
Department of Justice Press Release on the Mass Arrest Campaign Against the Union of Russian Workers, November 8, 1919

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Department of Justice.

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More than 200 Russian Reds, one of them with all the materials for making a bomb in his possession, were taken into custody last night by Agents of the Department of Justice in a raid that covered more than 15 of the largest industrial centers of the country. The raids were made at the direction of A. Mitchell Palmer, Attorney General. Anthony Caminetti, Commissioner of Immigration, cooperated.

Raiders captured a complete counterfeiting plant at Newark, NJ. This included plates, presses, and bank notes ready for circulation. Red flags, guns, revolvers, and thousands of pieces of literature were also taken by the Department of Justice Agents.

The Reds taken into custody were all leaders of the Union of Russian Workers in this country, an anarchistic organization that does not believe in any form of organized government, and teaches the overthrow of government by force and violence. This organization has more than 7,000 members throughout the country and has been engaged in active propaganda against the present form of government for many months. It has many locals scattered throughout the country. Last night's raids included leaders of the organization in New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, Buffalo, Akron and Youngstown, Ohio; Baltimore, Newark and Elizabeth, NJ; Hartford, Waterbury, Ansonia, Bridgeport, New Haven, and Seymour, Conn.

Roman Mosichok, organizer of the Union of

Russian Workers at Trenton, NJ, had the material for making bombs in his room at 109 Lamberton Street, Trenton, NJ, when taken into custody. These articles included gunpowder, copper and brass wire, electric batteries, wax paper, etc. Mosichok when taken into custody admitted that he was a member of the organization since December 1915.

The counterfeiting plant at Newark, NJ, was found to be an elaborate affair. It was found in the rooms of two of the active members of the Union of Russian Workers. A large supply of counterfeit bank notes was on hand. These men will have to face additional charges.

Agents of the Department of Justice and of the Bureau of Immigration have been collecting evidence in these particular cases for the last two months. All of the prisoners are aliens, and the evidence collected will be presented to the Commissioner of Immigration and their deportation asked for.

The Union of Russian Workers is even more radical than the Bolsheviki. It was organized in New York in 1907 by a group of 11 men led by one William Szatow [Shatov], at present the Chief of Police of Petrograd. The purpose of the Society was to amalgamate all of the Russian groups in the United States into one organization. With the aid of newspaper and other propaganda the membership of the Union of Russian Workers began to grow until at the present time it consists of 60 locals, located in the principal cities of the country, with a membership of 7,000.

The most important convention of the Union of Russian Workers was held in Detroit in 1914, with delegates from all of the principal cities in the United

States and Canada present. The delegates to this convention adopted resolutions which have become a part of the constitution of the Federation and which has not been substantially changed since that time. The dues books of the members of this organization contain the following preamble of the constitution of the organization, which reveals the purposes of the Union of Russian Workers:

The present Society is divided into two opposing classes: the downtrodden Workers and Peasants, on the one side, producing by their work all the riches of the world; — the rich people, on the other side, who have grabbed all the riches into their hands.

Many a time the Class of the Oppressed stood up against the rich parasites and their faithful servant and protector — the Government — to conquer its full Liberation from the yoke of Capitalism and Political Power, but every time it suffered defeat, not being fully conscious of its own final goal and means, by which victory can be accomplished, thus remaining only a weapon in the hands of its enemies.

The struggle between these two classes is being fought also at the present time and will end only when the Toiling Masses, organized as a class, will understand their true interests and will make themselves masters of all the riches of this world by means of a violent Social Revolution.

Having accomplished such a change and having annihilated at the same time all the institutions of Government and State, the class of the disowned must establish the Society of Free Producers, aiming at satisfying the needs of every individual person who, on its side, is giving to the Society its labor and its knowledge.

For the attainment of these aims, we consider as of the primal importance the necessity of building up a wide Revolutionary Organization of Toilers which, by conducting a direct struggle with all the institutions of Capitalism and Government, must train the Working Class to initiative, and independent action in all its acts, thus educating in it the consciousness of the absolute necessity of a General Strike — of the Social Revolution.

The Union of Russian Workers believes more in mass action, including armed action in time of great national strife. Its principles do not favor the Bolshevik form of government, but they are willing to accept the support of any radical or group of men as an expedient for furthering their own particular needs. And while not supporting the Bolshevik movement in this country openly, they are secretly supporting it in order that they may through it achieve their ends.

Conventions are held about once a year. Sub-conventions, or regional conventions as the Union calls them, are called from time to time and are attended by delegates from branches under a given territory. The main purpose of all of these conventions is to devise ways and means for furthering the propaganda of the Union of Russian Workers.

The various locals are organized for the purpose of spreading the doctrines of the Union of Russian Workers among the Russian immigrants working in the mines, shops, factories, logging camps, sawmills, etc., and the propaganda is conducted by means of literature, newspapers, and lectures. Lecturers are sent out by the Executive Committee of the Federation to all parts of the country. Funds of the organization are derived from dues, lectures and concerts, and the sale of radical literature.

On January 10, 1919, the 5th Convention of the Federation of UNION OF RUSSIAN WORKERS was held in New York City, at which time extended plans were laid for the formation of additional locals throughout the country and the extending of propaganda work through publication and agitators.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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