination, and the result of the deportation of her passengers will probably have been determined. Meanwhile, so confident are the labor officials that the anarchists of Russian nationality can be landed in Russia that preparations are going on for the deportation of others who were recently arrested, and who in the opinion of the Department of Labor officials are subject to deportation under the law.

As to the anarchists who are citizens of other countries, no doubt is entertained that such governments will receive them without question, as it is a well-established principle that no country must continue to harbor a citizen of another country who has been declared undesirable and ineligible for residence.

The American Element.

Of the arrested and suspected anarchists and

communists, 9 out of every 10 are foreigners. They come from different parts of Europe — a large proportion coming from Russia, however; and some of them have spent many years in the United States. Of the American element, it is said that as a class they are less bloodthirsty and less given to violence than the foreigners. Many of them border on the verge of insanity; many others are women with minds gone slightly awry, morbid, restless, and seeking the sensational, craving for something, they know not what.

Then there is among the Americas a percentage of what is known as the "Parlor Bolshevists," a group of people of the better class who gather to discuss wild theories, each trying to be more radical in thought and word than the other, but who carefully refrain from direct acts of sedition, although they give money and encouragement to the actual anarchists. Left alone, it is not believed that the American element would become very dangerous; but in many cases Americans lend a certain respectability to the movement, by reason of their position or standing in the country.

The foreign element, on the other hand, is absolutely destructive, very aggressive and determined, and constitutes a large proportion of the anarchists. This element is deemed by the Department of Justice to be very dangerous, and it must be handled vigorously if the spread of communism and anarchism is to be checked. The all-prevailing and governing idea of the foreign element is to obtain control of the people, overthrow governments, and set up their own oligarchies in dictatorship. Underlying this idea, and the main inspiration of the anarchists, is the desire to obtain the property of others or destroy it.

Operations of the Foreign Element.

The anarchists and communists operating in America have been most successful among the vicious and ignorant classes. This is entirely natural, because the idea of getting hold of other people's property has a special appeal to the criminal, while to the ignorant the prospect of sharing equally in the riches and ease of the world without effort is very enticing. Particularly among the negroes of Southern states has there been an active propaganda, and to that end a large quantity of anarchistic literature has been distributed.

So serious does the Department of Justice re-

gard the situation that its activities will not be diminished, but rather continued with the utmost vigor and determination, to demonstrate that the government of the United States is not without means and power to protect itself. But while the officials of the Department of Justice are enlisting every faculty and using every means to suppress the spread of anarchy in this country, they realize that the people themselves must be aroused to the danger before success shall finally crown their efforts.

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2006. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.