HE WENTIES // POLITICAL CARTOONS

Eight political cartoons on the Red Scare are presented in this collection. Published in mainstream newspapers, they reflect the postwar anxiety fueled by anarchist bombings, nationwide labor strikes, radical activists, Communists in unions and liberal groups, and the murderous Bolshevik takeover of Russia in 1917. Americans wondered: Was a Communist-inspired revolution imminent in America? Could it happen here?

To analyze a political cartoon, consider its:

- □ CONTENT. First, basically describe what is drawn in the cartoon (without referring to the labels). What is depicted? What is happening?
- ☐ CONTEXT. Consider the timing. What is happening in national and world events at the time of the cartoon? Check the date: what occurred in the days and weeks before the cartoon appeared?
- LABELS. Read each label; look for labels that are not apparent at first, and for other written content in the cartoon.
- ☐ SYMBOLS. Name the symbols in the cartoons. What do they mean? How do they convey the cartoon's meaning?
- □ TITLE. Study the title. Is it a statement, question, exclamation? Does it employ a well-known phrase, e.g., slang, song lyric, movie title, radio show, political or product slogan? How does it encapsulate and enhance the cartoonist's point?
- TONE. Identify the tone of the cartoon. Is it satirical, comic, tragic, ironic, condemning, quizzical, imploring? What adjective describes the feeling of the cartoon? How do the visual elements in the drawing align with its tone?
- POINT. Put it all together. What is the cartoonist's point?

QUESTIONS

- As evidenced in the cartoons, what attitudes and anxieties dominated the period of the Red Scare?
- What solutions, safeguards, and built-in remedies were portrayed by the cartoonists?

RED SCARE



"The Cloud"
The Atlanta Constitution, January 19, 1919



"The Big Red Apple" Los Angeles Times, April 19, 1923



"The Cloud!"

The Atlanta Constitution, January 19, 1919

Cartoonist: Lewis Crumley Gregg

Anarchism. Bolshevism. U.S. Europe. Lightning bolts—Murder, Arson, Plunder, Rapine [pillage]. Bolshevik caricature: Russian fur hat, ragged beard, burly facial characteristics, bomb with lit fuse. (The commenting turtle was a characteristic feature of Gregg's cartoons.)

On the day preceding this cartoon, the conference forging the World War One peace treaty convened near Paris, France. During the month of January, the brutal Russian Civil War expanded west and east, and a Communist uprising in Germany was suppressed.

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"UNANIMOUS"

Chicago Tribune, February 18, 1919

Cartoonist: Carey Orr

Bolshevik Agitator. I.W.W. Life of Trotsky. Labor. Farmer. Press. Legislator. Public. Capital [business/finance].

I.W.W.: International Workers of the World.

Leon Trotsky: a Bolshevik leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

In February 1919, fear of Communist/Bolshevik agitation in the U.S. was heightened by the nationally covered Seattle general strike, the Senate Overman Committee investigation into Bolshevik activity in the U.S., and daily coverage of the escalatingl civil war in Bolshevik Russia and of Communist uprisings in other European nations.

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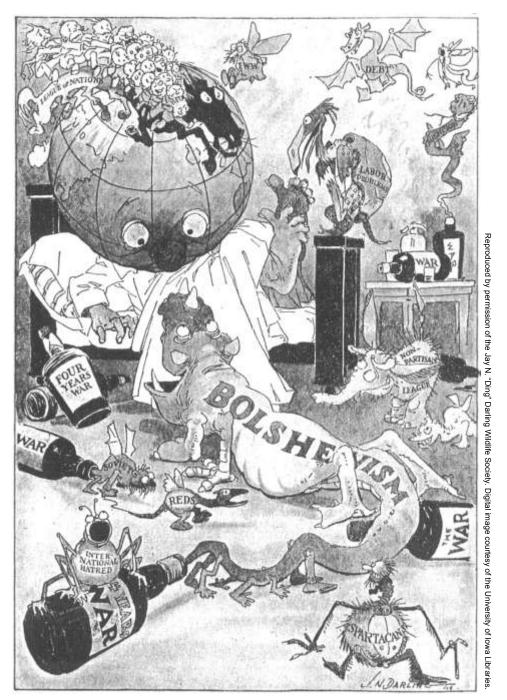
"Bolshevik: 'Join Us! See How I've Bettered My Condition in Less than Two Years!"

Life, March 27, 1919 Cartoonist: Harry Grant Dart

American worker: worker's hat, pipe, thin moustache, "full dinner pail," strong confident stance. Russian worker: unkempt beard and hair, ragged clothing, starvation apparent in eyes.

Since the Russian Revolution of 1917, Russia had been embroiled in civil war and ethnic conflict.

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"The Result of the Debauch"

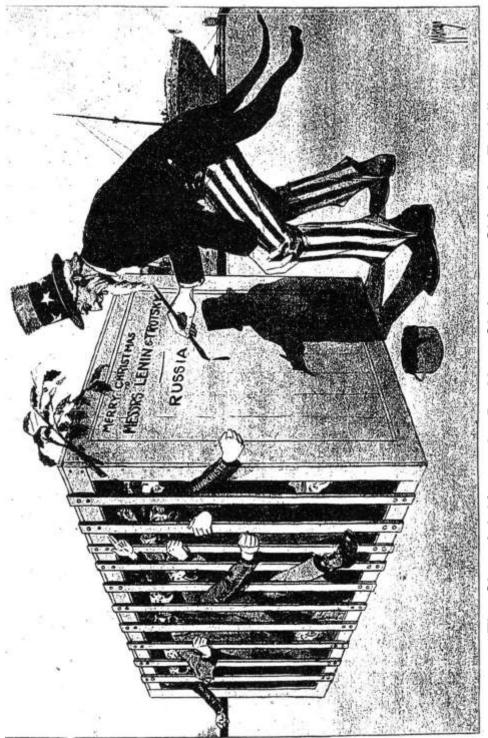
Des Moines Register [lowa], June 7, 1919

Cartoonist: Jay N. "Ding" Darling

League of Nations. I.W.W. Debt. Suspicion. Labor Problems. War. Four Years War. Soviets. Reds. Bolshevism. International Hatred. Spartacans. Non-Partisan League.

Debauch: Overindulgence in a sensual pleasure (in this case, a drunken binge, i.e., the war and its aftermath). Spartacans: German Communists who supported an unsuccessful workers' uprising in Berlin in January 1919.

Non-Partisan League: Populist farmers' organization in North Dakota that elected a legislature in 1918 which enacted a program of state-run banks and grain storage facilities to counter the corporate dominance of big railroads and flour companies; opposed as a radical socialist group and voted out of office in the early 1920s.



"The Cheerful Giver—Or, Do Your Christmas Shipping Early"

The New York Times, December 21, 1919 Cartoonist: Edwin Marcus

Crated deportees: Anarchists, Bolsheviks, I.W.W.

On December 21, 1919, an army transport ship nicknamed the "Soviet Ark" left New York harbor with 249 Russian immigrants being deported as "undesirable aliens," including the anarchist leader Emma Goldman. Most were anarchists and Communists who had been rounded up in the November 7 "Palmer Raids" initiated by Atty. Gen. A. Mitchell Palmer. On January 16, 1920, the ship arrived in Finland and the deportees were transported by train to the Russian border.

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"Into the Garbage Can"

Life, March 17, 1921

Cartoonist: Rollin Kirby

Bolshevism. American Federation of Labor. Rubbish.

"Let the Soviet savages know what labor of the civilized world thinks of their bestial system." From the manifesto of the American Federation of Labor, February 27, 1921. In January 1921, to counter accusations that the American Federation of Labor was sympathetic to Communism and the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, the union leadership officially denounced Soviet Russia, Communism, and labor radicalism. The cartoon quotes a statement of AFL president Samuel Gompers published in the March 1921 issue of the AFL journal, The American Federationist.

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"The Nice Red Apple"

Los Angeles Times, April 19, 1923

Cartoonist: Edmund Gale

U.S.A. Russia. Bolshevism. Liberalism (apple offered by the tempting snake). Skulls.

In April 1923 came warnings from President Harding, AFL leader Samuel Gompers, and others "to denounce those forms of destructive radicalism which, in the name of liberalism, are propagandizing in the United States to alter the structure of this government and to destroy its military system." They warned that liberal ideas such as pacifism and social welfare legislation were advocated by "genuine Americans whose patriotism is unimpeachable" yet were unwitting victims of Communist propaganda spread to weaken American resistance to radical ideas.

Robert Armstrong, ""Leaders Warn of Radicalism / Spread of Moscow-Directed Doctrine Is Denounced . . . People Shown Communism in Liberalism Cloak," Los Angeles Times, April 18, 1923 [quoted text from Times article, not leaders' speeches]

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"Sour Grapes"

Los Angeles Times, November 20, 1926

Cartoonist: Morris [George Matthew Adams Newspaper Service]

In the Aesop fable of the fox and the grapes, the thirsty fox fails in repeated attempts to jump and grasp the grapes, a failure he dismisses by insisting the grapes were probably sour.

In the mid 1920s as Joseph Stalin cemented his control of Communist Russia, he argued that Russia's socialist revolution could succeed without concurrent worldwide workers' uprisings—a reversal of basic Marxist-Leninist theory. Later he insisted that the revised position reflected original party policy

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