THE CRISIS AND THE WORKERS

By L. C. Fraina.

The world is in crisis. The old society is being shaken to its foundations, proving itself utterly incapable of realizing peace and happiness for the masses of the people. The system of Capitalism, with its oppression of the poor by the rich its despotic control of industry and its enslavement of the workers, is offering the final inescapable proof of its utter incompetence. It is necessary that the proletariat, through revolutionary Socialism, should complete the downfall of Capitalism and organize a new society of peace and plenty for all.

The workers of the United States are in a crisis—a developing industrial crisis that threatens the peace and happiness of our people.

Unemployment is becoming a real danger. The army of the unemployed (which is always large under Capitalism) is being increased by the demobilization of the soldiers and by the reorganization of war industry to a peace basis.

The steady employment during the war was due to three causes: (1) the mobilization of 3,000,000 men for the army and navy, developing a comparative scarcity of workers; (2) the unprecedented orders for munitions placed by the United States government and by the governments of the Allies; and (3) the fact that the larger nations were actively producing death instead of the means of life, allowing the United States to practically usurp a monopoly of the markets of the world. Our capitalists fully exploited this unusual opportunitq; they made more than $5,000,000,000 profits out of the war; what have the workers to show?

But now that the war is ended (except the "small war" against the workers and peasants of Soviet Russia—your comrades) 3,000,000 men demobilized from the armed forces of the nation must again be absorbed in industry. This is in itself an enormous problem. But this problem is complicated by the fact that the United States, is no longer able to monopolize the world's markets, the other nations again resuming production and again competing with American manufacturers. These circumstances produce an industrial crisis in two ways: (1) by displacing workers with demobilized soldiers, and (2) by lessening the world demand upon American production.

The employed are potentially unemployed. Those workers "assured of steady employment" are having wages reduced or threatened with reduction, the employers using the bludgeon of unemployment to compel submission.

The cost of living, instead of declining with the coming peace, as was promised, is actually soaring again; and this makes the crisis all the more acute.

The workers, actually or potentially in this crisis, have answered by means of large strikes. The answer of the employers has been —terrorism: terrorism against strikers and their representatives, the threat and actual use of armed force. This terrorism indicates the tactics Capitalism will use as the crisis develops—crush the workers!

The prospect, acordingly, is a prospect of unemployment, of lower wages, of more intense toil, of a higher cost of living, and of terroism against the workers should they actually move to alter these terrible conditions of misery and oppression.

Capitalism promised a new world from the war. Instead of a new world. Capitalism offers—a new terror and a new oppression.

This crisis and these developments are much more acute in other nations, directly traceable to the war and the economic forces that produced the war.

The ordinary "peaceful" competition for the economic, territorial and financial division of the world developed to a point where military force alone could decide the issue. Imperialism—the financial domination of the world, the struggle for monopolistic control of the investment markets of the world and undeveloped territory—determined the war, and Imperialism determines the peace. The Peace Sonference in Paris is dividing the world territorially, economically and financially among the Five Great Powers.

The League of Nations—a league against the nations and the liberty of the world—is to guarantee the conquests of the Allies and maintain the supremacy of their Imperialism. There can be no peace as long as Imperialism—the cause of modern war—is not crushed by the revolutionary working class.

Imperialism, in one aspect, means the subjugation and oppression of colonial peoples—the "prosperity" of an imperialistic nation comes to depend upon the misery and exploitation of these "undeveloped" peoples. Upon this parasitic foundation depends the "prosperity" of modern Capitialism. But these colonial peoples are already in revolt; and their general revolt will topple over the prosperity of the "great" nations.

The unity of the revolt of the colonial peoples and the revolt of the proletariat means the end of Capitalism and Imperialism and the coming of world Socialism.

The break down of Capitalism provides the opportunityy for the revolt. The war was an admission by Capitalism that it could not solve its economic antagonisms. The war has broken down the industrial system of Europe. The problems of reconstruction and the payment of war debts present an issue that can be solved only by the proletariat either becoming slaves, or overthrowing Capitalism and establishing Socialism. The governments are bankrupt; they are adrift on the tides of crisis, and they cannot actually solve the enormous problems that press down upon them. The crisis will drag along, but Socialism is inevitable, since Socialism alone can reconstrust society, realize work, peace and happiness for the workers of the world.

Reconstruction is the order of the day—in words. The old system has clearly—shown its evils to the masses. The workers have been lured to expect great things of reconstruction from the promises made during the war. But these promises are not being realized. Nor are they realized under Capitalism, where the profits of the Capitalists are more important than the peace and happiness of the masses.

American Capitalism is utterly incompetent on the problems of reconstruction as they concern the masses. Congress is bankrupt. It dodges every real issue. Congress is the organ of Capitalism and must act to promote the interests of Capitalism.

Reconstruction, accordingly, proceeds on the basis of promoting Capitalism, which controls our life. Industry has concentrated to the point where it dominates the whole of society, where a group of industrial concerns and bankers control industry.

But this concentration of industry provides the basis for the socialization of industry—control and management of industry, of the shops, mills and mines, by the workers through their own organizations—industrial democracy.

This does not mean state control or ownership of industry. The capitalist state is the organ of the capitalists, to protect the interests of the capitalists and crush the workers. State control of industry means capitalist control of industry control of the workers by the capitalists and their state. Industrial democracy is realizabl, only by breaking the power of the capitalist state and of the capitalists, ending profits and placing all industry under the control of the workers.

All these problems are determined by the class struggle that rages in capitalist society—where a few capitalists own the industries on which depends the life and happiness of the many. Every act of the state in war and peace, is determined by the class struggle; to promote the supremacy of the capitalist class, against the working class.

This class struggle comes, from

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the fact that the workers, the majority of the people, are denied all control of industry, are an expropriated class. The purpose of the class struggle of the proletariat is to secure control of industry for for workers.

In the shops mills and mines are the workers exploited. They are exploited by not securing the full social value of their labor, by being compelled to work for the profit of the capitalist. This exploitation develops the class struggle, the purpose of which is to socialize industry for the proletariat. This socialization of industry requires the conquest of the power of the state for its realization,—the construction of a new workers' state, or government, which will proceed to socialize industry.

Political democracy is of slight value to the workers. There can be no democracy without industrial democracy—the industrial vote by means of which the workers shall absolutely direct industry for the peace and happiness of the workers.

Revolutionary Socialism proposes a new government, that shall be industrial in character and functions. This government, elected directly by the workers in the factory and the farmers in the village, shall be the directing source of industrial management, depriving the capitalists of power, using industry exclusively for life and not for profit. This is the object—political mass action and proletarian dictatorship the means.