

The Tide Flows East

From the June "Liberator"

BYRON R. Newton, Collector of the Port of New York, announces that the rush of aliens leaving the United States for Europe has reached an average of 1000 per day. And the capitalist press is manifesting uneasiness. The following from an editorial in the New York "Evening Sun," (italics ours) is only one of the many now being published all over the United States:

"The throngs of aliens bound from this port back to their home countries have for some months surpassed any rate of outward movement of population that the recent records can show. This departure causes concern, partly because of the loss of workers it occasions us and partly because of the misgivings we conceive from such an expression of unwillingness on these people's part to stay here."

In spite of the attempts of the Government agencies to soothe American pride concerning the reasons for the exodus, it is more than a coincidence that this is taking place just when the Government is pressing its campaign to deport all foreign-born workers who dare to be active in labor organizations. This exhibition of Prussian lawlessness on the part of the authorities is the crowning act of the long and bloody history of capitalist exploitation of foreigners here.

One of the principles expressed in the foundation of the American republic was that of "providing an asylum for the oppressed of the earth." Like every other idealistic phrase, this was used by Capitalism to cover a shameless policy of debauching Labor. Under its grandiloquent wording, the poverty-stricken hordes of Europe were induced to come to America, and take the places of Anglo-Saxon workers in industry, for wages upon which no man could live decently. In Europe there was a surplus population, and no work. In America there was work for all—brutal, degrading work, at pitiful wages—but still work. And by living like an animal, by scabbing, submitting to nameless brutalities, the foreign-born could hope to scrape together enough, not to live in the United States, but to return to his home and live there. The fact that he returned broken in spirit and health did not matter.

This then was the spirit in which America welcomed "the oppressed of the earth." Lured not only by gold, but by the talk of freedom, the absence of compulsory military service, and the picture of the Statue of Liberty on the steamship companies' advertising matter, the aliens poured into our ports at the rate of hundreds of thousands a year. They were bullied and cheated at the port of entry, hurled into fetid slums, drawn into the lowest strata of the cruel machinery of industry, sweated, clubbed by the police, shot in strikes, and at the end, worn-out before their time, their lungs rotted with tuberculosis, were spewed out into the jails, or back across the sea. It is a significant commentary on American civilization that of the most intelligent foreigners who came here political Socialists, a large part returned to their own countries anarcho-syndicalists, advocates of sabotage and direct action.

The war revealed the American industrial system in all its brutality. Foreigners in large numbers who had taken out their first papers were drafted, and many who had never taken out any papers at all were forced into the Army, and if they refused to fight, were thrown into guardhouses and military prisons, and tortured. Those working in industry were subjected to the strictest espionage, and thrown into prison for advocating labor organization, or participating in strikes. A system of terrorism was employed to force them to buy Liberty Bonds and War Saving Stamps, and to contribute to the Red Cross; if they refused, they lost their jobs. Their churches were

invaded by mobs who compelled the clergymen to preach patriotism in English. Their papers printed in their own language were censored by bureaucrats, and often stopped for reprinting dispatches, articles and editorials from the English press. One foreign newspaper was stopped by the United States Post Office for reprinting my name, for example. Meetings of foreigners were invaded by the police and private "patriots" who arbitrarily created laws concerning what should or should not be said, and beat up and arrested speakers who refused to conform. And the lives of foreign workers were tyrannized over by private organizations such as "Minutemen" and "American Protective Leagues," composed of bankers, employers and the most reactionary hirelings of the industrial autoerats.

The barbarous Espionage Act, in its revolting character as a weapon of capitalist class domination, we especially invoked against foreigners active in working-class organizations. In Bayonne, N. J., two young Russians, Frederick Feodotov and Anton Taichin, were arrested at a meeting called to organize a school for Russians. Under the New Jersey Sedition Act they were sentenced to ten years in the penitentiary. Mollie Steimer, seventeen years old, Jacob Abrams, Samuel Lippmann, Hyman Lachowsky and Jacob Schwartz, Russians, were arrested for distributing circulars protesting against American intervention in Russia, and horribly beaten by the police of New York. Schwartz died from his injuries; Mollie Steimer was given fifteen years in jail and \$500 fine—and the three boys twenty years and \$1000 fine. Ricardo Magon and Librado Rivera, Mexican revolutionists, were given twenty and fifteen years respectively for articles in the Mexican paper "Regeneration," opposing the war. And of the hundreds of I. W. W. members tried and given long sentences at Chicago, Sacramento and Wichita, fully half are foreigners.

The agitation against foreign mass-meetings, foreign languages, and the foreign press, assumed considerable proportions. The end of the war brought no relief; for in the East, proletarian Russia was rising, gigantic and luminous, inspiring the workers of the world; and in Central Europe the Spartacides and the Communists were swinging into action. Instead of slackening with the signing of the Armistice, the campaign against the foreign workers grew more intense.

The end of the war left American industry still mobilized, as the plutocrats were busy scrambling for huge profits to plan for a conversion of industry to a peace basis. Sooner than take time to plan demobilization, they preferred to close down war activities the moment war ended, and throw thousands upon thousands of workers into the breadlines, where their numbers increase, week by week, as I write. All attempts of these unemployed workers to protest or to meet and consider their position are mercilessly checked with the threat of machine-guns.

This action was accompanied by almost universal reduction in wages throughout the textile industry, which, as I write, threatens to extend to the steel and other basic industries. At the same time awards made to the workers during the war by the War Labor Board were either disregarded or immediately revoked.

On top of this add the rapid demobilization of the Army, hundreds of thousands of men thrown penniless on the already-overcharged labor market, no jobs available—or jobs at wages less than before the war, or as strike-breakers. In the great cities of the country these aimless, workless soldier-hordes are being organized into mobs to attack Socialist and Labor meetings, wreck radical headquarters, assault individuals.

This is the situation faced by the foreign-born

workers, most of whom are not protected even by the inefficient labor organizations affiliated in the A. F. of L.—or are members of the I. W. W., which has been practically outlawed, (although the Government pretends it is not,) and whose members are hounded from city to city, arrested and beaten, and even lynched.

The final attack by the industrial autoerats on the foreign-born workers came just when the powerful general strikes in Seattle and Butte had indicated that the working-class of America was at last developing a weapon capable of combatting capitalist tyranny. Since December, 1917, foreigners active in the Labor Movement had been quietly arrested in the West, and after cursory hearings, alone, (no lawyers permitted,) threatened with physical force while being questioned, scores have been held for deportation under the Immigration laws.

The center of the movement was in the great Northwest, where the I. W. W. had been organized the timberworkers and lumbermen. This was the scene of the Everett Massacre, where deputy sheriffs and private detectives fired upon a steamboat full of labor organizers from Seattle, and killed six.

The same business men and manufacturers who inspired the Everett Massacre were behind the deportation scheme. The famous "American Committee" of Seattle, consisting of the Reverend M. A. Mathews, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church; Judge Thomas Burke, attorney; J. D. Lowman, vice-president of the Union National Bank; O. D. Colvin, general manager of the Pacific Car Foundry; J. W. Spangler, vice-president of the Seattle National Bank; A. E. Haines, general manager of the Pacific Steamship Co.; W. C. Dawson, general manager W. C. Dawson Co.; and William Calvert, Jr., president of the San Juan Fishing and Packing Co.: issued a secret invitation to the lumber companies to give "moral and financial support" to a network of detectives to be placed in the camps and mills, with the purpose of securing evidence which would lead to the "immediate expulsion of all alien agitators and publishers" from the country. A further printed statement by the same "Committee" showed that it was endorsed by thirteen lumber companies.

The credentials of one of the Department of Justice agents who arrested the aliens show that he was at the same time a member of the "Minutemen," a private secret service of employers authorized during the war by the Department of Justice, and of a private detective agency of Chicago, and also membership secretary of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce and Commercial Club. Another such agent was on the payroll of the Government and a large lumber company at the same time.

What was going on in Seattle was repeated more or less in other parts of the country. Men were arrested on some charge of misdemeanor, or on no charge at all, held for investigation, and then ordered deported. The investigations were a farce. Membership in the I. W. W. was ground for ordering deportation. Some of the reports of Immigration agents read like a Socialist cartoon of Capitalism. For instance, this from an official in Kansas City:

"The alien has no money, and is liable to become one of the migratory herd."

In February, 1919, a train-load of these unfortunates was taken across the country, with the intention of quietly hustling them out of the United States. The Immigration officials interviewed reported that the men had received adequate hearings, and that "the Courts co-operated." As a matter of fact these aliens had been denied legal defense, had been denied habeas corpus; their chief crime was that they belonged to the I. W. W.

Owing to the intervention of Miss Caroline Lowe, and of Charles Recht, of the Bureau of

(Continued on Page Seven)