

A Challenge and A Greeting

By Rose Pastor Stokes

MAY DAY—the day of Labor's International— and never before a May Day so thrillingly significant! Where once we hoped, today we realize; where once we yearned, today we fulfill; where once we only thought, today we think and act! Not all of us, everywhere, true; but for millions of us, the world's workers, the day of liberation has dawned.

For us here, how sweet-scented is this Day with the air of approaching freedom! From far lands in the old world is borne to us the new odor of the flowers of our long awaited Spring-time—the Spring-time of Humanity. And for the gift of this fragrance, from blossoms nurtured with the blood of Europe's revolutionary proletariat, we send them, in return, the electric current of our unshakable will—to be faithful and loyal to the true International.

From over the vast spaces we hear the voices of our Comrades. Over the still-budding birth of Liberty; over the world-filling clash of class will and class conflict; over the effort of the world's exploiters (hiding behind armies of confused workers—"facing" the aroused, irresistible hosts of the proletariat); over the battle of the losing Black guards against the winning Red Guards there comes to us, workers of America, a ringing call. In the accents of Shelley, in the meaning of Marx, millions of voices, mingling as one voice, cry to us:

*"Rise like lions after slumber,
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth
like dew,
Ye are many, they are few."*

And we—we stir, we make answer. Hear us, Comrades. Catch the meaning of our message over the "wireless" of our world-encircling class-consciousness . . .

Yes! We are many, they are few. Yet we have slept. Yet we have allowed them to rob us of the common earth and the fruit of our hands; to bleed us white for their strength; to break us in our youth that they might have youth in old age; to draw the frail energies of our children and shut the gates of industry in our men's faces for their profit. We, the many, who build all that is built, clothe all that are clothed, feed all that are fed, who carry and fetch, comfort and heal, educate and entertain, create and inform; we have suffered them, the few, to leave us ill-sheltered and naked, hungry and insecure, limited, sick and uncomfortable; untaught, unsatisfied, repressed, uninformed, while them we have surfeited with all things.

We, the many, have suffered them, the few, to insult and betray us—to send us forth with the Judas-kiss of their hypocritical patriotism to kill our comrades and be killed, that they, the betrayers, might gain a few more bloody pieces of imperialistic silver. We, the many, have permitted them, the few, to fatten us before the killing, for their gold's sake, and then for the sake of their gold to starve us at the very doors of our own granaries.

Like sheep have they driven us over the separating stiles of creed, race, nationality. While they themselves welcome every faith and color and nation in an imperialistic alliance against us, we have, ourselves, been divided by them into Jew and Christian; Black and White and Yellow; Teuton, Slav and Anglo-Saxon—Native and Alien.

We have been lured by a beautiful word made hateful with bourgeois hypocrisy; and turned deaf ears to the music of a phrase become sweet with the prophecy of proletarian power.

Berlin, October 31 st 1918

To the workers and soldiers of the entente!

Friends, Comrades, Brothers!

In the midst of the earthquake of the world war, of the chaotic collapse of the tzaristic imperialist society the Russian proletariat, in spite of misunderstanding, hatred and slander, has established its rule—the Socialist Republic of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants. It is the titanic beginning of the Socialist construction of the world, the work which constitutes now the historic task of the international proletariat. The Russian revolution has tremendously stimulated the revolutionizing process of the world's proletariat. Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary are already drawn into the struggle. The German revolution, too, is awakening. Still, tremendous difficulties are arising on the way to victory of the German proletariat. The bulk of the people of Germany are with us. The power of the most bitter enemies of the working class is breaking down. Still they are striving by means of lies and deception to chain the masses to their chaotic and to put off the hour of the emancipation of the people of Germany.

And just as the imperialism of the Entente powers was strengthened by the robberies and murders perpetrated by German imperialism in Russia, so have the German rulers made use of the assault of the Entente powers upon Socialist Russia for the maintenance of their power in Germany.

Have you seen how a few weeks ago Kaiser Wilhelm II, who after the overthrow of Tzarism is the representative of the most infamous reaction, made use of the intervention of the Entente powers against proletarian Russia to arouse anew the war spirit of the masses of workers?

We cannot allow that such welcome opportunities for demagoguery be placed into the hands of our contemptible enemies—the most abominable enemy of the world proletariat. It cannot be that the proletariat of the Entente powers should allow such a thing to happen. Of course we know that you have already raised your voice against the machinations of your governments. But the danger is constantly growing. The united front of the world imperialism against the proletariat is becoming a reality in the case of the campaign against the Russian Soviet Republic.

It is to fight to prevent this that I am appealing to you!

The world proletariat cannot allow the hearth of the Socialist Revolution to be put out if it does not want to see its own hopes and power vanish. The downfall of the Russian Soviet Republic would mean the defeat of the world proletariat.

Friends, Comrades, Brothers! Raise your arms against your masters! Long live Russia of the Workers, Peasants and Soldiers!

Long live the revolution of the French, British, Italian and American proletariat!

Long live the emancipation of workingmen of all countries from the hell of war, exploitation and slavery!

From The Class Struggle

Karl Leibknecht.

We have allowed the Church, State, Press, Bourse to drug, suppress, confuse and swindle us—to undermine the foundations of our uprearing class-solidarity, while diplomats and politicians have used us as pawns in their criminal game.

But even as "lions after slumber" we, in America too, are awakening. We too, are flinging our proletarian challenge into the teeth of our bourgeois sharks:

You have fed upon us and our wives and our children long enough! We shall take our common heritage, the land. We shall take the mills and the mines and the workshops; we shall take the roads and the wires and the ships. All that we have made and you have bled we shall take. We shall establish an order in which none shall starve who is a willing worker and none shall eat who can work and will not; where each shall have a

voice and vote who has the will to serve, and where the deliberate idler alone shall be disfranchised. In which enforced idleness of men and industry will be as rare as now it is common; in which insecurity, that cancer in your hellish civilization, shall disappear from the social body forever.

We shall become masters of our own destiny as today we are victims of your greed. We shall control all things that they, who create all things may profit thereby. We shall rear temples of

Art, Science, Learning for ourselves and our children as to date we have done these things for you alone. No longer at us, the "ignorant" and "uncouth," shall you fling the challenge of the culture with which we have labored to provide you.

We shall wipe out war and the cause of war. We shall wipe out the parasitism that, to exist, must find more and ever more victims to feed upon. This May Day, we, the many, aroused and alert, reaffirm our solidarity with our brothers in revolutionary lands. You shall not use us to wage your predatory wars upon our own class. We solemnly vow, and give you warning, that never shall we become executioners of our own freedom, destroyers of our own hope, traitors to our own historic destiny, prison wardens of our own power!

Speak what sweet words you may, never shall you lure us with honeyed phrases; conjure up from your trick-bag of cunning diplomacy what scare you may, no racial, religious or nationalistic bogey shall frighten us. We have done. The spell is broken. We know the secret of all your black magic. Our seeing eyes are turned to the most significant, the most stupendous fact in all history: **THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD ARE STRUGGLING SUCCESSFULLY TO THROW THE PARASITES OFF THEIR BACKS.**

You the few, have browbeaten us long enough. Your bullying must come to an end.

Soon we shall have done toiling and starving, fighting and dying

for you. Our hands that have been busy in your service shall become busy in our own. For you, we shall cease to labor. Against the power that resides in our unitedly idle hands you cannot prevail. To our general order "Tools down!" you may oppose the cry "To arms!" It will avail you nothing. Our forces are gathering. "We are many, ye are few!"

Yes, soon we shall have done toiling and starving, fighting and dying for you. Against your industrial chaos we shall oppose our industrial order; against your social rottenness we shall oppose our social sanity; against your war-breeding imperialism we shall oppose the fraternal interdependence of our Socialist Republics; against your Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie we shall oppose our Dictatorship of the Proletariat. This, despoilers of the People, is our May Day challenge to you!