

Who Is Behind the Passaic Strike?

By JAY LOVESTONE.

UNFORTUNATELY for the American working class in particular, and the international working class in general, the Communist movement in the United States is still weak. Communism is still unpopular among the great mass of American proletarians. Worse than that. Our class is still on the whole so backward politically that the employing class, the exploiting clique, is able to paint, in the eyes of millions of workers, Communism, the most constructive force in the whole American labor movement today, as a sort of bugaboo, as a sort of a devastating plague. This is a very painful situation for the working class of this country.

Particularly when great numbers of workers are involved in a struggle against the capitalists do the bourgeoisie and their well-paid agents try to raise all sorts of smoke screens and red scares to hide the real issues of the raging class conflicts.

Communism and the Strike.

Senator Edge of New Jersey, who is serving the same interests as Colonel Johnson, hired outright by the textile barons, is yelling Communism in order to give the impression that the Passaic strikers count among the demands for which they are fighting, the setting up of a proletarian dictatorship of Soviets in Passaic. The fact of the matter is that these workers are fighting for the most elementary, the most basic social and economic rights necessary for them to live in a manner approaching even half decency, let alone their achievement of the much-vaunted American

standard of living.

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WHAT do we find? We find that Rabbi Wise, who on more than one occasion during the last national convention of the democratic party invoked the help of his own mighty Lord to bring light to the groping delegates, is condemning the attitude of the textile barons in this strike. We find that Frank P. Walsh, one of the best known democrats of this county, chairman of the war labor board, and the most outstanding figure in the movement to make Al Smith president of the United States, has declared and shown his readiness to present the demands of the textile strikers and defend their interests before congress. We find that Senator LaFollette, who has shown increasing signs of making peace with the standpat republican machine dominated by Mellon, is the one to introduce a resolution in the United States senate for an investigation of the textile strike. Senator Borah, who is a member in good standing of the party of Coolidge and Kellogg, is lending a sympathetic ear to the demands of the sixteen thousand striking textile workers for the establishment of decent conditions of life and employment. Why, even the Honorable Victor Berger—the gentleman from Wisconsin—has introduced a resolution for an investigation of the textile strike situation. Than Victor Berger there is no more “audacious” and embittered enemy of the Communist movement here, there, and everywhere!

No one will believe that the American capitalists are color-blind. One might as well be asked to believe

(Continued on page 2)

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(Continued from Page 1)

that Wall Street is dollar blind. Our exploiters and their intellectual defenders know very well that the Wises and Walshes, the LaFollettes and the Borahs, some of the gentlemen of the New York press and others of the same political stripe are anything and everything but Reds, Communists, Bolsheviks. They are plain conservatives who realize the dangers that a situation like the one which has developed in Passaic breeds for the sanctity and security of the present system and the foundations of the institutions of private property.

What Do the Communists Want?

WHAT interests have the Communists in the Passaic strike? We have no other interests than those of the workers. But we must confess that the behavior of such gentlemen as Mgr. Kernan, Senator Edge, the multi-millionaire secretary of labor, Mr. Davis, Colonel Johnson, the rulers of the barony of Passaic and its environs, is such as to afford six-cylinder proof of the correctness of the underlying Communist contention that the government is a strikebreaker. We have long ago said that the capitalist state—inclusive of the church, as an institution, the press, as an institution (of course, to the extent that there are exceptions here and there, these exceptions only prove the truth of the general contention), the police, the government officials, are all part and parcel of a gigantic strikeberaking machine.

Are the Communists active in this strike?

Yes! It is our business to be active in all struggles of the workers because we have no interests other than those of the workers. It is our duty, as the advanced section of the working class in America, not only to be active but also to inspire and lead workers to struggle against wage slavery, in all its despicable, deplorable and degrading manifestations.

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Why There Is a Strike.

THE Passaic strike is not a strike for Communism. The Passaic strike is a strike for the most elementary rights which were supposed to have been won decades ago by the American workers. Passaic is simply the scene of capitalist Americanism run amuck. The American workers are not yet ready, are not sufficiently developed politically to strike for direct, broad, class demands. The Communists are realists. The Communists are Leninists. The Communists are revolutionists to the core. As such the Communists know that every time the workers strike for the smallest every-day demands that every time the proletariat fights against its exploiter for even the pettiest advantage and most insignificant rights, these workers are getting a value lesson in the class struggle.

We know that the problem is to set the American workers into mo-

tion, to develop a fighting class spirit amongst them. Every step forward in this direction, objectively develops a next step forward to a broadening, towards a deepening of the demands and the struggles of our workers. The strike is a university for the proletariat. The strike is a dress rehearsal for the bigger fights, for the sharper combats that the American workers will yet have to fight in order to achieve proletarian democracy in the United States.

Colonel Johnson, Senator Edge, His Unholiness Mgr. Kernan, are much more responsible for the textile workers' strike than the Communists are. Unfortunately, the American Communists do not yet have enough influence to call out and have scores of thousands of workers strike at their request. Nor are the Communists abstractionists, hair-splitting visionaries, who talk strike or act strike when there is no objective, no real basis and demand and response to it among the broad masses.

We Communists have not created the strike. But we have likewise not been asleep and have pointed out the lessons of this strike to the thousands of workers. We have done more than that. Communists don't believe in sitting on a sort of proletarian Mount Olympus and handing down a sacred wisdom and undefiled advice to the great masses of the workers. Communists are an integral part of the working class. We don't believe merely in pointing out. We believe in carrying on and carrying out. We propose to do all in our power to help the workers win their demands. Having no interests other than the interests of the workers, the Passaic strike is the affair of the Communists as well as every other worker who believes in fighting against the textile barons and their agents infesting the White House, the senate, the house of representatives, the gubernatorial office of the state of New Jersey, the state legislature, the municipality of Passaic and the St. Nicholas Roman catholic church of Passaic (this is Mgr. Kernan's own little House of the Lord).

THE Passaic strike is a revolt against American capitalism which crushes and degrades millions of the proletariat engaged in the unorganized basic industries of the United States. The Passaic strike comes at a time when American imperialists are waxing fabulously rich thru their domination of the world capital and commodity market. It is the task of the Communists, as of all workers who have the interests of the working class at heart, to leave no blow unstruck, to leave no stone unturned, to leave no duty unfulfilled in order to turn the Passaic strike into a great victory for the thousands of workers who are struggling for the very right to exist, who are fighting against vicious persecution and ruthless exploitation.