

The Versailles Peace

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French Socialist Party.*

IT was to be expected that those who have signed "their" peace should rejoice—and congratulate themselves; that they should try to give to the occasion a solemnity which the situation renders false; that, in order to again fool the masses—and perhaps to convince themselves—they should loudly affirm that June 28, 1919 is a date forever memorable.

It was also to be expected that bourgeois democrats and social reformers, who, during the war, believed that the leaders of the Entente would end it by an honest and durable peace—the Peace of Justice, crowning the Last War—should now burst out in useless lamentations and superfluous reproaches.

For us, who have always declared that the war, imperialistic in its origin would be also imperialistic in its results; for us, who have ceaselessly warned the labor organizations against the dangers of Wilsonian politics—the so-called "peace" treaty is just what it ought to be, the logical and foreseen conclusion of a butchery undertaken by two rival capitalist coalitions for a new partition of the world.

By a clever exploitation of secular hatreds—the result of an entire history of violence and plunder—by a shrewd stimulation of nationalist passions, by concealing their real aims, the governments of all the belligerent countries made the war acceptable to the masses of the people.

By the suppression of civil liberties, by dictatorship, by the formidable oppressive organization of the capitalist state, they have held these masses in the flaming inferno; blinding and bewildering the majority of them by means of the ferocious propaganda of a servile press, and breaking the resistance of the rest by a pitiless repression—always ready to pay their own price to those who will remain silent at the right time, who will talk when it is profitable, and who will resign when it is demoralizing.

Thanks to this eclipse of the human conscience, to these obscurities carefully maintained, they have conducted their war to its logical end—world wide economic autocracy. On one side Anglo-American Capitalist—Imperialism, on the other side German Cap-

italist-Imperialism, both equally greedy, both equally contemptuous of humanitarian phraseology and accepting no other limit to their appetites except the fortune of arms. Versailles is no more a surprise than Brest-Litovsk was. The world market, which would have belonged to the financial oligarchy of Berlin if official Germany had conquered, now belongs to the financial oligarchy of London and Washington. If the proletarian revolution does not put things in order, these financiers will direct, for their own profit, all the productive forces of the universe.

Such is, in spite of all the superficial demonstrations, all the gilt and bunting, all the triumphant brass band music, the true and only significance of the treaty.

It is sometimes compared to the treaty of Vienna. The League of Nations, in fact, is nothing but a Holy Alliance infinitely more hypocritical and oppressive, which puts at the service of Capitalism all modern technique. But at Vienna Talleyrand was not received with a shower of stones (like the German delegates at Versailles) and what is more the Congress of Vienna really settled the peace of the world for the first half of the nineteenth century.

But the Treaty of Versailles does not finish the war, even with Germany. The signatures of the figureheads Muller and Bell, representatives of the most tottering government of the world, give only illusory guarantees of peace. In reality hostilities will continue between France in arms—acting as sentinel while America and England go peacably about their profitable business—and Germany for the moment disarmed, but trembling and impatient to free herself from insupportable slavery.

No working class could accept the conditions imposed by the treaty upon the German proletariat, crushed under an eternity of obligations and servitude and at the same time forbidden the means to fulfill these terrible demands. After having fought for its masters

the German proletariat must now organize to struggle for its own existence. This situation will bear heavily upon the shoulders of the international proletariat and more particularly upon the French proletariat, ruined and bled white by the war, driven by its government against the Russian and Hungarian revolutions and forced to face the terrible economic and military burdens piled up to annihilate the German proletariat's struggle for liberty.

No, it is not peace; for the merciless war between the old world crashing down and the new world arising continues everywhere. It is not only, as in 1815, the liberal protests which arise, or the protests of nations in slavery against their foreign oppressors. The war has cost too much, and victorious Capitalism has paid for its victory too colossal a price, in treasure, in tears, in blood. On the shattered ruins of what was once their bastille, the exploited workers of all countries are expressing more and more loudly, more and more imperiously their will to destroy Capitalism—the exploiter.

In spite of the powers of which it disposes, in spite of censorship and repression, in spite of a press filled with calumny, hatred, and lies the bourgeois autocracy cannot prevent the truth from spreading and penetrating the most profound strata of the people. Some politicians may be able to set up a new equilibrium founded on a coalition of anti-German appetites; but they cannot much longer avoid facing the facts that the war has consecrated the downfall of the capitalist, nationalist state—which has become in the strong words of Trotsky, "an intolerable obstacle to economic development."

Whatever they do, the hour is approaching, when, realizing the powerlessness of the bourgeoisie to escape from the chaos it has created and from the abyss of misery which the prolongation of bourgeois domination means, the proletarians of Europe will finally shake off the yoke; and, sole masters of the state power and of their own destinies, they will establish, by the union of all the proletariats in the only League of Nations possible—the *Communist International*—peace, real peace, happy and enduring.

Class War Prisoners Greet the Left Wing

The National Left Wing Conference received the following letter at its first session, June 21, 1919:

We, members of the Socialist Party now confined as political prisoners in the U. S. Disciplinary Barracks, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, send our cordial greetings and heartiest encouragement to the Left Wing of the American Socialist Party.

We place our hope for the future of American Socialism in Left Wing control of the Party.

Carl Haessler, Milwaukee; A. V. Alexander, Passaic, N. J.; O. H. Wangerin, St. Paul; Jacob Schneider, Boston; Leopold Weinstein, Newark, N. J.; Richard Carlson, St. Paul; Leopold B. Balner, Philadelphia; Carl Johnson, St. Paul; Lazarus B. Marcowitz, Kings County, N. Y.; Gunnard Johnson, St. Paul; John Flage, Virginia, Minn.; Jacob Miller, New York City; Emil Nygard, Duluth, Minn.; Frank E. Rayer, Cleveland; Stanley A. Marshall, Cincinnati; John Grass, Hudson County, N. J.; Axel W. Carlson, St. Paul.

We, political prisoners here but not party members, endorse the above.

Clark H. Getts, H. Austin Simons, M. J. Plonsker, H. D. Cohen, Herman A. Blass, Ross Michael Holwach, Jacob Lalek, Stephen Reckhoff, Chas. P. Larsen, Alex Norbe, W. B. Hollingsloods, H. Stanley Megender, Leroy Hoelcher, A. H. Smith, Tony Pruschuk, John Schmidt, John Kos, Alexy Kiriluk, Egnatz Kruvonsko, Xeny Pollack, Morris Falk, Gabriel Petnonar, David Joff, Dan Voloshin, Nick Prokopenko, Michael Prush, Sedor Okilko, Kusma Tkachuk, Sam Mazur, Alex Cherly, Jacob Vogel, Theodore Falatovich, Alex Sologub, Joseph Volsky, Alex Urosky, Avkxenty Solkovitz, Frank Zamatowitz, Xaveluk Ludwig

In addition there are many, both party members and sympathizers, who would sign this statement but who cannot be reached because they are in isolation from the other prisoners.

C. H.