

The Spirit of Mass Action

People are acting in masses. They learned mass action during the war and they have been practicing it since the signing of the armistice.

Politicians do not understand mass action; the statesmen of the old order fail to grasp its significance. They are so accustomed to "boss" the masses, that where they encounter the mass in motion they are offended by it. They think and speak of it as though the masses intend a personal affront to them and to the form of government that they represent. The French ruling class felt that way in 1789; the rulers of Russia had the same idea in 1905 and 1917; the rulers of America take such an attitude today.

Mass action is an effort of the people to find salvation. Mass action is a crusade. The crusaders are enthused, inspired, transfigured. They are no longer men. They are the prophetic embodiment of a new world order.

Strange reports come to us of the spirit behind the mass action that is convulsing South America and transforming Europe. In Russia, the masses have made work a national duty and parasitism an offense. An American officer is reported as having praised Clemenceau and the French Government and then added "but when I speak thus to the French soldiers they spit." British troops en masse notified their officers that they would not go to Russia and refused to unmass themselves until they were given assurance that they would not be sent there. Freemen, Canadians, Australians, Japanese, Hungarians, Finns and Germans—all evince the same spirit.

The British workers are crusading. The Belfast strikers and the workers of Glasgow announce publicly that they have no intention of stopping until they have secured possession of the industries—announce this in face of open protests from the old trade union officers and from the government authorities. The New York Times in an editorial denunciation, declares that some of the more respectable of the British trade union leaders have repudiated the rank and file and resigned their positions.

The same spirit of mass action has dominated the clothing strikes in New York and is expressing itself among the workers of Seattle. From Buenos Aires and Montevideo come similar stories of the untutored workers, casting aside his allegiance to trade union organization and to government machinery and announcing that the world must be his.

One French soldier summed up the whole question when he said: "We have fought and bled and died for France. Now that the war is over, France belongs to us."

Politicians, statesmen and the diplomats who speak for the old world cannot fathom mass action. Therefore, they condemn it, oppose it and attempt to crush it. They might as well try to check the ice packs in the June Yukon or the sweep of the trade winds.

The masses are aroused. They have been starved. Their children have died of disease. Their sons have been lost in battle. Their lives have been crippled and broken. All these things have come to them under the reign of capitalist society. The masses have reached the conclusion that capitalist society is a menace to human happiness and well-being. The masses have made up their minds that the capitalist society must go. Experience has made them wise. Misery and suffering has made them bold. The masses have spoken. The crusade has begun! The indomitable, invincible mass crusade, crying its message—"Bread, peace and liberty—capitalism must go!"—SCOTT NEARING.

THE WEEK

(From the New York Nation)

The despatches from Paris furnish strange reading in connection with the news from Germany during the past few days. On the one hand is Germany, moving with a sort of stumbling accuracy along the path laid out by Russia. Hungry, resentful, divided among themselves, the German working people appear to be tending more and more toward actual Bolshevism; Hugo Haase at the conference of the Independent Socialists of Berlin, has said not only that the Soviet form of government must come in Germany, but that "the principles of Bolshevism cannot be suppressed; they are bound to prevail." The assembly at Weimar is practically isolated; the great strikes appear to be spreading over wider areas; the Government, Russian fashion, talks half resistance, half surrender to the new forces and forms of control. The only German innovation is the unofficial suggestion of making the workers' and soldiers' councils an actual legislative arm of the Government. This would seem to promise little more than the facilitation of a probable transfer of power to the new organs of proletarian control. Meanwhile, order has been forgotten; strikes and counter strikes, riots and shooting, and more than all, hunger, seem to be the actual ruling forces in Germany. On the

other hand is France, victorious and vengeful, intent upon its pound of flesh. The French Government cries for reparation, appearing neither to know nor to care that the Allies are rapidly starving Germany into a state where reparation will mean little more than a joke—a grim Russian joke. Germany may not buy bread, say France's rulers; it must save its money to pay the bill that the Allies are rapidly itemizing. But when men are beggared and starving, though they may steal or die, they can be counted upon not to pay their debts. France appears willing to risk crippling itself and all of Europe, providing it may have the privilege of crippling Germany, too, while by acquiescing in this behavior the United States and the members of the Entente shoulder their share of the responsibility for what is bound to come. If the bogey of Bolshevism, feared and yet encouraged by the Allies, stalks across Europe in the dangerous guise of famine, part of the blame at least can be laid to the policy which has been developed at Paris.

From the Rhine to the Yellow River the world is in a state of unrest and revolution. The next step in the German development none can foretell. Russia is a vast experiment station for half a hundred new economic and social undertakings. From the Caucasus and Central Asia we hear reports of violent outbreaks. The Emir of Afghanistan has just been murdered. India, which is kept hidden from our curious gaze by the high defensive wall of a strict censorship, suffers from vast strikes, the first evidence of a concerted nationalistic movement, while China is maintaining a perilous balance between Japanese aggression and revolutionary separatism.

PRESS JOTTINGS

"The Canadian Pacific Railway owns some six million (6,000,000) acres of the finest virgin land in the prairie provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba which it received as a grant for the construction of its trans-continental line. Some three million (3,000,000) acres of this land is in the province of Alberta."—World Wide.

"In order to prevent the disastrous glutting of the labor market, following the industrial demobilization of women workers, General Booth of the Salvation Army, is reported to have induced the authorities to give substantial support to a scheme for the after-war immigration of women to the overseas dominions. To meet the enlarged plans some 72,000 pounds has already been collected. Agents of the Salvation Army Migration Department have been investigating in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa to determine the opportunities for women settlers in those Dominions."—Nation.

"Thirty-five thousand children under five years of age die each year in Canada, in most cases from lack of nourishment and proper housing," was the sweeping statement made by Miss Hughes, superintendent of Child Welfare in Alberta who spoke on this subject. "As our nation's future depends upon its infancy it is the duty of all Canada to educate itself in the care of children."

French labor, whose discontent has been so successfully concealed by the ardent Paris censorship, is answerable for a measure of the haste with which the peace delegates are pressing to a multitude of unstudied conclusions. German events have awakened many reverberations in French cities; in fact, while the Spartacan revolt was at its height it was feared that its triumph might instigate a similar movement in Paris. The collapse of the Liebnicht revolt temporarily heartened the Parliamentary regime in France, but there was renewed fright when the Socialist and Democrats swept the German elections, and the French press was forbidden to report the subsequent British strikes. The one-minute strike on the Paris, Lyons, and Mediterranean railway was a laconic remark by French workers to which the peace delegates have paid anxious heed.

The Russian revolution cannot be crushed; the old order cannot be crushed by bayonets. . . . The Capitalist Press and the Politicians hold up their hands in horror and talk of anarchy. They are the prime makers and fomenters of anarchy because they will not acquiesce in the Revolution, but give aid to the old order which can only prolong its death-agony. . . . In the name of order they are everywhere fomenting disorder and civil war and are preventing Eastern and Middle Europe from settling itself. And for this devil's work we—unless we call a speedy halt to it—must pay in the blood of our men.—English Herald.

"General Otis' command includes small American forces at Harbonovak, which it is said were unwilling to aid the Japanese against the enemy in recent encounters. These Americans are described in local papers as pro-Bolshevists."—Montreal Star.