

**OUT OF THEIR OWN MOUTHS; A
REVELATION AND AN
INDICTMENT OF SOVIETISM.
WITH THE COLLABORATION OF
WILLIAM ENGLISH WALLING**

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Out of their own mouths; a revelation and an indictment of sovietism. With the collaboration of William English Walling by Samuel Gompers

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SAMUEL GOMPERS

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OUT OF THEIR OWN MOUTHS

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*A Revelation and an Indictment
of Sovietism*

BY

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With the Collaboration of

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FOREWORD

I HAVE been under the necessity of observing the Bolshevik movement from close quarters for many years. I have had to contend with it almost daily long before it seized the power in Russia in the name of Communism and Soviet. Trotzky is only one of the Bolshevik leaders who long sojourned in this country to plague the American labor movement. And the few thousands who have returned to Soviet Russia represent but a small part of the forces of revolutionary mania in America. These forces are not strong enough seriously to threaten American labor—provided they are isolated and understood. But they must be understood and isolated.

While the labor movement of the world is gradually but steadily shaking itself free of the illusion that the Soviets are a workingmen's government—the first workingmen's government—conservative powers are beginning to give them commercial and political support and a part of the press is engaged in finding virtuous reasons for this policy. The pace was set by the British-Soviet trade agreement and by Lloyd George's speech in Parliament in which he contended, with an intentional paradox but still quite seriously, that the Bolsheviks had suddenly become moderates. The work of labor in repudiating Bolshevism has thus become more difficult. Certain conservatives and reactionaries pretend—for motives of their own—that they no longer have much objection to

the Soviets. They are willing to trade with cannibals, to use an expression of Lloyd George. But labor cannot affiliate or associate with cannibals—or with tyrants who rule over labor by the Red Terror and the firing squad.

Whether an anti-labor despotism rules over one of the greatest peoples of the earth may be a matter of indifference to the masters of the British Empire as long as that despotism is willing to meet the Empire half way—and to sign away the title to the territories and natural wealth of the nation. It cannot be a matter of indifference to labor.

Labor's interest in putting forth the truth about the Soviets is in part altruistic. Labor's regard for the welfare of the Russian workers is deep and genuine. But it also knows that if an anti-labor despotism may be made to work in one country—however inefficiently—it will encourage the enemies of labor to try the same methods elsewhere. Moreover, if the Soviets are given a certain permanence and success as “moderates” by the aid of certain governments and financiers they will certainly continue to represent this success to the labor of the world as having come to them from their own efforts as “ultra-revolutionists.”

The outward success of the Soviets—with capitalist backing—would cost the capitalists themselves dearly in the end. But labor would pay, and pay heavily from the beginning.

The Soviets may or may not reach a common understanding of real practical importance with cynical imperialists and capitalistic adventurers. There is no possible common ground between Bolshevism and organized labor. Nor will the proposed economic alliance between

Bolshevism and Reaction be able to force labor to compromise with the Soviets. In the long run this alliance will help to make still more clear to the wage-earners the true character of Bolshevism. But its first result is to re-inforce the already formidable Bolshevist propaganda.

The miserable collapse of the revolution called by the Soviets in Germany in March, following upon their failure in January and February to capture the labor unions of Italy and France, would have spelled the end of the Bolshevist menace as far as labor is concerned. But then came the British-Soviet trade agreement, the laudatory speech of Lloyd George, and a renewed flood of pro-Soviet propaganda from capitalist and so-called "liberal" quarters. So that the Bolshevist propaganda menace, while in a new form, is more threatening than ever, and continues to strike at all the foundations of our democratic civilization—and, in particular at the principles that underlie the labor movement.

The American labor movement has lost no opportunity to prove its warm friendship for the Russian people and for the Russian Revolution. It has not hesitated to send its greetings and offer of support even to Socialists such as those associated with Kerensky—although American labor is not and never has been socialistic. Officials of American labor unions have not scrupled for this purpose to associate themselves with certain Socialists of this country who supported the war in a common address to the Kerensky government. American labor also, in its earnest wish to reach the Russian people after the Bolshevist revolution, went so far as to address a mes-

sage to the Russian nation in care of the Soviets. Both messages are quoted in the Appendix.

From the early beginnings of the first Russian Revolution in 1905 every occasion has been seized to demonstrate friendship. In 1921 the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor once more reiterated its friendly attitude in the following words:

It should be understood clearly that between the people of the United States and the great masses of the people of Russia there has been, is and will continue to be the most earnest and sincere friendship, and that the people of the United States express no sentiment to the contrary except towards those in Russia who are destroying the opportunities of the Russian people for democratic self-government, and who, on the contrary, are imposing upon the Russian people a brutal, defenseless tyranny. This friendship is the friendship of the working people and of all the people of our country for a great people whose character and aspirations have ever justified the confidence, respect and friendship of all liberty loving people, and the earnest hope that the situation in Russia may so change that freedom, justice, democracy and humanitarianism may be the guiding principles of their every day lives. For that time and opportunity American labor fervently anticipates that the true bond of international fraternity may be established between the toilers of Russia and those of America.

The present volume endeavors to give a balanced and equal consideration to all the more important phases of Sovietism. But, naturally, I am in a particularly favorable situation to discuss the Soviet attitude towards labor both in Russia and throughout the world. The chapters dealing with this part of the subject should be of interest

not only to labor and its sympathizers but to the entire community.

I must take this opportunity to point out that the hostility of the Bolshevists to the American Federation of Labor is of the same degree of intensity and of the same general character as the hostility of a large group of reactionary employers—a group to be found in all countries, but at the present moment far more aggressive and powerful in the United States than in any other nation of the globe. So closely identical are the anti-labor-union policies of the Bolshevists and Reactionaries that a number of instances have already arisen of deliberate co-operation to destroy organized labor. But even when there is no definite alliance the similarity of the purposes and methods of the two groups bring it about that they spread an identical propaganda. The Reactionary, therefore, does not disguise the delight with which he reads of the Bolshevist attacks on organized labor, nor do the Bolshevists disguise their joy at the victories of Reaction. Nor is this the only way by which Reaction aids Bolshevism; in its refusal to grant reasonable economic concessions and to cede to reasonable demands for political and legislative reforms, the Reactionaries inevitably drive the thoughtless and impatient into the arms of Bolshevism.

I have been obliged to deal continually with Bolshevism for the past four years. I have utilized in the present volume parts of several recent articles from the official organ of the American Federation of Labor, *The American Federationist*, of which I am editor, as well as certain material in the current report of the Executive