
Fighting the American Bolsheviki

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During the war there arose in this country a cheap imitation of the Black Hundred that disgraced Russia during the regime of the tsar.

This organization, calling itself the American Protective League, trampled upon all the dear-bought rights which the American people thought secured to them by the constitution.

Because they were given some sort of semi-official recognition, the members of this organization considered themselves little tsars and kaisers who might do whatever they pleased with ordinary persons.

They abridged the right of free assemblage by interference with public meetings.

They arrested hundreds of persons without warrant and without any charges, merely because it suited their whim of the moment.

The Cleveland division of this organization brutally pushed and mauled men, women, and children at a big meeting at Gray's Armory, at which the affairs of Russia were being discussed.

In another instance they carted 200 Socialists to prison for no other reason than that they were present to hear a speech by Eugene V. Debs.

It was a great sport for this organization to establish a dead line in the downtown section of the city and to throw into the filthy hole called the local prison every young man caught within the district who did not happen to have his [draft] registration card in his pocket.

The American Protective League as it manifested itself in Cleveland, was everything un-American — if Americanism is written in the Declaration of Independence and the constitution. It was an organization of men whose heads had swelled because of the power they were permitted to usurp because of wartime ter-

rorism and who set themselves up as petty despots to rule the actions of ordinary people.

By the direction of Attorney General [Thomas Watt] Gregory this organization was dissolved on Feb. 1 [1919]. Probably Mr. Gregory knew that it had earned the lasting hatred of most people through its brutal, despotic methods and that it would be best to get rid of it through dissolution.

But petty despots do not give up their power easily. Once having experience the sensation of riding roughshod over the rights of other individuals, brutally mauling and beating them and throwing them into prison when the spirit moved them to such action, the desire is strong to continue their power.

The Cleveland branch of the organization has found the excuse for an attempted continuance of its tyranny in the need it has discovered for a fight against what it calls Bolshevism.

The Successor of the American Protective League.

Its new name is to be the Loyal American League. Under this name it has issued a lurid appeal to all members of the defunct American Protective League to please join the new organization and make a liberal contribution for the fight against "socialism, anarchy and bolshevism."

Its circular is worthy of examination. It sets forth what "Loyal Americans" have set out to fight — what they mean by "socialism, anarchy and bolshevism." It will open the eyes of some working men to what their masters are really fighting against when they paint their "awful" pictures of bolshevism.

The circular begins with an admission that we are rapidly approaching a crisis in this country. Here are the first two paragraphs:

"Very rapidly we are approaching a grave crisis in the affairs of the American Commonwealth. The hearthstones of the nation are in danger. If the working class once loses its head and takes into its system the poisons that has wrecked and ruined all Russia, all kinds of evil things will happen here, on the Russian plan.

"Our one hope is that the restless elements of American life can be enlightened to the evils of socialism, anarchy and bolshevism, and persuaded to keep sane and peaceful while the great

industrial problems now worrying the whole nation can be worked out by competent minds.”

Translated into plain English these two paragraphs say that the American workers have caught some of the spirit of the Russian workers, who are abolishing all oppression and exploitation; unless we can poison their minds against Russia through misrepresentation and lies and force them to remain meek and patient while the opportunity to earn a living is denied them because there are no jobs, they may follow the example of the Russian workers and take the matter of solving the industrial problem in their own hands.

What is Meant by Bolshevism.

But the most interesting part of the circular follows. It describes what the “Loyal Americans” call “socialism, anarchy and bolshevism.” We quote again:

“The Bolsheviks now are putting forth well-organized, widespread and most vigorous efforts to persuade the real workmen of America to adopt the policy of Lenin and Trotsky, to seize all public utilities, to fully maintain or increase war wages, to reduce working hours, to increase employers’ liabilities, and to force the employment of labor on public works. All this is not new to those who read the newspapers carefully.”

There is the whole story. “The hearthstones of the nation are in danger” because working men dare ask that wartime wages be maintained *as wartime prices are being maintained*; they are to be fought by the “Loyal Americans” because they dare ask for reduction of their hours of labor; because they dare demand that employment on public works be provided for those whom the broken down capitalist system cannot give work, they are everything that is evil.

What do you think of this Loyal American League, working man? This league that is branding you as an anarchist and destroyer of the hearthstones of the nation, and, as the circular continues, “wreckers of nations,” “pillagers of cities,” “destroyers of homes,” “murderers of innocent people,” because you dare de-

mand wages that will buy food, clothing, and a place to live in and dar say that you have a right to earn a living and if the capitalists — the men of “superior brains,” as they think — cannot give you that opportunity, it is time that they stepped aside and permitted the industries to be organized on a new basis!

Threaten Deportation.

If you believe in better wages, shorter hours, and the right to work for those who can only earn a living through working and happen not to be a citizen of the United States, you are a “traitorous alien and anarchist alien” and the “Loyal Americans” threaten you with deportation, for the circular continues:

“Do you want the traitorous alien and anarchist alien deported? *We are going to help do it!*”

What is you answer, working men of the United States? Your enemy is organizing. If you demand better wages, shorter hours, and the right to work you are to be branded as an enemy to the nation and if you happen to be an alien, deported. The capitalists are organizing to protect their right to rob you and oppress you and to create ten thousand more millionaires and to add to the wealth of those who already own millions.

Are you going to submit to be thus branded? Are you going to submit to have your rights trampled upon?

There is but one answer you can make if you intend to resist the efforts of these oppressors of the workers and that is organization. Answer the organization of the Loyal American League, the Black Hundred of capitalism, by organizing in your shop or factory, organize in the industry in which you work and organize by joining the workers already organized in the Socialist Party.

You have power — more power than the capitalist if it is organized. The capitalists say that if you demand better wages, shorter hours, and the right to work you are disloyal and a traitor and if you are an alien you ought to be deported. Answer them by organizing your power and sweeping them into oblivion.

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