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# **Radicalism Under Inquiry: Conclusions Reached After a Year's Study of Alien Anarchy in America.**

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In the mind of every serious American who stops to think about the matter must be this question: What has caused in the United States the movement toward extreme radicalism? Among many perfectly good Americans the impression exists that what is called "radicalism" is merely one outcome of the continuous effort to bring about more equitable economic relationships between classes and to advance that real liberty of thought which has been so valuable to the nation in the past. Because of this mistaken conception of the nature and importance of the movement the American people have been tolerant of its many different manifestations. As a whole they have not sympathized with it, but they have not fought it.

To certain Americans, however, the real perils of the situation have been apparent and as one result the Joint Legislative Committee of the State of New York, of which I am the chairman, was appointed after the leaders of the Legislature had carefully studied information laid before them as to the existence in the state of conditions so serious that the necessity for some remedy was plain.

Since May 1919 the Committee has been busy with investigation of these perilous conditions. It has called as witnesses such persons as it has been able to find who are especially informed upon any phase of the subject and have been willing to testify. It has exercised the right granted to it by the act creating it of subpoenaing unwilling witnesses. Through the right of search it has seized documents and many publications in the possession of individuals and organizations which it had good reason to believe were seditious in their sympathies.

Some of the evidence obtained in these and other ways has been placed before the Committee at public hearings, and has been made known generally through the newspaper press; but as much of that which has been secured has had to do with direct violations of the so-called "criminal anarchy" law under which the Committee has instigated or assisted in many prosecutions and as there will be more of these, much remains unannounced, for its publication in advance obviously might hamper or defeat the administration of justice.

## **What Is Behind Radicalism?**

The investigations of the Committee already have progressed sufficiently to prove the falsity of the impression that the "radical" movement is merely a peaceable endeavor to better economic and social conditions through the trial of harmless governmental experiments. No such motive is behind it.

There is ample and convincing evidence that the movement had its inception some time prior to the beginning of the world war in 1914, and that it was started here and elsewhere by paid agents of the Junker class in Germany as a part of their program of industrial and military world conquest. The propaganda inaugurated by these conspirators against everything which was not German differed greatly, of course, in the various regions where it was pressed, but followed lines generally similar. It succeeded in Russia and was active not only in the United States but in Italy, France, England and their colonies, in South America, and rather especially in Mexico. It had attained headway long before the war began,

and during the actual prosecution of the war it did Germany good service by measurably crippling some of the activities of those whom she had planned to overcome.

With the end of the war its activities continue through sheer momentum, if through no new impulse. Even if all the trained agents of disorder had been withdrawn on the day of the Armistice, the work of their disciples, some of them definitely convinced and some of them merely in the habit of the easy and psychologically exciting life which is the lot of the professional agitator, would continue. It is continuing.

Bearing in mind the origin of the wave of extreme radicalism which is now sweeping across the world, it is not surprising that there should be nothing in its principles or practice to commend it. Here in the United States it threatens practically everything that by tradition, and as the result of the established American habit of moral thinking, we hold dear.

### **Against the Thrifty.**

The original idea of the promoters of the movement was such industrial and social disintegration of other peoples as would make economic and perhaps military and political conquest easy. The economic aim is low production; and this, it has been thought, could be most certainly assured by the introduction of communism, which always includes the "nationalization" of, or state confiscation of, private property, not only that of the rich, but that of the thriftily prosperous, a class which the communists particularly hate and in this country, as in all others, denominate by the French word "bourgeoisie."

The married couple who, through years of hard work and economy, have established themselves upon a fully equipped farm in the country, or in a prosperous little village or city shop or store, are as much the targets of this movement as the great "coal-baron," "trust-magnate," or railroad millionaire. It is claimed that when this confiscation has taken place the "proletariat" will find it possible to establish a

communistic government in which there shall be no injustice and in which each individual will be exactly on an equality with every other individual. With regard to the precise *modus operandi* of this governmental plan the promoters of the movement are either contradictory or indefinite.

### **Against the Church and the Family.**

From the start it has been obvious to the advocates of all this that if their ends were to be accomplished our national sense of decency and honesty, laboriously built up through years of the recognition of property rights, and the general wisdom and necessity of morality in all things, must be broken down. Realizing this necessity, and being in the main of lawless and defiant mind, the radicals have conducted and today are conducting definite propaganda against the church and all religions, against the institution of the family, and against all present moral ideals.

Of all these activities so vitally in opposition to the ideals of the American people, the Committee has found and has in its possession ample evidence which in this article I can refer to only briefly. In the city of Rochester, NY, the other day, we discovered in the headquarters of a central radical organization a circulating library containing all kinds of works attacking the institution of marriage, the worship of the Christian God in any form, and all American institutions. These books showed much evidence of the extensive reading by the subscribers to the library, who are proved by evidence to be numerous. One well-worn volume extolled the prostitute as the ideal woman and laughed the virtuous wife to scorn. The discovery of such books in radical headquarters has not occurred on this occasion and in this place alone. The maintenance of such libraries is a part of the radical program. Libraries and stores for the dissemination of such literature exist in nearly all the radical headquarters.

### **Results of Unrestricted Immigration.**

That such a movement could gain impetus in

any of the world's civilized countries, least of all in the United States, may seem incredible. But it has gained a great momentum and its tide is still rising; no man can foretell the height which it will reach.

Always we have had with us our proportion of the degenerate and the criminal. While remained entirely American we had as small a proportion as any nation in the world of the shiftless and those without ideals of honesty and personal morality, but we had a share, of course. After virtually unrestricted immigration from abroad began, it flooded us not only with criminals and paupers, fleeing from abroad, but with the politically discontented, many of whom had fallen into what seems to be the changeless habit of dissatisfaction, and, bringing it with them to our shores, were unable to perceive that here it was not justified.

For many years we have known of and now and then have suffered from the presence in our midst of criminal anarchists. The Haymarket outrages in Chicago were among their earlier serious manifestations, and two Presidents and many other of our public officials from time to time have been assassinated by them, while the number of unsuccessful attacks upon our prominent and useful public men has been unparalleled in any other country.

We have done little or nothing to break up these tendencies, and, furthermore, we have had among us many of an apparent intelligence justifying expectation of better things, who have been socially unstable, and, often without much sincerity, but frequently with loud acclaim, have espoused radical ideals and ideas.

The existence of these different classes here offered the organized propagandists of disorder fertile soil in which to sow their seeds of discontent and revolution. The presence of large and entirely unassimilated foreign-born, non-English-speaking industrial class gave them further opportunity.

### **A Campaign Against Government.**

It is not surprising that in many quarters their teachings were welcomed as a common ground on which large numbers could get together for attack

on the established order of progress, prosperity for the industrious and honest, and reward for right and moral living. It was obvious from the start that the growth of Socialism here never would achieve their ends. Something more than Socialism was required. The government organized for the protection of our people in the exercise of their religious, property, and other personal rights, must be destroyed. The overthrow of that government by force, violence, and other unlawful means is, therefore, today the avowed object of many of the organizations which have sprung up and thriven because of our neglect and through our ignorance of fact and false sense of security.

It probably is true that among American citizens, even of foreign blood, the movement has not become important. In the course of the execution of search warrants issued against the seventy-one Communist headquarters in New York City early last November it was found advisable to take to police headquarters for examination nearly a thousand men found in these places, which were crowded although the night of the raid was not a meeting night for any of the organizations.

Less than 5 percent of those arrested were American citizens. Many, although they had been in this country for years, were unable to speak the English language. But all had been liberally supplied with radical propaganda, were fully conversant with the aims of the radical organizations, and, while not amenable to prosecution, because not identified as leaders, furnished valuable evidence of the seriousness of the situation.

Residence even of years in this country finds them without associations among any except those of their own original nationality. Many were found to have relatives or friends among the men and women who, in Russia or elsewhere, long had been extreme radicals, and these, since their arrival here, had been liberally supplied from home, or by organizations in this country, with propaganda. This, prepared in their own language, and uncontradicted by anything else which they could read as easily, had had its effect.

They were fully informed with regard to the

injustice of the government from which their emigration had been a flight, and attributed to all other governments, including our own, most of its imperfections and vicious practices, no one having taken the trouble to inform them with regard to any difference between this government and that. Many others, even more dangerous, having been definite revolutionists at home, automatically had become revolutionists here, because they are so ill-informed that they believe their quarrel is with government, as government, and not with any government in particular.

They are found antagonistic to all existing government, looking forward with a fatuous and almost pitiful confidence, or with the sullen determination of destructionists, to the triumph in this country of the radical theories. Even had these raids yielded no food for criminal prosecutions, they would have been invaluable because of their revelations of the extent of radical tendencies, and their revelations of methods and propaganda arguments.

### **Who Are the Leaders?**

The radical agitators in this country are such natural leaders as rise among those instructed in this propaganda. They work by devious methods, joining legitimate organizations when they can, often if not usually under assumed names, and attempting to change these bodies into revolutionary bodies. Once leadership has been obtained they endeavor to induce their followers to make unreasonable demands on their employers; and if these demands are met they endeavor to induce their dupes to make further calls which cannot possibly be met, for their sole object is the fomentation of discontent which may lead to the commission of disorderly acts.

They are not interested in the betterment of conditions surrounding labor under the present system, such as the question of working hours or the amount of pay, but keep their eyes fixed on that ultimate end of the overthrow of the industrial system, the disestablishment of the present government, and rule by the "proletariat." Avowedly, it is for the purposes of propaganda only that they urge their

followers to participation in elections for entrance into parliamentary contest.

They have not yet succeeded in their ultimate object; but by disorganizing industry and stopping its wheels they have materially reduced production, and thus have added to the burdens of the workingman. Having created this condition, they point to it as another argument in favor of their theories. The condition therefore becomes progressive, and if permitted to continue will produce in the United States troubles the nature of which cannot be foretold at present.

### **Raids by the New York Committee.**

The activities of the Committee by no means have brought New York state's manifestations to a halt. During the last week of the year several avowedly revolutionary organizations were raided in the cities of Buffalo, Rochester, and Utica, and one raid, even more significant than these, in one sense, occurred in the little city of Cortland, which has a population of only 13,000 and is the center of one of the farming communities which have been regarded as the strongholds of Americanism.

The recent raid in Buffalo was upon the headquarters of the central branch of a definitely revolutionary organization, and among the prisoners taken were officers of eight subsidiary revolutionary organizations by no means all located within the city limits. Some had been organized in adjoining villages. The raids in Rochester and Utica disclosed the existence of several revolutionary societies in each of those cities. In Rochester evidence given before the Committee revealed the fact that revolutionary meetings habitually had been held in the city's schoolhouses during the evening hours when they were not used for school purposes, this having been made possible by the general opening of these public structures as civic centers, a plan which had been fostered by the best citizens of the town with the thought that the exchange of ideas resulting from such neighborhood meetings would tend toward the development of good citizenship and Americanism. There is a strange and significant irony in this. At

these meetings revolution was openly preached, and plans made for the wholesale distribution of a letter written by Lenin to the American workers urging them to overthrow our government through violence.

This not only is an excellent illustration of the abuse of a commendable system adopted for the purpose of civic betterment, which was intended to include the education of foreigners in Americanism, but it also illustrates how little knowledge the authorities in the state of New York really have of what is being done in their communities. Such ignorance probably is general throughout the country.

In several instances the investigations of this Committee have disclosed that teachers in the public schools have been members of these revolutionary organizations. They have shown that in different parts of the of New York systematic campaigns have been conducted to reach schoolchildren and teach them to detest their own country and government by means of "Sunday schools" and through the distribution to the young of revolutionary literature, written so as to make an especial appeal to childhood.

### **Early Bolshevik Propaganda in New York.**

One of the members of a revolutionary organization arrested in Buffalo and charged with criminal anarchy recently came within a few votes of being nominated for the office of mayor of that city. In Utica it was found that members of revolutionary organizations had been extremely active in attempting to induce certain members of labor organizations to violence during a recent labor trouble there, and that their efforts had not been without success. Under the leadership of these men a mob in that city forced every business-place along more than a mile of one of its principal business streets to close and frightened the proprietors of many into putting in their windows placards condemning the police for enforcement of laws restraining a labor organization from violence. It is necessary to add that this labor organization was not affiliated in any way with the American Federation of Labor. Its own printed

documents in evidence before the Committee advocate that the workers prepare themselves to take over the factories in which and the tools with which they labor.

While the revolutionary movement in this country only recently has come to the attention of the general public, it has been organizing for several years. On the third of February, 1918, a cablegram was sent from the city of New York to the "Council of Peoples' Commissioners, Smolny Institute, Petrograd" by Louis Fraina, "for the Bolshevist Information Bureau," which said:

**Bolshevik information bureau organized here two months ago to interpret actions of commissioners and arouse solidarity of American workers with Russian Proletariat. Widespread sympathy of American workers with you. Have taken steps to organize Red Guard.**

Evidence taken before the Committee from witnesses who were in Petrograd at the time the Lenin-Trotsky regime came into power, showed that one morning the city found itself in the possession of the armed force of the revolution and that this force was known as the "Red Guards."

### **Other Parts of the Country Involved.**

While the investigations of the Committee of course have been confined to radical activities in the state of New York, as I have said, it has come into possession of evidence showing that revolutionary activities are as notable elsewhere. Among the letters seized in a raid upon the Russian Soviet Bureau in New York City, is one from Cleveland, Ohio, under the date of March 7, 1919, which reads in part as follows:

"The ESSP Comm. is the Soviet of ten Bolshevik organizations in Cleveland."

Letters of a similar nature from other parts of the country also have come into the possession of the Committee. A fact of great significance is that white radicals are conducting a systematic campaign among the colored people of this country, especially among those of the South, for the purpose of "changing," as they call it, "their race consciousness into

class consciousness," and organizing them into revolutionary bodies.

### **Prosecutions Under Criminal Anarchy Law.**

The members of some revolutionary bodies have been arrested and prosecuted under the Criminal Anarchy Act of the state. Some recently have been deported and others await deportation. But many of these organizations are permitted to continue their campaigns for membership, and their distribution of revolutionary propaganda. The same reason which prevents us from making public evidence as to the extent and location of these organizations precludes me from going into other details at this time.

The Committee is an investigating body and not a prosecuting body. The prosecutions which have come about because of evidence obtained by the Committee have been incidental to its work of investigation. It has cooperated as fully as possible with Federal, State, and local authorities. The question of further repressive legislation and provisions for the enforcement of the laws of the state is one which will be taken up and disposed of by the Committee as a whole, and is also one which I cannot discuss further.

Some of our citizens profess to believe that the men and women who are working to bring about the overthrow of our established government by force and violence and unlawful means, the confiscation

of property, the destruction of the church and the institution of marriage and the ruin of all organizations for the promotion of morality and decency, should be permitted to continue their work without interference.

In my opinion, this method of handling the situation was given a fair trial before the Committee started its work, and the result of ignoring these revolutionary activities was not highly satisfactory.

### **Americans Generally Sane and Loyal.**

But, despite the real seriousness of the situation, there is no occasion for panic or hysteria. The great body of American people are sane and loyal. The time has come, however, for action. The day for sentimental dawdling has passed in this country. We should have drastic laws, but laws will amount to nothing unless they are enforced. The criminal anarchy law of the state of New York has been in existence for nineteen years. Criminal anarchy has been rampant throughout the state during that entire period, and existed prior thereto or the law would not have been written. Not a single prosecution was ever brought in this state under that law, however, until it was done under evidence obtained by this Committee.

We are learning in our state that the people should see to it that men are put in office who have sufficient moral, physical, and political courage, and the necessary energy to enforce our laws.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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