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# Special Report on the Growth of Bolshevism in the United States

By "B.H.T." and circulated by the British Home Secretary

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**SECRET**

**DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE**  
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***Special Report on the Growth of  
Bolshevism in the United States***  
(Circulated by the Home Secretary)

The growth of the Bolshevik and Anarchist spirit in America during the past 5 months has been remarkable.

The following report — abridged from a more detailed essay by a well-informed observer — will give a general outline of the causes which have led to this disquieting development. The situation is so seriously regarded by the Administration that a bill of a drastic nature is likely to be introduced into Congress.

The few feature in the movement is the behavior of the American Socialist Party, a recognized political party in the United States. The obligation that all its members must be American citizens has been evaded by the institution of a system of foreign language federations, and the party now derives much of its support from these organizations, whose American members number less than 5 percent. †

The membership of the chief federations is estimated as follows:

Russian	5,000 members.
Ukrainian	3,300 members.
Lithuanian	3,000 members.
Lettish [Latvian]	2,000 members.
Polish	3,500 members.
Jewish [Yiddish]	4,500 members.
Finnish	10,000 members.
German	7,000 members.
Hungarian	3,000 members.
Bohemian [Czech]	2,000 members.
Scandinavian	2,500 members.
Italian	1,000 members.

Counting the other smaller federations, the total membership reaches nearly 50,000.

The revolution in Russia naturally created great excitement in the Russian Federation of the American Socialist Party. It absorbed Bolshevik doctrines, its prestige was greatly enhanced, and it was the first body in America to proclaim its adherence to the Russian Communist program. Its leaders combined with the leaders of other foreign federations, and with extreme Radicals of the type of Jim Larkin, in a concerted effort to spread Bolshevik propaganda. They had very soon made certain of the support of the great bulk of the Russian and kindred groups; other foreign federations followed suit, and finally many of the English-speaking members of the American Socialist Party were won over to the Left Wing and adopted the Bolshevik program.

Some 8 months ago, when there was little talk of the Socialist Party adopting the Russian Bolshevik methods, a convention of delegates from 38 branches of the Russian Federation [Extraordinary 4th, Sept. 28-Oct. 1, 1918], held in New York, passed the following resolution:

†- There was no such American citizenship requirement in the constitution of the Socialist Party of America. Only after the consummation of the split of 1919 was there any movement in this direction in the SPA.

In view of the fact that sooner or later a split between the revolutionary and non-revolutionary elements of the American Socialist Party is unavoidable...it is the duty of the federation to revolutionize the rank and file of the party in the spirit of the Bolshevist principles, and when the split comes to unite the Left Wing of the party....

Conferences of the Foreign Language Federations were duly called, and were successful in uniting the foreign-speaking Socialists under a common Bolshevik banner.

Speaking at a private meeting of the elect in New York, Nicholas Hourwich said:

The Conference of the representatives of all our branches has done much work. They have established the Federation of the Russian Socialist Party on a steady and sound foundation of Bolshevism. Although we are still affiliated with the American Socialist Party, our ways are different. We Bolsheviks can make no compromise with the capitalists...and the only reason we are still with the American Socialist Party is because this will lighten our mission — to bring it to the ideal of Bolshevism.

By means of very vigorous propaganda they set to work to win over the English-speaking branches of the Socialist Party, their principal centers being New York, Boston, Detroit, and Chicago.

Until early in February 1919, the General [Executive] Committee of the Russian Federation was at Detroit. New York is, however, the most important center, and since February it has also been the headquarters of the party. The action of the Federal authorities in Detroit had made that place uncomfortable, and most of the members of the Committee live in and around New York, where also are the offices of the *Novyi Mir*, the official Russian organ of the party.

The Foreign Language Federations which have been most active in assisting the Russians to create the Bolshevik party are the Ukrainian, the Lettish [Latvian], the Finnish, and the German. Almost 75% of the Finnish Federation (i.e. 7,500 members) are strong for the Left Wing, and they are devoted to Nuorteva, their leader.

Anderson [née Kristap Beika] is the chief of the Lettish [Latvian] Federation. In Russia he was a leader of the "Brothers of the Woods," an organization operating in Lettia [Latvia] during the 1905 revolution, and his name is still remembered there as one of the most cruel of the terrorists. He is closely associated with the *Novyi Mir*, and is one of the most active revo-

lutionaries, though he shuns publicity.

The activities of the Russian Federation in New York center around the offices of *Novyi Mir*, which are very well equipped and staffed. Recently its circulation was about 4,500 [?]. Mailing privileges have been withdrawn, and many issues have been suppressed. Nevertheless, it is still issued and distributed to different centers by messengers, or through the express company. The same press prints large quantities of other Bolshevik material, in Russian and in English, both books and pamphlets, etc. These last are given away free (e.g. 60,000 copies in English and 60,000 in Russian of the letter from the Russian Soviet Government to President Wilson). The office has also established a regular bookstore. There are other communist periodicals, e.g. *The Communist* (New York), the new English organ of the Left Wing; *The Revolutionary Age* (Boston); *Novyi Mir*, Russian; *Der Kampf*, Jewish; *Elore* (Forward), Hungarian; and *Robitnik* (Worker), Ukrainian.

In addition to the stream of printed propaganda, other proselytizing measures were devised and put into execution. Many meetings were held in different parts of the country, to which envoys were sent to preach the Bolshevik doctrine. At the end of October conferences were being organized all over the country to unite the radical associations in America under the Bolshevik standard, and many English-speaking associations were already affiliated. Again, in December [1918] the leaders took steps to distribute intelligent members among the locals of the American Socialist Party for the purpose of spreading Bolshevik doctrines. Soon after this, the *Novyi Mir* was assured that branches of the American Socialist Party were becoming more and more revolutionary, and Fraina was able to write to Weinstein that "within 3 months there will be no moderate or Menshevists among the party; it will be forced to adopt the program of the Bolsheviks." At this time, too, Stoklitsky was able to report that about 85[?]% of the members of the party in Chicago no longer <words illeg.> become Bolsheviks, and would do everything possible to force the officers of the party to adopt the platform of the Russian Communist Party. At the beginning of January [1919], the *Novyi Mir* learned that the Bolsheviks were controlling nearly <illeg.>% of the radicals of New Jersey, and on February 9th [1919], a conference of the Foreign Language

Federations affiliated to the American Socialist Party was held at the *Novyi Mir* office. All of these had now adopted the Bolshevik platform, and they agreed to remain within the American Socialist Party for the purpose of breaking up the old party and reorganizing it on a Bolshevik basis.

Local after local has joined the Left Wing, and the 1st District of the American Socialist Party — comprising all the locals and branches of the states of Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York — has announced its entry into the Left Wing and has nominated its own candidates to the National Executive Committee of the American Socialist Party, namely Fraina of Boston, Hourwich of New York, and Lindgren of Brooklyn.

The leaders of the Left Wing are exerting themselves to dominate the forthcoming election of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, and there is a likelihood that they will be in the majority and elect their Bolshevik candidates. If this happens, then the entire party will adopt the program of the Russian Communists and the members of the Right Wing will have to secede or become an impotent minority. Such a change would give to the Bolsheviks the control of the whole of the resources of the party, which owns

about 50 papers and magazines, and thousands of dollars in its treasury. These resources would then be put to a new use. The old Socialist Party worked on ordinary American political party lines, and was only active [in its] propaganda at election times. But the new Communist <words illeg> workers of America industrially instead of politically, a policy which is likely to be far more effectual and dangerous. The new party would join hands with the Industrial Workers of the World and other labor organizations which are striving to accomplish the Industrial Revolution and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is difficult to foretell how far they may be successful. They have against them the general high standard of wages and comfort and the widespread education of the public schools, but in their favor are the less satisfactory trade conditions in some places and the very large foreign element in the labor body.

The Federal authorities and educated public opinion are fully alive to the danger, and the legislative measures that are to be taken will act as a check, but the most valuable prophylactic would be publicity and cooperation between employers and organized labor.

*B.H.T.*

***Edited by Tim Davenport.***

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