
**Report on IWW or Bolsheviki Activities
in the District of Massachusetts to
William E. Allen, Acting Chief of the
Bureau of Investigation in Washington
by Boston BoI Informant J.S. Peterson,
Feb. 13, 1919 (with cover letter).**

Document in DoJ/BoI Investigative Files, NARA collection M-1085, reel 923, file 167630.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL Boston, Mass.

Feb. 13, 1919.

GEK:GTD

February 18, 1919.

SUMMARY REPORT

**In Re: IWW ACTIVITIES
(General Survey of This District)**

William E. Allen, Esq.,
Acting Chief,
Bureau of Investigation,
Department of Justice.

Dear Sir:

Pursuant to your recent request I am submitting herewith a summary report upon IWW or Bolsheviki activities within the district of Massachusetts prepared by Informant Peterson of this office, and based upon special reports rendered by Special Agents Weiss, Molt, Butterworth, Robinton, and Informant Peterson.

In connection with the above report, advices are requested in regard to furnishing a copy of the same to Assistant US Attorney Dewey on the basis of my letter of February 15, 1919.

Yours very truly,

G.E. Kelleher,
Division Superintendent.

.

Pursuant to instructions from Division Superintendent < *words obscured on film* > following resume, based upon special reports rendered by Special Agents Weiss, Molt, Butterworth, Robinton, and Peterson, covering recent developments in the IWW situation in this district.

The unsettled condition following upon the declaration of an armistice in November has given an unequaled opportunity for the trained agitators of the International Workers of the World [*sic.*] to foment discontent in all branches of labor. Those who have been most conspicuous as trouble makers in and around Boston are:

Louis C. Fraina: (Italian), now just through serving a month in New York for violation of the Espionage Act.

Eadmonn MacAlpine: (Sinn Feiner), Editor of *Revolutionary Age* during Fraina's imprisonment.

Ludwig Lore: (German), Editor of *NY Volkszeitung*.

Gregory Weinstein: (Russian), Editor of *Novyi Mir*.

N.I. Hourwich: (Jew), radical speaker in Russian.

Santeri Nuorteva: (Finn), sponsor of the social revolution.

Peter P. Cosgrove: (Canadian), general troublemaker among jewelry workers around Taunton.

In all of the radical meetings held in Boston for the past 3 months, where the audience has been predominantly foreign born, either one or more speakers from the before-mentioned have appeared to extol internationalism and to deride the actions of the United States government. All of these are forceful speakers and time and again have aroused audiences of 2,000 or more to fever heat. When not on the platform, these agitators are writing for such publications as *The Revolutionary Age*, which first appeared in Boston on *November 16, 1918*, frankly anti-American and pro-revolutionary, exhorting the masses to lawlessness and holding up the Russian Soviets as the ideal of self-government.

Besides this work, which is conducted in English and therefore has to be bridled, to a certain extent, in order to conform at least with the letter of the law, these agitators are simultaneously carrying on IWW propaganda in foreign languages. Here they have the chance for more rabid utterance, with less fear of apprehension; for any foreign language offers means of expounding anti-governmental doctrines without offering literal means of translation which would lay the user open to prosecution. Hence in the foregoing list of agitators there are already 6 languages other than English at the command of 6 men to whom patriotism means nothing — law and order, less than nothing — if opposed to their cause.

The sanest way of dealing with these professional troublemakers would be to outlaw them from the country for which they hold no respect. They surely can not further the future good of America by transferring Old World class feuds to this country or by

influencing the immigrant population of the country to derive as many benefits as possible without giving either allegiance or respect in return.

The agency through which most of the foregoing agitators' Boston activities have been conducted is the headquarters of the Massachusetts Socialist Party at *685 Washington St., Boston, Mass.* Their official organ is the *New England Leader*, whose publication is directed from this same office but which is printed in Fitchburg, Mass.

Corresponding foreign language newspapers in and around Boston, having socialistic and anarchistic tendencies are the following:

Italian: *IL PENSIERO*. Editor: *Felix Guadagni*. Publisher: *John C. Gambera*, 30 Hanover St., Boston, Mass.

Portuguese: *A LUZ*. Editor: *Vasco Pamplona*, 669 S. 1st, New Bedford, Mass.

Lettish [Latvian]: *ATBALSS*. Editor: *John F. Apsit*, 53 Dudley St. [Boston]. †

Finnish: *RAIVAAJA*. Editor: *Wilho Boman*, 47 Wallace Ave., Fitchburg, Mass.

The Revolutionary Age, appearing at the Progress Press, 53 Dudley St. [Boston], is the most radical of the local publications and did not come out until after the signing of the armistice.

As regards these various publications, the fact that certain issues were barred from the mails serves only to bring out more rabid issues which are freely sold at such meetings as those that have been held this winter at the Dudley St. Opera House. The *New York Call*, *Novyi Mir*, *The Soviets at Work* and other publications banned by Postmaster General Burleson have found a ready sale here. ‡

Eastern Part of Massachusetts.

In the industrial centers of Eastern Massachusetts, such as Lynn, Salem, Lowell, Lawrence, Fitchburg, Maynard, and Sardner, strikes are usually begun by the foreign element, as was the case in the

†- *Atbals* [Echo] was published briefly in 1918 during a period in which the Latvian Socialist Federation's flagship publication, *Stādnieks*, was banned — before *Atbals* was banned from the mails itself. Only one specimen of the paper, a copy of the first issue (published on Feb. 15, 1918), is known to have survived.

‡- *The Soviets at Work: The International Position of the Russian Soviet Republic and the Fundamental Problems of the Socialist Revolution* was a pamphlet by N. Lenin, published by the Rand School of Social Science.

present Lawrence strike. When the strikes is well under way, some professional agitator, (such as Jim Larkin, at Lawrence), appears to encourage the strikers holding out. Meanwhile itinerant speakers are busy in other industrial centers to elicit sympathy for the strikers and to urge other communities to join the movement. All of which is tending toward the general strike, attempted in Seattle, and which, according to all of the IWW speakers, is the most effective weapon on the proletariat. According to the program which is enthusiastically subscribed to at all of the large mass meetings being held in this district, the workers' aim is to "strike for shorter hours and more pay." When that is accomplished they are to "strike for shorter hours and more pay." And they are not to be satisfied until they have acquired the earth. Agent quotes from the speech of one *MacDonald* who spoke at the Dudley St. Opera House early in last December and was wildly cheered for the statement given above.

Agent believes that if these outside interceders could be summarily dealt with for hindering district negotiations between employer and employee, the general strike need not become a menace.

When actual demands begin to assume the character of "54 hours pay for 48 hours work," then we see the actual putting into practice of the demand for the "whole earth," quoted above.

Southeastern Part of Massachusetts.

In the textile mills and the machine shops of the Southeastern part of Massachusetts, comprising the cities of Fall River, Brockton, New Bedford, and Taunton, IWW agitation has been rife for the past 2 years or more. Among the agitators the most prominent have been:

Oliver Christian, who was arrested in Lawrence in 1918 for inciting riots, and whose activities have centered upon reorganizing the IWW in Lawrence.

William R. Ginrod, 5981 Pleasant St., New Bedford, Mass. has been an active assistant of Christian's.

John Golden, President of the International Textile Workers, and *Sarah Conboy*, Secretary, have been helped by *George W. Brady*, Secretary-Treasurer of the Longshoremens' District Council, Hanover and Blackstone Streets, Boston, in their efforts to establish the IWW in this district.

Fred W. Suito, a rabid agitator, and *Thomas A. Breck*, President of the Textile Workers' Council, Main St., Maynard, Mass. have both been extreme in their criticism of this country's part in the war.

Leroy Harlacker, whose residence is supposed to be in Fall River, Mass., seems to be a professional agitator employed to inculcate IWW doctrines into the cotton mill workers.

Additional names of agitators and IWW members of this district are on file in this office and will be furnished if desired.

New York agitators seem to be prominent in the paper mills. Chief among these was *J.B. Nellegar*, whose headquarters were at 127 North Pearl St., Albany, NY at the date of last report of his activities rendered this office. (September 6, 1917).

Western Part of Massachusetts.

At Holyoke, Mass. there is an IWW organization which has been in existence a year and of which *Lawrence Bowrowski* is President and acting Secretary. Their meetings are held at Kosciuszko Hall, 117 Lyman St., Holyoke, Mass., owned by a Polish Society, were forbidden by the Polish governing board, owing to remarks made there against the government. After having been driven from two other halls and having had their quarters at the rear of 321 Park St., Holyoke, Mass., raided by the Holyoke Police on Sept. 22, 1918, they have been meeting at the home of *Samuel Schneider*, 694 South East Street, Holyoke.

In the smaller communities, such as Ludlow, Greenfield, Turner's Falls, Ware, West Warren, and Southampton, there is considerable unrest fostered by agitators from New York, Boston, Springfield, and Holyoke.

Names of local agitators and IWW members in this part of the state are on file at the Springfield office of this Bureau.

For detailed accounts of their activities, Agent would respectfully refer to reports of

Agent *Butterworth* for Jan. 13, 1919, Jan. 24, 1919, Jan. 5, 1919, Jan. 9, 1919, Jan. 10, 1919.

Agent *Potter* for Jan. 9, 1919, Sept. 5, 1918, Sept. 25, 1918, Sept. 27, 1918, Dec. 21, 1918, Jan. 3, 1919, Jan. 11, 1919.

Agent *Dowd* for Jan. 15 and 16, 1919.

Lists of the various foreign IWW organizations in the 3 divisions covered by this report are on file in this office, with the names and addresses of various individuals who are known to be anarchistically inclined.

Though Agent feels that deportation of leaders may not solve the whole problem of industrial unrest, yet it is a certainty that conditions can be bettered by enlisting the sympathies of employers whose business is dependent upon the good will of their workers and in lending more attention on the part of communities to the housing and recreation of the workers. Agent has felt very keenly, on attending the various meetings in which the audience was largely foreign born, that to these people the radical meetings, instituted by the local socialists, and charging no admission, were a real enjoyment, purely from the opportunity it gave them on their free day to mingle with their own kind and enjoy the program. It seemed, therefore, that if the trouble had been taken on the part of the community, or some local organization, other than the radical elements, to provide such an afternoon, that the audience might have been as receptive to more healthy doctrines than those promulgated at these meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Peterson,
Informant.

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing Corvallis, OR, 2007. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.