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May Day, 1917

MAY symbolizes the awakening of nature, and May Day symbolizes the awakening of Labor. A year ago, two years ago, one couldn't celebrate May Day with any feeling of enthusiasm. Labor seemed dead; everywhere reaction was triumphant. But this year, there is a real awakening of Labor. In Russia there has been a revolution, and it still is in process of achieving great things. In Germany the Working Class is asserting itself. Great strikes and demonstrations were planned for the First of May, in spite of *Forverts'* hysterical injunction to the contrary. The revolutionary minority backed up the plans for the strike, and thereby inspired and united the forces of aggression against the government. Austria itself is on the verge of revolution, and our uncompromising comrades in France are waiting for an opportunity to act. The revolts against the government in Spain have been only temporarily suppressed. Swedish workers demonstrated for a Republic, and Italy is

in a state of revolution. The Italian Socialist party has maintained an uncompromising opposition to the war, and is in a physical and moral position of great strategic power. In Argentina the Socialist party in its convention voted down a proposal to compromise with the ruling class in favor of action that might lead to war. In this country, in spite of the triumph of the reaction and the apparent moral and physical bankruptcy of the party, in spite of Gompers and the A. F. of L., strikes are being organized and the radical forces lining up for the fight. Truly, the promise of May Day this year is indeed a revolutionary promise! And the meaning of May is clear!

A New Trial for Mooney

Two of New York's newspapers comment on the "astounding fact" that millions of Americans heard of Mooney for the first time when the cable report came of the demonstration in Petrograd in favor of Mooney. Astonishing? It is the usual thing. Outrages against representatives of labor are suppressed as much as possible. Mooney is to have a new trial; the conspiracy has been exposed. But the danger is not past. The business interests of San Francisco are determined to "get" Mooney. Workers of America, defend your own!

The Other War

THE Socialists who would suspend the class struggle in time of war are blind as bats to the facts of capitalist aggression. The ruling class does not suspend the struggle against labor during war but emphasizes it. Leon Trotsky is still in a concentration camp in Canada, imprisoned by that British government which is fighting for democracy. And Trotsky is not the only victim of the "other war" that the social-patriot wishes to forget, but which the capitalist doesn't. The war has produced its victims in this country. Men and women have been arrested for exercising their constitutional "right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition their Government for a redress of grievances." Men have been thrown into prison for refusing to register in the military census. Men have been shot for not implicitly obeying the orders of military guards. And over in Blackwell's Island to Henry Jager, a Socialist

arrested on a preposterous charge of "disorderly conduct," given six months in jail; and, a new trial having been ordered, Jager is denied bail as a form of persecution. These are the victims of that "other war," whom we must defend. And this is the war that we must pledge our hearts and minds to wage in spite of all.

Expel Meyer London!

MR. MEYER LONDON is still a member of the Socialist party. He is still actively disgracing Socialism—and the party takes no action. In a speech in Congress justifying his recent action, he said: "I did not vote against the bond issue for the simple reason my sympathies are in the main with the cause of the Allies, and I believe that we should render them every form of non-combatant aid." This was preceded by: "I voted against the war resolution. I would vote against it to-day." A simple reason, indeed! Doesn't Meyer London know that of the seven billion dollars, the maximum that may be loaned the Allies is three billions? This leaves four billion dollars to wage a war with, and to pay for developing a menacing American militarism. This is the important thing for Capitalism; the aid to the Allies is incidental. This is what Meyer London cowardly or stupidly didn't vote against. And yet—Meyer London is still a member of the Socialist party!

Aid and Comfort to the Enemy!

THE mind reels at the actions of some of our Socialists. A. M. Simons stigmatizes as "treason" the Convention's resolution on the war, and Allan L. Benson joins in the chorus. William English Walling has wholeheartedly accepted the hypocritical idealism of the ruling class. Charles Edward Russell brands as "anarchists" the Socialist objects to the war. Frank Bohn—of all men!—in the New York Times proposes a plan for virtually starving the European neutrals. Russian Socialists in this country, the social-patriotic group, are urging on the cabal against the real revolutionary forces in Russia. Meyer London in Congress misses a magnificent opportunity, and disgraces himself and his party. All these men are giving aid and comfort to the capitalist enemy. It is the symptom of a corroding disease in the party—Nationalism. More

The Convention Referendum

THE acts of the Emergency Convention are now before the membership for decision. It is a situation in which the radical can find very little comfort. Louis B. Boudin having withdrawn his minority report, there are now two resolutions on the war—the majority report adopted at the Convention, and the pro-war report subsequently issued by a group of delegates. The issue is clear: the majority resolution *does* declare against war, it *does* propose a form of aggressive action; whereas the report of the social-patriotic minority accepts the war and proposes an essentially bourgeois course of action. Adopt the majority report! And then—compel the party to aggressively carry out its general proposals!—On the action to abolish the National Committee the vote should be No. In spite of its faults, the N. C. was a preventive against the autocracy of the party bureaucracy. Obviously, the repeal of Article Two, Section Six, should be sustained. The proposed new platform was jammed through in the last days of the Convention, and without debate. It is futile, and worse. It should be voted down, and a representative platform drafted by a representative body. And while these actions of ours cannot completely express our policy, they can at least prevent the more complete demoralization of the party.

Proletarian Preparedness

IN the state of New York, and presumably in other states as well, sinister capitalist interests are making a vigorous and vicious onslaught upon the labor laws. They wish to destroy the few barriers that labor has erected against ruthless exploitation.

The forces of the enemy are preparing an offensive against the unions—and Gompers falls in the trap by pledging the A. F. of L. not to strike.

The cost of living rises higher and higher, distress becomes more acute, and the general indications are that worse things are to come.

And on top of it all, the ruling class is preparing to impose a tyranny upon the Working Class that will discourage action. The right to strike may be abrogated through legislation.

The proletariat must fight all these measures of reaction and all the causes of its suffering—fight them fearlessly,

relentlessly. To allow these measures to pass, these conditions to exist, is to put our neck into the noose with Capital pulling the rope.

Capitalism uses the war to promote its own class interests. And what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

The danger is immediate, and it is ultimate. These measures of reaction and oppression are not for to-day alone; they are being prepared for to-morrow. Capitalism looks ahead and is organizing for the future. The conditions of war are a direct consequence of the conditions of peace. War does not alter the struggles of peace, but emphasizes them.

In times of war the proletariat prepares for peace. Every strike, every struggle, every act of the proletariat now arouses its strength for the days ahead, develops its moral and physical preparedness. We have a particular menace to fight; but all our actions have an ultimate as well as an immediate scope. Our action to-day prepares the proletariat for the coming struggles to overthrow Capitalism.

The suspension of the class struggle during war is a great calamity for the proletariat, yielding aid and comfort unto our capitalist enemy. It sacrifices our immediate and ultimate interests. It means lower wages and worse conditions of living; moreover, it makes difficult the resumption of an aggressive class struggle during peace. It impairs the morale of the proletariat and dulls its fighting spirit. It is the worst menace of war.

On with the struggle against Capitalism!

The Great Betrayal

IT is unique in the annals of revolutionary movements—the betrayal of Socialism by the Socialist party of America. It is a harsh characterization, perhaps, but true; and these are not the times for mincing words.

The party had ample opportunity to defend itself and prepare its action. For two years this country had been on the verge of war; for two years the greatest pro-war propaganda that history records had been going on; for two years the forces of American Imperialism had been organizing and preparing for aggression; and for two years the Socialist party had been fiddling while Rome burned.

In its propaganda work, through its manifestos and through its press, virtually abandoned the class struggle. Its peace propaganda was largely insincere and bourgeois in spirit. Its press suppressed the facts of the real Socialist situation in Europe. The party leaders either openly or tacitly justified the actions of the European Socialist majority, particularly the Socialist majority of Germany. During this period, Victor L. Berger carried on a propaganda in the Milwaukee *Leader* for war against Mexico, and Meyer London in Congress pledged the party's support to "the country" in the event of war. And the party on the whole supremely accepted this betrayal. The radical spirit of the membership was unable to express itself, because of the officials' control of the press and machinery of the party.

After the severing of diplomatic relations with Germany, the party had an opportunity to act. It did not. True, the party carried on a propaganda against the declaration of war; but it was largely on non-Socialist lines and in co-operation with bourgeois pacifist groups. The party officially did not organize a program of action in the event of war; when such a program was proposed, it was either sneered at or howled down to the tune of "treason!" Nor did the party organize its forces to resist conscription, and other reactionary measures of war. (This is true except in the case of minority groups, and of such locals as Local Kings County, New York.)

The policy of passive protest against the coming of war is futile. The only threat that the ruling class heeds is the threat of aggressive action during the war. And if you do not organize your forces before the declaration of war, you are hampered in your action during the war. This is exactly the colossal error of the European movement, which our party did not heed. And a part of the party, as expressed in its officials, seems to have had neither the will nor the desire to prepare for action.

Then the war came. The Emergency National Convention met in St. Louis. It was a radical convention, largely; but the politicians organized a conspiracy to crush this radical spirit. A resolution was adopted declaring against the war—many thanks! But the resolution itself was a marvellous and impudent expression of insincerity, of compromise, of fear and hesitancy, and of downright dis-

honesty. The measure of this resolution is taken in the action of about fifty of its supporters who, after voting for the resolution, drew up a *pro-war resolution* of their own that smells to high heaven.

Is there a word too harsh to characterize this contemptible and treasonable procedure?

Whatever merit the majority resolution may have is vitiated by the conditions of conspiracy under which it was adopted, and by the action of the fifty delegates who first voted for it and then repudiated it.

This is the great betrayal. These are the circumstances under which this crime against Socialist integrity was perpetrated.

The party is doomed by these acts, unless the revolutionary minority acts and acts immediately. If the minority does not organize itself definitely and aggressively, it will become a *particeps criminis* in the great betrayal.

Comrades of the revolutionary minority, organize and act!

The Safety of Democracy

"The world must be made safe for democracy."—President Woodrow Wilson.

THE process of war may promote democracy directly, providing that the war itself arose out of democratic impulse.

The great war is the consequence of the clash of rival economic interests as expressed in nations, Serbia and Belgium long incidental and unimportant factors. The idealism of "the war for democracy as the rights of small nations" is simply a moral justification for a brutal economic fact, and the means of inciting people to war.

In the past, wars of national liberation arising out of democratic impulses promoted the interests of democracy. But the era of national wars is past. The war of 1870 apparently promoted democracy in France; actually it did not. The decrepit empire of Louis Napoleon was dying of its own evils; while the triumph of Prussia crushed the bourgeois aspirations of the German people, particularly in the Rhenish provinces. The Russian Revolution was accomplished by the revolts of 1905, and not by the war.

The American measures of war are being directly at the freedom of action of the Working Class and at individual liberty—is this making the world safe for democracy? The President is acquiring virtually all the powers of government, becoming a dictator—is this making the world safe for democracy? Conscription is to compel our youth to fight in, and the Working Class to peace for, a war they did not will and did not profit by—is this making the world safe for democracy? The apologists of Capitalism argue that the reactionary measures are temporary—that after the war democracy will be restored and the civil rights of peace restored. This is a justification that does not satisfy. The war is creating the conditions out of which new wars may arise. I cite the testimony of the enemy on this head. The New York *Mail*, one of America's most aggressive and conservative apostles of Imperialism, says in issue of April 27:

"We have no permanent community of interest with the entente. . . . When the war is over we shall face the future with our industrial productive capacity doubled, our stores of loanable capital multiplied tenfold over their pre-war proportions. Where shall we sell the cotton and woolen goods, the glassware and hardware, the steel and iron which these factories are to-day turning out for all the world, our industrial rivals being absorbed in the business of war? . . . The great industries have been doubled to serve the export trade; their market will continue to be found abroad. It will not be found in the entente countries; they will produce for themselves. Both

they and we will engage in a desperate struggle for the markets of the undeveloped non-industrial world—Central and South America and China before all lands. Every nation's accumulations of capital will seek those same lands. The predominance which we seek, and must have, on this hemisphere may disrupt any temporary military alliance that we form. In the same way Great Britain and Japan are already developing points of difference over China. Interests clash! We must be armed and strong for the future."

Are these the conditions that can make the world safe for democracy? They are an incitement to perpetual war. And the identical measures of autocracy that are now necessary for this war, will be deemed necessary as a preparation for the next war.

There is no hope in Capitalism for democracy. And the democracy of Capitalism is itself a sorry and tattered thing. It means the minimum of democracy that may pacify the Working Class temporarily, and that will provide the fitting conditions for the development of the forces of Capitalism.

Bourgeois democracy marked an upward and onward era in human annals. Its historic mission was to destroy feudalism and to allow Capitalism to develop. Being now grown up, Capitalism has little need of its past democracy, and has been and is still developing a form of autocracy much resembling the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV.

The world can be made safe for democracy only by the democracy of Socialism; and that is the task of the revolutionary Working Class of all nations.

The Collapse of Parliaments

THE press of the country assumed that conscription would pass Congress without a struggle. When the opposition developed real strength, the press denounced Congress and unanimously agreed that, "President Wilson will get conscription if he wants it." The whole problem was "put up" to the President as if he were the arbiter of legislation.

And the President is the arbiter of legislation. In the days of peace, tremendous power is lodged in the Executive, the Congress having slight influence on

the President. In times of war, Congress practically disappears as a factor; the President becomes an open dictator. All the proposed legislation for purposes of war centre around the President and lodges complete power in his hands.

The war has shown conclusively that the parliaments are dead. They may function as talk-fests, they may give a Liebknecht the opportunity of using parliament as a forum for revolutionary propaganda; the actual power, the real control over events lies in a dictatorship of one man or a small group of men. The parliaments make motions, but they do not act.

This holds good in all the belligerent nations, except Russia. In that country the situation is different. The parliament there is in its revolutionary age, as it was in France in 1789 and in England a hundred years before. But parliaments elsewhere are in their conservative age, even in their dotage.

The futility of parliamentary control in this war may lead to a misconception, that it is a temporary phenomenon. It is not. The collapse of parliaments, the centralization of power in the Executive, was proceeding rapidly before the war. All that the war has done is to accentuate the development, to blazon it to the world in a new and revolting way.

The economic basis of the collapse of parliaments lies in the concentration of capital. The huge economic units of today cannot function properly unless coordinated through the national government. Industry and the state are being merged into one. More and more the complexity of industry imposes new regulative functions upon the government; and these functions become centralized in an administrative control with virtually unlimited power. Parliaments may talk, but the administrative power directs as the economic power decides.

The war is not simply emphasizing this development; it is creating a demand for a reconstruction of government. The New York *Tribune*, in its February 23, 1917, issue, expressed it this way:

"Our governmental machinery—city, state and national—is not geared to deal with serious economic problems. It breaks down when a demand is made on it for aid in regulating big economic forces. It does not know how to compel economic and social efficiency."

This is drastic criticism, but not quite as drastic as the proposals of the arch-imperialistic London *Times*, which urges the reconstruction of the House of Commons, favoring the abolition of political representation based on geographical divisions, and insisting upon elections by trades, industries and occupations.

All these changes and demands are the political expression of the concentration of industry and the accumulation of capital, out of which arises Imperialism. And a determining development of Imperialism is the centralization of power and the consequent decline of parliamentary prestige. The accelerating factors are the economic unity of Capitalism and its merging of interests in State Socialism, and the increasing severity of the struggles of Imperialism for the control of the investment markets of the world.

This collapse of parliamentary control may lead to one of two things:

Congress and parliaments generally may sink still lower in actual power, and become mere verbal outlets of repressed energy.

Or, their basis of representation and functions may become transformed and adapted in accord with the new conditions, as proposed by the London *Times*.

But whichever course is taken, parliaments will become less and less responsive to the democratic instincts of the age.

The task that these developments impose upon the Socialist is obvious. Parliament never was, and is still less today, a means of revolutionary action for the proletariat.

Parliamentarism showed itself utterly futile in the European crisis. The supreme utility attached to parliamentarism was a strong factor in destroying the morale and taming the fighting energy of the International Socialist movement. Marx bitterly satirized those who consider parliamentarism creative and dynamic. Even had the Socialists had the will to organize actual opposition to the war, what effective means could they have adopted? Parliament had no control over events; all the Socialist parliamentarians could have done was to vote against the war credits, which would not have stopped war. The unions had no initiative, the political movement having always played the dominant role. A General Strike, accustomed to paying a

leading part and not acting in obedience to a parliamentary-mad bureaucracy. The Social Democracy has always denied the unions any vital function, conceiving them as an auxiliary of minor importance with no revolutionary mission to perform.

Parliament—political government—is a bourgeois institution, developed by the bourgeois in their fight against feudalism, and expressing bourgeois requirements of supremacy. Socialism, of course, cannot ignore political government; the political struggles are an expression of class war in capitalist society, and political action becomes a necessary form of action. But the proletariat must develop its own fighting expression, its own organ of government—the revolutionary union. Socialism seeks not control of the State, but the destruction of the State. The revolutionary union alone is capable of dynamic, creative action.

Economic mass action assumes dominance in our tactics as the Socialist movement becomes more definite and aggressive; political action becomes an auxiliary. Revolutionary unionism develops the initiative and virility of the proletariat, unites the proletariat as a fighting force. It organizes the proletariat not alone for every-day struggles but for the final struggle against Capitalism. Revolutionary unionism prepares the workers for their historic mission of ending political government and establishing an industrial government—the "administration of things." Revolutionary unionism, finally, can secure for the workers all necessary immediate reforms through their own efforts, without the action of the State. In this process Revolutionary Unionism develops itself as the means for the overthrow of State Socialism and Imperialism.

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