
Appeal to American Workers

[May 1921] †

Leaflet of the American Bureau — International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions [Profintern]

Copy in DoJ/BoI Investigative Files, NARA collection M-1085, reel 938.

Workers:

The spectre of starvation haunts the entire world. Victors and vanquished of the late war alike tremble before it. This breakdown of the whole fabric of capitalism is accompanied by a savage drive upon the workers by the massed power of the employing class. The Master Class has declared war on Labor. This war rages in all countries.

White Terror Everywhere.

The white terror slays the Hungarian worker. West Virginia mobs lynch miners who arm themselves in self-defense. Hungarian white terror — West Virginia mobs — what difference? They have a common aim — the violent suppression of labor!

In Spain, the “civil guards” shoot union men on the streets; the militant leaders are held as hostages of the class war. In Italy the hired thugs of the bourgeoisie are burning the workers’ halls, destroying their newspaper plants. The workers are assaulted with violence and murder. In Japan a labor union is a conspiracy.

“White terror” by mobs and hired thugs increases daily in America. But one step further, in Ireland, Hungary, Spain, Finland, India, and Japan — *the white terror is the government itself.*

To Destroy the Labor Unions.

The French government has ordered the dissolution of the General Confederation of Labor. In America, the campaign for the *open shop* — the destruction of organized labor — marches across the land with its accompanying army of thugs, strikebreakers, and spies. The Clayton Act, proclaimed by Gompers as labor’s “Magna Charta,” in the hands of the Supreme Court becomes labor’s “Waterloo.” The same forces attack the worker in France as in America.

Millions of Unemployed.

In America 4 million unemployed walk the streets. Millions more have had their wages cut and have been forced to accept part-time work. These are the same millions who, only a few month ago, were urged to “increase production” — these are the same millions who are ordered to “work or fight.” *We produced.* And now the capitalists claim they cannot find a “profitable” market for the goods we produced.

How About Trade With Russia?

There is a market for our products. Soviet Russia wants locomotives, rolling stock, agricultural machinery, electrical supplies, tools of all kinds, clothing,

†- Publication date was derived from the weekly report of Bureau of Investigation Agent J.F. McDevitt for the week ending May 14, 1921 [NARA M-1085, reel 938, file 202600-1617-11, pg. 2], in which he notes that this leaflet “is being placed in mail boxes in different parts of the city [Philadelphia].” He sent several copies of the 4 page leaflet to Washington, at least one of which was filmed up and is the source of the transcription here. According to a document in the Comintern Archives [RGASPI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 50, l. 79], there were 40,000 copies of this leaflet produced.

shoes, medical supplies, etc. But the United States government refuses to recognize and opposes trade relations with Soviet Russia — which would mean work and alleviation of the unemployment crisis.

The US government denies the Russian workers and peasants the tools and clothing they need. The American workers are thus denied the chance to work. *The same force that starves the Russian workers thus starves the American workers.*

Preparing New Wars.

The world imperialists have united to starve Soviet Russia. But even this unholy alliance cannot starve their tottering system. In addition to the industrial depression we are now suffering from, we may be called upon at any time to fight new capitalist wars. The capitalists of England, America, and Japan are disputing the oil fields of the world. The propaganda of race hatred and patriotism is being intensified. Mexico, Siberia, Baku, Mesopotamia are the bones of contention. Japan is casting angry glances at Kamchatka concession to Vanderlip. In short, every capitalist peace treaty is a preparation for new wars.

Our Fight.

The American workers are faced with war on 3 fronts. We must fight the employers to a finish in their Open Shop campaign. We must prevent the cutting of our wages. We must meet the problem of unemployment. To do these things we must have a fighting organization. We cannot meet the Open Shop campaign with a policy of “class-conciliation.” Gompers, Stone, Lewis & Co., who fooled us into making peace *with* the bosses and going to war *for* them, cannot solve these problems for us. These “leaders” have been advising the rank and file to “be good” and they will be rewarded. And now we have our reward! *Reduction of wages, unemployment, the open shop.*

Bosses Powerfully Organized.

Let us compare the organization of the workers with the organization of the bosses. We are divided into craft unions. Our contracts and agreements expire at different times. We have separate organization

machinery, separate treasuries, separate sets of officials. We are divided amongst ourselves. We quarrel over jurisdictional matters, national and color questions. Everywhere in the ranks of labor is confusion, division, and lack of a clear-cut plan of action.

Not so with the bosses. They are united in Chambers of Commerce — Merchants’, Bankers’, and Manufacturers’ Associations — international trusts and syndicates. They have subjected the machinery of government to their class. Internationally, they are united in the “League of Nations.”

Close Your Ranks!

In this emergency all such confusion must cease. We are in the midst of class war. Wars cannot be fought with scattered forces. We must unite our small detachments into one mighty, disciplined army; we must straighten out our skirmish-lines into one great battlefront; we must unite our unions into one General Staff of Labor.

The first duty of every worker is to join the union of his industry. He must see to it that the union is composed of active workers. Only the full participation by the rank and file in the activity and management of the unions can develop the labor organizations into a solidly organized and disciplined army of labor.

War on the Labor Fakers.

New times demand new tactics. We must first of all attain mass unity. Loyalty and devotion to the labor movement does not mean loyalty and devotion to the old bankrupt leadership with its outworn tactics. Mass unity produces mass action. In England, the mass unity achieved through the Triple Alliance of miners, railwaymen, and transport workers was followed by mass action. The example of the English trade unionists points the way to the American workers.

Class War is International.

Capitalism is international. The class war is international. It is not enough to build up a strong, unified labor movement in each country. The experience of the Russian and Hungarian revolutions teaches

us that the working class must unite internationally if it is to fulfill its historic mission. Unless united by a revolutionary international labor movement, the capitalists of the world will use their combined reactionary forces to crush the workers' movement in each country. The labor movements of all countries must unite to wage the class war on an international scale.

The Capitalist International.

The capitalists have their international — the League of Nations — with its international army, navy, and police. Through the League of Nations the Imperialist Powers have divided the world's markets among themselves, and small, weak nationalities are completely at their mercy. The offensive against labor is in full swing in France, Italy, England, Spain, Argentina, Chile, Japan, and America. The League of Nations is the instrument of international reaction to crush the workers' movement everywhere. Only the blind cannot see that the "League of Nations" is the capitalist international.

The Yellow Amsterdam International.

The capitalists have a very powerful auxiliary in the Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions organized as a tail to the kite of the Labor Bureau of the League of Nations. These traitorous leaders, whose hands are stained with the blood of 13 million workers — these betrayers of the working class have organized the "yellow" Amsterdam "International" as a center of world sabotage against Soviet Russia and the awakening workers of Europe and America.

This yellow "international" is organized not to wage class war but to maintain *class peace*. This Amsterdam "international" endorsed and participated in the Washington Conference of the Labor Bureau of the League of Nations. Its representatives to this conference worked hand in hand with the representatives of the employers and agents of the governments.

This yellow Amsterdam "international" is not the workers' organization. The leaders who dominate it are not our representatives. They are the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class." *They are agents of the bourgeoisie in the camp of the workers.* The workers of America must have nothing to do with such leaders

and with such an organization.

The International of Revolutionary Labor Unions.

The rank and file of the trade unions of Europe and America have a deep feeling of class solidarity with Soviet Russia. This was very clearly demonstrated last summer when under the pressure of the toiling masses of France, Italy, England, and Germany, the criminal hand of the imperialist bandits was stayed. On August 13th, 1920, the British workers' "Council of Action," the French, Italian, and German railroad workers and seamen prevented their governments from openly waging war on Soviet Russia, after the heroic Red Army had repelled the Polish mercenaries from its territory.

This shows how much more an organized and disciplined International of revolutionary unions could accomplish.

The Russian trade unions, over 5 million strong, have already taken the initiative together with the representatives of the labor unions of Italy, France, England, Norway, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Georgia. They founded on July 15th, 1920, *the International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions — the Red Labor Union International*.

This vanguard of the revolutionary labor movement began with a membership of over 10 million. The following organizations have joined:

Russian Trade Unions	5,200,000
Italian General Confederation of Labor	2,000,000
Spanish Confederation of Labor	800,000
French Labor Unions of the "Left"	300,000
Italian Syndicalist Unions	300,000
British Shop Stewards & Workers' Comm.	200,000
Norwegian Labor Unions	180,000
Yugoslav Confederation of Labor	160,000
Bulgarian General Workers' Union	120,000
German Syndicalists (<i>Freie Arbeiter</i> Union)	60,000
Georgian "Left" Unions	15,000
Dutch Transport Workers' Federation	<i>unknown</i>
Transport Workers of Dutch East Indies	<i>unknown</i>

The Provisional Council of the International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions has called a World Congress of all revolutionary labor unions to be held at Moscow in May 1921.

This call is addressed to all the revolutionary

workers in the labor movement of Europe and America to rally round the banner of the Red Labor Union International and to send delegates to this forthcoming world congress.

Moscow or Amsterdam?

The class-conscious workers of Europe are answering this call in a most determined and enthusiastic spirit. They are going to Moscow. How about the American workers? Shall we go to Amsterdam, with its Labor Bureau of the League of Nations, with its [Albert] Thomas, its [Leo] Jouhaux, its Gompers, with its international policy of "class cooperation," with its criminal sabotage of Soviet Russia? Or shall we go to Moscow, with the Russian workers and peasants who have shown the world the greatest example of working class solidarity, achievement, and sacrifice; with the revolutionary workers of Hungary, France, Germany, England; with those who have fought for years for the cause of labor?

This question the workers of America must soon answer. Despite Gompers' official withdrawal, he is still part of the Amsterdam International through the Washington Labor Bureau of the League of Nations. A campaign will be started soon for affiliation with this "yellow international." You workers will have to

make a choice. You cannot remain neutral. There can be no neutrality between the workers and the capitalists. You are for the dictatorship of the workers or you are for the dictatorship of the capitalists.

Workers of America! Where do you stand?

If you are with the workers and against the bosses and their agents then you belong in the *International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions*.

The Provisional Council calls upon you to take up the question of affiliation at your union meetings. Discuss it with your mates in the shop. Have your local unions bring pressure upon your national organizations to endorse it. Our aim must be to bring the whole American labor movement into the *International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions*.

**Long live the international solidarity
of the workers of the world!**

**Long live the International Council
of Trade and Industrial Unions!**

**AMERICAN BUREAU,
*International Council
of Trade and Industrial Unions.***

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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