

The Reds in the United States

FACTIONAL ROWS KEPT RADICALS FROM UNITED ACTION IN BIG STRIKES

Moscow's Efforts to Harmonize Elements Failed Completely—I. W. W. Resented Proposal of Absorption by Workers Party—Threats of Discipline—Bitter Controversies Over Policies.

EIGHTH ARTICLE.

FACTIONAL differences and Communist politics prevented a united front of the revolutionists in this country during the recent coal and railroad shopmen's strikes. Bitter controversies over policies and methods were raging at the time the labor disputes reached the climax. These internal rows made solidarity impossible.

The I. W. W. at the one extreme and the Parlor Radicals at the other were breaking away. The Goldman and Berkman Reds had folded their tents and left the Communist group. All efforts from Moscow to heal the differences and bring about harmony for one grand drive against the capitalists and the capitalist Government met with failure. I. W. W. leaders resented the suggestion from Soviet Russia that they sink their identity and let the Workers party of America absorb them. The situation for the radicals became worse, and the prospects of the long sought "solid front" were dark.

Open Letter Reveals Attempts to Harmonize Red Factions

An open letter sent to every minority member of the Workers' Party of America reveals attempts to bring the factions together:

"Dear Comrade—The acceptance of the decisions of the Communist Internationale is binding upon every unit of the party. This means that the party units have no power to keep out any of the minority members that desire to return. They MUST accept without discrimination all old members, groups and branches that are ready to place themselves in good standing. "If you place yourself in good standing within sixty days from the time that the decision of the Communist Internationale was transmitted to the groups of the central executive committee, that is, before June 25, you will be able to participate in the election of delegates to the coming party convention.

Enforcement of Discipline.

"We urge you not to wait till this time limit expires, but to act at once. There is nothing more to wait for. The Communist Internationale has made its final decision. It has set the time limit for exercise of revolutionary discipline.

"Comrade, you know that the fight against the Communist Internationale is to-day more than ever a crime against the proletarian revolution. Not one of you wants to strengthen the counter-revolutionist and the Bourgeois reactionaries that are trying to undermine Soviet Russia. Yet that is in effect what it means to oppose the decision of the Communist Internationale.

"In accord with the decision of the Communist Internationale we shall let the dead past bury the dead. We invite you to face with us the issues of to-day and the unsolved future.

"Secretary CEC, CFA Section of the C. P. "May 18 "One for each group."

Labor Political Party.

Agents of the Government at Chicago reported that at a meeting of the executive committee of the Communist Party of America the question of the formation of a new labor political party was discussed and resulted in a division of opinion.

Members of the central executive committee of the Communist Party of America presented a demand to the Communist Internationale that the carrying out of the present plans to organize a labor political party be stopped until the final decision upon the question shall have been rendered by the executive committee of the Communist Internationale. Copies of this demand were sent to the C. E. C., which refused to comply with it.

About this time Max Bedacht, alias Marshal, arrived in the United States and reported to the C. E. C. of the C. P. A. that he had specific instructions from Nicholas Lenine and Chairman of the Communist Internationale to the effect that the Communist Party of America must immediately organize and launch a labor political party.

Plan of Organization Presented.

Marshal further reported that if the C. E. C. of the C. P. A. did not act at once in compliance with this demand, he, Marshal, was authorized to go after the membership of the Communist party for the purpose of getting a party congress to decide the issue, but if the Central Executive Committee immediately carried out the instructions no party congress was necessary. Marshal presented to the Central Executive Committee a plan for the organization of the labor political party, endorsed by Nicholas Lenine.

There was halting as well as back pulling all along the line. A bulletin signed by Mike Novak, "chairman," Chicago, said that owing to the lack of solidarity a committee should be formed in Chicago to be known as the "Temporary Committee for Working Class Unity" to urge all class conscious workers desirous of uniting the independent unions outside of the American Federation of Labor to get together.

Text of the Bulletin.

The bulletin said: "None but real class conscious workers who are willing to work should be enrolled, for this is not a national committee seeking membership, but of workers who will actually support what they believe in. Our own speakers will be available for lectures dealing with our objects. "Every local committee will gather writers who will be able to deal with the sectarian and sectionalists in the working class movement of America. They will see to it that nothing but

urge that you do all within your power to induce the British workers to refuse to handle coal for the United States.

Hail to the international solidarity of the workers. "Central Executive Committee, Workers Party of America. "C. E. RUTHENBERG, "Executive Secretary."

Proclamation of the Party.

A proclamation of the Workers Party distributed throughout the United States reads: "At Herrin, Illinois, striking miners have been engaged in an armed struggle with the gunman and scabs in the employ of the bosses.

"This breaking out of the class struggle into open force has given the capitalist newspapers the opportunity to pour forth their wrath upon the heads of the miners. With one voice these lying tools of the bosses are denouncing the miners and their union.

"The bosses see in this armed defense of the miners against the armed attack of the gunmen of the employer the opportunity to break the strike. They hope to use the fact that blood has been shed and scabs and gunmen have lost their lives to create that sentiment among the people of the country which will enable them to throw all their forces against the miners.

Must Build United Front.

"Workers of the United States: The Workers Party of America calls upon you to unite for the struggle against the bosses. The armed struggle at Herrin shows how bitter the struggle against the capitalist drive to reduce wages and smash the unions is growing. To win in that struggle we must build a united front of labor.

"The miners must be supported by the whole working class by all the power the working class can muster. "Workers! Rally to the support of the miners!

"BUILD DOWN THE CAPITALIST ATTACK. "BUILD THE UNITED FRONT OF LABOR."

Classes Are Compared.

The following circular letter was distributed generally in Kansas City and other Western cities in April and May:

"Working men and women everywhere, you see the capitalist class standing as one man, while the working class is divided and seemingly powerless to protect itself. The capitalist class is drunk with its success against the steel workers and its more recent success against the packing house workers, whom it has forced back into conditions worse than chattel slavery, and also it has now forced the coal miners to strike in the face of a critical situation by refusing to deal with their union. Only by solidarity of the entire working class can we hope to cope with the situation. Let our slogan henceforth be 'UNITY.' In unity there is strength. "You are hereby extended an invitation to send three delegates to a joint conference to be held April 17 for the purpose of drawing up plans for a giant mass meeting.

United Toilers' Bulletin.

The United Toilers of America, a Communist organization, about the 10th of July issued this railroad strike bulletin in the form of a leaflet:

"To THE STRIKERS: "Do not let any one tell you that it is a crime to strike against the decisions of the United Labor Board. "Harding's proclamation means nothing except that the Government is to officially protect scabs. "It is in the scab business, but you can stay on strike, and induce others to strike by any lawful means within your power."

C. E. Ruthenberg issued this bulletin in July and it was accepted as a general proclamation to all striking bodies to unite and force the Government to keep hands off.

Call for Mass Demonstrations.

It is a call to oppose the Government, if not actually by force, at least by the evidence of power in "mass" demonstrations and parades. It reads: "Workers: The Government has played the game of the bosses in every recent strike. When the bosses are in danger of being beaten it steps in with its injunctions, courts and soldiers—to break the strike, to beat the workers into submission.

Demand for Free Hand.

"WORKERS: You must use your strength to keep the Government from breaking the strike of the miners, the textile workers and the railroad shopmen through use of force—through injunctions and court action backed by soldiers.

"DEMAND THAT THE GOVERNMENT KEEP ITS HANDS OFF. BACK YOUR DEMAND WITH A MASS DEMONSTRATION OF YOUR STRENGTH."

"WORKERS: WE MUST FIGHT IF THE BOSSES ARE NOT TO GRIND OUR FACES INTO DIRT. WE MUST FIGHT BACK WITH ALL OUR POWER IF OUR WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS ARE NOT TO BE MADE WORSE THAN EVER."

The manifesto was signed by Ruthenberg for the Workers Party.

British Workers Condemned.

The Workers Party of America issued the following press statement in Chicago during the coal strike:

"We condemn British workers for becoming more active while Americans are striking. Operators will not meet United Mine Workers until thousands of tons of coal now in storage are consumed. The price of coal has begun to climb and will continue skyward as the press reminds the public of the coal shortage.

"In the Coalville region a series of monster mass meetings have been

held for the purpose of organizing non-union miners and so great was the response that local authorities were afraid to interfere with these general strikes toward unionism.

The radical press of the country, edited by strong men of the movement, generally approved or sympathized with the massacre of workmen at Herrin, Illinois.

Defense of Massacre.

The Workers Challenge, organ of the Minority of the Communist Party of America and of the Toilers of America, wrote a vigorous editorial on the Herrin tragedy.

"Mad with blood lust," it declares, "the insatiable jackal pack of capitalist hounds for the lives of the men of Herrin who had the courage to defend themselves against an invading horde of hired degenerates who had terrorized the whole community with their vile insults hurled at the wives and daughters of the miners and who had assaulted citizens of the entire country, finally resorting to deliberate murder of two unarmed miners.

"The National Coal Association, Illinois Industrial Council and other agencies of predatory capitalism, ably supported by the anvil chorus of pen prostitutes on the capitalist press, demand death for the union miners of Herrin.

"The working class of the nation is watching Herrin and will see that the miners are defended in any assault made against them by any minions of capitalism who may attempt to legally lynch them. They fought a worthy struggle and were victorious, and we glory in their victory."

Revolutionary Press's Advice.

The Vltina, a Lithuanian Communist semi-weekly of Chicago, in its issue of July 4, referring to the Workers Party proclamation on the Herrin outbreak, said:

"The Workers Party appeals to all the proletariat of the country to hasten to the miners' help. It warns the wage slave against believing what the capitalist press has to say on that account, advising them to read their own revolutionary press and take the

Herrin Stands as Warning.

The Labor Herald, official organ of the Trade Union Educational League, Chicago, for August says:

"Herrin stands as a warning to the predatory capitalists that the use of private armed force is not entirely a one sided game; it is a warning to the Government that it cannot continue to wink at murders committed by detectives in order to break strikes."

The Freiheit of July 28, daily organ of the Jewish Federation of the Work-

ers' Party of America, of New York, justifies the Herrin massacre in the following editorial:

"Five thousand miners plunged into the battle against strike breakers. This happened in southern Illinois, in the mountainous district between the towns of Marion and Herrin. They have armed themselves—some with iron bludgeons, others with rifles, still others with guns. Some have seized weapons from the shopkeepers of the neighboring villages.

"The strikers besieged the mine where 100 strike breakers were working. A war ensued, the miners triumphed and now the mine is not working. There were a few wounded and dead left on the spot after the battle. Now the strikers maintain a guard around the mine to preserve order.

"The situation is critical. The wealthiest capitalist country in the world in which labor fares somewhat better than in Europe, at least, is prostrated by industrial paralysis. The striking and the unemployed masses stand like a phantom before the smug and contented rich. The ruthless exploitation of labor by the greedy rich has tried the patience of millions of workers.

"The plutocrats cater but to an insignificant minority; with the help of bullets they are trying to liquidate the class war; whereas the toiler bears the brunt. The plutocrat shows him with lead. The public is swinging to the left. Look in the direction of Herrin and West Virginia. The march of the class war is growing in dimension and intensity."

Vital Right Involved.

"The bourgeois press will sound an alarm. It will accuse the workers of criminal acts and shout venom at them. The fact is that in this case the workers were protecting their rights to strike and to fight out their battles with capital.

"The vital right of the miners was infringed upon. Nothing was able to stop them—even sacrifices. Like a violent torrent they swept the obstacles from the road and intimidated both the scabs and their protectors.

"Upon grasping their class interests in a broader and historical sense they will not hesitate to start the great historical struggle against the entire capitalist system."

[Tomorrow's article in this series deals with the opportunism of the Reds in seizing chances to spread the communist doctrine, create discontent and foment a revolution against the United States Government.]

MAY START THIRD PARTY AT CLEVELAND PARLEY

Delegates Seem Disposed to Favor Movement.

CLEVELAND, Dec. 10 (Associated Press).—Nationally known labor, radical, Farmer-Labor, Socialist and Non-

partisan League leaders were arriving here to-night for the opening to-morrow morning of a two day session of the second conference for progressive political action, at which labor and the farmers will map out future political action.

A meeting of the executive committee of the conference was held here this afternoon at which the procedure for the conference was decided. William H. Johnston, president of the International Machine Union and president of the conference, announced at the close of the session that it had been decided among the leaders to take no action relative to the formation of a third party at this time. Delegates among the rank and file arriving to-night, however, seemed disposed to favor a third party movement and it was predicted that the discussion of this subject might be one of the features of the conference.

President Johnston declared that the main purpose of the meeting "was to set up active organizations in all States for the participation by progressive voters in primaries."

DEBATE ON CAPITALISM PROVES LIVELY CLASH

Charge of Prejudice Prevents Vote by Audience.

A large audience heard Herbert Adams Gibbons, historian and war correspondent, and Scott Nearing, formerly assistant professor of economics at the University of Pennsylvania, debate the question, "Can Every Man Earn a Living Under Capitalism," at the Brooklyn Academy of Music yesterday afternoon, the former taking the affirmative.

"I don't think that either has proved his case," remarked Don C. Seltz, the referee.

Upon motion of Harry Cooper, president of the Brooklyn Philosophical Society, the audience refrained from selecting a winner.

Mr. Gibbons contended that the people of the world were never better off than now and that opportunity never before was so great. This is due to the capitalist regime, he argued.

Mr. Nearing defined "earning a living" as the "opportunity to earn an amount which is adequate to maintain physical health and social decency." "I could easily demonstrate to you," he said, "that there are people in America who are not earning a living."

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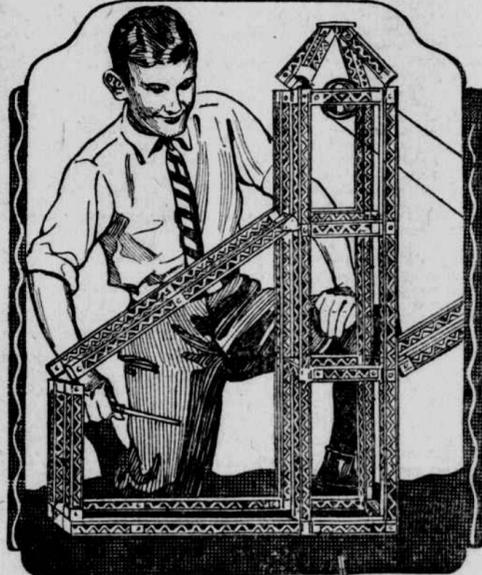
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