
Note to Leon Trotsky Regarding a Survey on Conditions in America Distributed in Advance of the 1st World Congress of RILU from Earl Browder, Delegate, in Moscow, May 9, 1921.

Document in the Comintern Archive, RGASPI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 39, l. 38.

Moscow, May 9, 1921.

Comrade Trotsky;

I have discussed your questionnaire with Comrades Marshall [Max Bedacht] and [Ella Reeve] Bloor, and feel that I have little to add to their answers already written, except on questions 1 and 6. I believe that it would be of great value to have a careful examination of the strike movement of 1919 from the Communist viewpoint, studying this movement with a view to methods and means of turning similar occasions to revolutionary action at some future time.

The most significant point to my mind is that mass-action of the workers in America almost invariably springs from the ranks of organized labor or finds its expression in the attempt to organize. It is usually defeated and dispersed by some definite act of submission of the union officials to the capitalists or to the capitalist state. The events of 1919 provided the American workers with more fundamental Communist education by 100 times than was accomplished by the agitation of the Communist parties.

Specifically, these events showed that it is within the realm of possibility, in the immediate future, for the Communists of America to take over the direction

of the labor movement if they could be given a clear idea of the technical requirements for labor union leadership and administration. A compact, well educated Communist minority in the great mass organizations, united upon a clear program of practical action, can obtain the strategical positions of power in organized labor. With these positions the masses can be thrown into direct conflict with the state whenever a similar situation arises, like that of 1919. To accomplish such a task a special study of the technical requirements of union leadership is required as much as Communist education.

Time forbids a detailed discussion of the strike movement in its details from this point of view, and I content myself at this time with indicating this attitude to you, and recommending it to your further consideration.

With Communist greetings,

Earl R. Browder,
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from Miners Unions, Kansas, and
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