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# The IWW Bogey

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The morning paper I have just read contains an extended press dispatch from Washington, under screaming headlines, making the startling disclosure that a worldwide conspiracy to overthrow the existing social order has been unearthed by the secret service agents of the government. The basis of the conspiracy is reported to have been the discovery of some guns and ammunition in the hold of a Russian freighter just arrived at a Pacific port in charge of a Bolsheviki crew, from which it has been deduced that the guns must have been sent by the Russian revolutionists to the IWW of the United States in pursuance of a conspiracy of the Russian reds, the Sinn Fein leaders of Ireland, and the American IWWs to overthrow all the governments of the civilized world.

This is really too much!

We are not told how the Sinn Feiners happen to get in on this universal conspiracy, but as their name, like that of the Bolsheviki and the IWW, has great potency as a bogey to frighten the feeble-minded, the inventors of this wonderful cock-and-bull story may well be allowed this additional license to their perfervid imagination.

Everything that happens nowadays that the ruling classes do not like and everything that does not happen that they do like is laid at the door of the IWW. Its name is anathema wherever capitalism wields the lash and drains the veins of its exploited victims.

It is a wonderful compliment! Is the working class wise to its significance? Unfortunately not or the leaders and moving spirits of this persecuted industrial organization would not now be in jail waiting month after month to be tried for criminal offenses charged against them which they never dreamed of committing.

I think I may claim to be fairly well informed as to the methods and tactics of the IWW — with some of which I am not in all in agreement — and I have no hesitancy in branding the sweeping criminal charges made against them since the war was declared as ut-

terly false and malicious and without so much as a shadow of foundation in fact.

Repeatedly the sensational charge has been spread broadcast through the capitalist press that the IWW were in conspiracy to blow up the mills and factories in the East, to burn the crops and destroy the orchards in the West, poison the springs and wells in the North, paralyze the cotton and rice industries in the South, and spread ruin and desolation everywhere for the profit and glory of the crazy Teuton Kaiser and his atrocious Junker plunderbund and the overthrow of democracy and freedom in the United States.

Was a more stupendous lie or a more stupid one ever hatched in the human brain?

Look at the IWW and then at the government and the more than 100 million people of the United States! Is the lie not apparent on the very face of this absurd and malicious charge? Would any but an idiot or madman ever dream of the slaughter and destruction of an entire nation by a comparative handful of its population? Would any but a fool be deceived by such glaringly self-evident lies and calumnies?

Oh, the ghastly joke of it all! And the stark tragedy, too, when one thinks of the many simple-minded people whose attitude of fierce hostility toward the IWW and its leaders is determined by these inspired fabrications!

Why should the IWW, organized for the very purpose of destroying despotism and establishing democracy, go across seas to lend its aid to the most brutal autocracy on the face of the earth?

Ah, but the autocracy within our own borders knows how to play upon the prejudice and credulity of the unthinking and turn them against the men who at the peril of their freedom and their very lives are battling for the liberation of the people!

It is from Wall Street, the money center of the American plutocracy, that the campaign of falsehood and slander against the IWW is directed; from there that the orders are issued to raid its national and state offices, jail its leaders, break up its meetings, and tar and feather and lacerate with whips and finally lynch and assassinate its speakers and organizers.

Wall Street mortally fears the IWW and its growing menace to capitalist autocracy and misrule. The very name of the IWW strikes terror to Wall Street's craven soul.

But Wall Street does not fear Sammy Gompers and the AF of L.

Every plutocrat, every profiteering pirate, every food vulture, every exploiter of labor, every robber and oppressor of the poor, every hog under a silk tie, every vampire in human form, will tell you that the AF of L under Gompers is a great and patriotic organization and that the IWW under Haywood is a gang of traitors in the pay of the bloody Kaiser.

Which of these, think you, Mr. Wage-Slave, is your friend and the friend of your class?

It is interesting to note that at the very time the plutocracy and its hirelings are charging the IWW with treason and cramming the jails with its members they are also driving union labor out into the desert to perish under armed vigilantes as at Bisbee and Bingham, while in the same hour their Supreme Court outlaws picketing and legalizes and protects strike-breaking as in the cases of the union miners in West Virginia and the Southwestern states.

There is one thing in this situation that is clear to every union man, to every sympathizer with the working class, and every believer in justice and fair play, and that is that the hundreds of IWWs and Socialists now in jail are entitled to be fairly tried. Upon that question there can be no difference among decent men, whatever may be their attitude toward the union and its principles. The Socialist Party, through its National Executive Committee — to its supreme credit — has taken this position and in a ringing declaration and appeal has expressed its determination that the accused IWW leaders and members shall receive a fair trial and a square deal.

To this end money will be needed, all that can be raised, and as the Captain Kidd Kaiser and his pirate crew of Junkers have not yet come across with that cargo of gold covering the purchase price of the IWW, it becomes the duty of everyone who is with us to forthwith send his contribution to the defense of our shamelessly persecuted comrades.

*This is our fight! We of the working class are all vitally interested in the outcome.*

The war within the war and beyond the war in which the IWW is fighting — the war of the workers of all countries against the exploiters of all countries — is our war, the war of humanity against its oppressors and despoilers, the holiest war ever waged since the race began.

Let there be no mistake. The guerilla warfare of Wall Street is not against the IWW alone but against the labor movement in general

except so far as union labor suffers itself to be emasculated and crawls on its belly at the feet of its despotic masters.

A spineless and apologetic union bearing the official seal of the Civic Federation is the noblest specimen of working class patriotism in the eyes of our Wall Street rulers.

Now is the time to meet the attack; to resist the assault; to turn the guns on the real conspirators. The inevitable reaction will swiftly follow and instead of smashing the revolutionary labor movement this dastardly conspiracy will prove the making of it.

Now is the time for the fighting union men of America to stand together. The situation is the grimmest that ever confronted the working class but every such crisis bears with it the golden opportunity to the workers to strike the decisive blow and to forge ahead to a higher level of life. To take advantage of this supreme opportunity and profit by it to the limit, the workers must be united and act together like a well-disciplined army.

Solidarity must be the watchword!

As we stand upon the threshold of the year 1918 let us resolve to make it the most luminous one in the annals of proletarian achievement.

Industrial unity and political unity the revolutionary solidarity of the working class, will give us the power to conquer capitalism and emancipate the workers of the world.

*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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