
They Are Making One Front

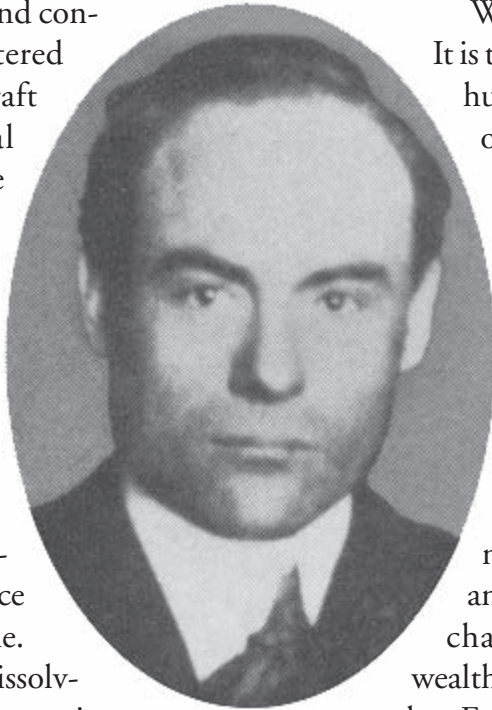
by Robert Minor

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The struggle between the privileged class and organized workmen is changing its form. The old line of struggle is being quickly obscured; and the familiar forms no longer exist, or, if they exist, are nothing but empty shells. As the battle-lines of the old struggle on the prairie between the Red Indians and the scattered groups of white men scouts were lost and forgotten in modern warfare under the great system of steel and concrete trenches — so the scattered group formations of labor, craft unions that resembled social clubs, as well as the little intimate “radical” groups of personal friends that used to talk with glistening eyes of imagined future societies build to their taste — all these are disappearing now, or will soon disappear. A new tremendous battle front is being flung across the earth, a fortified line of steel and concrete, so to speak, takes the place of the old scattered skirmish line.

Fast the little things are dissolving, whether the little things know it or not. Little groups, little cliques, little sects, are quickly melting into and crystallizing in either one or the other of two giant forms. Every little formation may still scream of its separateness, but the monster iron dividing line — the “front!” — is flung calmly and silently through the multitude and divides all things and men whether they will

or not, into two and only two hard-crystallizing divisions. Fast all men and things line up for one struggle, one war — one world divided into two civilizations, with a vast gulf between them. One each side of the gulf is one organization, and can be but one. Each side crystallizes its own international organization. Each can have but one. It is an international world.



We hear a clamor of mobilization. It is the one great capitalist class, which hurries together and talks no more of nationality. The flag inscribed “La Patrie” lies bloody and torn in the gutter with the bodies of the 10 million that were slain for nationality when nationality was the best lie. But Capitalism screams now that it was all a mistake, that we must not be loyal anymore to “our country,” but that those of us that are not yet dead must reverse ourselves and be loyal now to a hideous, mechanical international League of wealthy classes, which is the best lie of today. Everywhere we hear the cry of the herders — monarchists, republicans, liberal-bourgeois, Catholic, atheist-bourgeois, and Protestant; reformer-pacifist and military reactionist — all together the herders whip men into line of the new loyalty that will make men slaves — loyalty to the one great Capitalist International. The League of Nations, some call it, and others call it The Asso-

ciation of Governments.

The Capitalist International is what it is. It marches into the open, coolly taking its place in battle. We see it everywhere. In America it cynically announces its program: "All unionism to be destroyed; workmen, you are commanded not to organize; we lied to you during the war, to keep you quiet; now we will break you on the wheel: the open shop."

The same throughout the world. The White Terror of the Capitalist International. You can see it in Finland, where a rifle shot sends staggering the ragged form of a workman caught carrying a dispatch to Russia, and you hear at the same moment the shot of the Baldwin-Felts' detective in the West Virginia mountains as the American mountaineer falls to his death for bearing a dispatch from the Union into non-union territory. The battle front now between labor and capital is a huge girdle around the earth. And it knows no mercy, no relenting, and fast it drops the last of its camouflage.

Workmen who in the old days used to sit in backrooms over a glass of beer to discuss an imagined future and to weigh the question as to "whether the struggle would take the form of violence or whether on the other hand the change would be voted in with peaceful ballot," are interrupted. "Will it happen by means of peaceful—" But the voices are drowned under the rattle of rifle fire, heavy and incessant and fast increasing, from all quarters of the globe. The question is answered.

Everywhere the working class, too, is stirring, jolted and bruised and rudely wakened from its daylight dreams. The cries of mobilizing men come also from the depths, from the alleys and kennels where workmen live. Men who have been dreaming of this time, have dreamed of its being in a different way. Some are still dreaming. Here and there we see some brother-workman, still in the midst of his dream, running out with a teapot full of water to put out the burning house; here

and there a workman comes with a wooden lath to take his place in the concrete trench. He had gotten so used to his dream that he thinks it a dram battle. But the old methods are no good anymore. The dangerous weapons of a generation ago are foolish toys today. Men find that their "important organizations" of yesterday are doll houses today.

Doll houses no more. It is a concrete dug-out now flung across the hundreds of miles, the thousands of miles; and the faces of intimate friends are lost in a sea of men that we never saw before, and that are familiar only in this that they carry the marks of labor. Do not be displeased by the strange faces. Do you not understand? — it is at last the workers' answer to your own cry: "Workers of the world, unite!" These are the workers of the world. Don't you know them, now that they have come? The millions have answered and are coming into the trenches.

Labor, too, forms into one vast concrete-bound front that stretches around the world as a girdle. It stretches out to meet Capital in battle.

An international world. An international fight. Two international organizations — only two — clashing in a combat that will end in the death of one — and after that, only one international organization — the administration of things by the non-state workers' commune.

The mobilization of each side has its tragedies, of old sentiments rooted up. No man can come to a new battle without shedding some part of his old equipment. Here they come, watch them, the variegated philosophers, this man with an "ism" and that one with an "ism" and each "ism" having its own beauties of fancy and its own vanities of permanency in this world which is not even itself permanent. There in the corner, right over there where you see the ashes and tin cans, that is the place for your dogmas. Don't shed any tears about them; just drop them, and pass on.

One front. One international organization. What will the international organization be?

I think it already is. It is the "Third International." To many persons this is a bitter thing to hear. There is no smell of warfare in it, and there is the discipline of a new iron unity. But the soldiers entering the battle line must sacrifice, everyone will have to sacrifice. And with some it is hard. It is hard to concede anything to another man's philosophy; but we have to do it., We hear Hillquit scream as he is force to drop the sawdust doll of parliamentarism or be dropped himself. He is frightened with being told to associate with strange fellows called Anarchists, or else to admit he is not fit for the fight. He screams in horror that the third International is taking in "the Anarcho-syndicalist groups and the groups that now and then simply call themselves Anarchists." It doesn't matter. One front.

The past few years have settled many questions. One question is Parliamentarism, and it was settled to the extreme dislike of most Socialist lawyers. Another question is the question of a temporary military organization resembling a State, and that was settled to the distaste of many Anarchists. But history has settled it. It has proven that the working class, whether we like it or not, is going to win its fight by means of a temporary dictatorship, and we take our choice between being out of the fight or in the fight in the form which it takes, not in any imaginary form. The one front has been drawn by history, and no man can draw it otherwise. Whether we like it or not, there will be one front. And I think that one front is the Third International.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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