
The Issue is “Americanism vs. Bolshevism.”

Unsigned article in the *Milwaukee Leader*, v. 8, no. 309 (Dec. 6, 1919), pg. 1.
Written in a style shared by Victor Berger and Oscar Ameringer, probably by the latter.

The issue in this campaign in “Americanism vs. Bolshevism,” say the “100% Patriots” — the profiteers — the Tory Loyalists — the frothy-mouthed “Legionnaires.”

They say “Bolshevism is a revolution by force — by bloodshed — a revolution from below.”

And we are against it.

Well and good! For the sake of argument — let us accept this definition of the “100% Patriots” for Bolshevism.

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But what is Americanism?

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We believe that most men will agree that the real Americanism is best expressed in the following sentences of the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident:

That all men are created equal;

That they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights;

That among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;

That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed;

That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

Reducing this magnificent passage still more, we find that democratic government by the consent of the governed is the essence of Americanism.

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Jingoism is not Americanism. Race hatred is not Americanism. Mobbing foreigners is not Americanism. Lynching opponents is not Americanism. Obeying blindly the brutal Wilson-Palmer-Burleson combination is not Americanism.

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Declaring our form of government is perfect is not Americanism.

Foaming at the mouth about Bolsheviki and IWW is not Americanism.

Painting churches and homes yellow is not Americanism.

Breaking up peaceful assemblies by mobs of ex-soldier boys is not Americanism.

Destroying the freedom of expression by packed juries is not Americanism.

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Getting up a “slush fund” of \$100,000 in this campaign — to which the banks alone contribute \$20,000 — to corrupt the voters and defeat Victor Berger is not Americanism.

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The whole world is in the throes of a gigantic social revolution hastened by the world war.

All about us we see the old order falling. Russia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Bulgaria, one after the other, are sucked in by the vortex of revolution that will swallow all Europe and will swallow us — if we desert

Americanism — government by the consent of the governed.

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There are but two ways for the forces of evolution — expansion or explosion. All history is but the recounting of the struggle of the new against the old.

And always the new cried for light, for air, for room to grow. And always the old, in tottering self-conceit, denied the new a place in the sun, until the youthful giant burst his bonds and killed his parents.

Must we, too, refuse the guiding light of history and tread the path that leadeth to destruction?

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The foundations of democracy are freedom of expression and representative government.

The American people are the jury in every dispute. Their verdict is final. And they have the right to elect any citizen they choose — as their representative.

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The attack of the present administration against free dome of speech and press and the ousting of Victor Berger from Congress is, therefore, a flagrant violation of fundamental Americanism.

Without the right of every constituency to be represented by the man of its choice, democracy becomes a hollow mockery.

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Already there are millions of men in this country who look upon the ballot as a joke. Tell them about fighting the political struggle with peaceful means and they will answer: "They shut up your speakers, break up your meetings, suppress your papers, and kick out your elected representatives."

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Pray, what answer can you give to these people? Our capitalist rulers have done their utmost to discredit the old American way by calling in suppression, lawlessness, and mob rule as the handmaiden of government.

Must the mob from below fight the mob above?

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We Socialists still hope that government by the consent of the governed will not perish in the land of its birth. That is one of the reasons why we are making such heroic sacrifices to preserve the shattered remnants of American democracy.

If you are a true American; if you love and cherish the great ideals of government from below, then cast your lot with us.

Today the spirit of Americanism has found sanctuary in the hearts of the Socialists alone.

Vote with us next Monday.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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