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# The Capitalists Challenge You, Workingmen!

## Proclamation of the Communist Party of America. [Leaflet of Oct. 1919]

Copy in Comintern Archive, RGASPI f. 515, op. 1, d. 101, l. 14.  
Alternate specimen in DoJ/BoI Investigative Files, NARA M-1085, reel 926.  
According to archival documents, 100,000 copies were printed.

Martial law has been declared in Gary, Indiana!

Soldiers of the regular army, soldiers who have seen service overseas, who have waded through the blood of their fellows on the battlefields of Europe, as the capitalist press is gloatingly declaring, are now in control.

The army of occupation entered Gary fully equipped. Automatic rifles, hand grenades, machine guns, and heavier cannon, cannon that can clear two miles of a city street in a few minutes, as the officer in charge said — these are ready for use in Gary. And the soldiers wear trench helmets made by the workers of Gary!

Why are these soldiers there, workingmen of the United States? What has happened in the City of Steel that requires this murderous equipment for the destruction of human lives?

The workingmen of Gary are engaged in a struggle against the capitalists. They have suffered long. Low wages, long hours of exhausting work in the heat of the steel ovens, life-sapping toil with no time for home life, this has been their lot.

At last they revolted. Risking suffering and hunger, risking the assault of the brutal bullies of the Steel Trust, who do not stop even at murder, they resorted to the strike to make their masters lighten the conditions of their toil. They organized their power and united dared to challenge

to a test of strength the industrial octopus which dominates the steel industry.

Gary is the City of Steel. It was built by the order of the Steel Trust. The influence and control of the Steel Trust extends to every nook and corner of the life of the city. Its spies are everywhere. The local government is its tool and expresses its will. This Steel Trust municipal government forbade the workingmen to show their solidarity by parades or public meetings. It hoped by keeping the workers apart to break their spirit, to give encouragement to the few scabs who were working.

For two weeks the workers submitted. They permitted the Steel Trust government to trample underfoot the democratic rights which they had been so often assured were the heritage of the people of this country. They let the industrial masters demonstrate clearly that not “democracy” but iron-fisted autocracy was, for the workers, the aftermath of the war.

Then these workers broke into spontaneous protest. The mayor, the Steel Trust tool, had forbidden them to meet in public. He had forbidden them to parade through the streets. **But they would meet and would parade.**

They formed in line with 500 uniformed men, strikers all, at the head of the line and marched through the heart of the city.

This mass action of the workers won. Their

mass power conquered. The orders of the mayor became mere rags of paper. Ten thousand workers marched through the heart of the city and in place of upholding the orders of the mayor, the militia and police cleared the way for the strikers — became their servants because they were showing their power.

But capitalism was not done. The Steel Trust does not only have at its beck and call the power of the local government, but the national government, the State, is equally its servants. The workers had won the first skirmish through their mass power. They must be taught a lesson. They must be cowed and thrown back into their former position of abject slaves.

The orders went forth. Soon the long line of truckloads of regular soldiers were on the way to Gary. The men who the workers had been told a short year ago were fighting their battle for democracy upon the bloodstained fields of Europe, and whom they had been urged to support by giving the last of their strength to the work of production, these men were coming to teach them “democracy.” And with them came their instruments of murder, their automatic rifles, their machine guns, the cannon that could clear a street two miles long in a few minutes, and the helmets that the workers of Gary had produced. Gary was to be shown how the Tsar and Kaiser treated rebellious workingmen.

The National Government, the Capitalist State, had stepped in. The Steel Trust was in danger of being beaten. It might have to submit before the power of the workers. To save itself it brought into the field the instrument forged by the capitalists to uphold their system of exploitation and oppression, the State, which in spite of all its

democratic pretensions is but the physical expression of the Dictatorship of the Capitalist Class.

**WORKINGMEN OF THE UNITED STATES, THE CAPITALISTS ARE CHALLENGING YOU!**

They are demonstrating before your very eyes that the governmental power is theirs, for use against you when you dare strike against the enslavement which they force upon you.

The homes of the workingmen of Gary are being raided, their meetings forbidden, their literature confiscated by the military regime which controls Gary. Martial law is supreme. The instruments to destroy the lives of the workers are ready.

Are you, workingmen of this country, going to submit meekly to the use of military invasion and force to break your strikes? Shall the iron heel rule unchallenged?

This is the hour to rouse the workers.

**GATHER IN GREAT MASS MEETINGS. BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE UNENLIGHTENED WORKERS THE MEANING OF MARTIAL LAW AT GARY. SHOW THEM THAT IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO STRIKE AGAINST LOW WAGES AND BAD WORKING CONDITIONS BUT THAT THE STRIKE MUST BE DIRECTED AGAINST CAPITALISM.**

**THE WORKERS MUST CAPTURE THE POWER OF THE STATE. THEY MUST WREST FROM THE CAPITALISTS THE MEANS, THROUGH WHICH THE CAPITALISTS' RULE IS MAINTAINED.**

**The answer to the Dictatorship of the Capitalists is the Dictatorship of the Workers.**

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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