

## Confusion and Compromise

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the masses of the workers in this country, and to rally all sincere radicals and opponents of militarism and war under its banner of Social Revolution; but its spokesmen and leaders failed to see the light. Their lack of insight and courage means to sidetrack the issue, and consequently they reduced the influence of our party in the conference and in the meeting to zero. Their zeal for adaptation was so great that they "forgot" everything about the class struggle and Socialism, and do not realize their ludicrous and ugly stand even now—as is plainly shown by the boastful clamors of the New York Call. They lost their identity as Socialists by becoming mere creatures of the crowd, and imagine they have acted the part of heroes. *Materiam superabat opus.*

It may be highly possible that finally a new "Progressive Party" will spring up from the Council of the People, and the sponsors of this movement once more will slander and attack the official stand of our party. They then will be able to mislead the workers of this country for years to come, taking advantage of the fact that this movement was fathered by our own leaders. They have rendered a wonderful service to our movement and to our cause, indeed; but what kind of a service is this! The proverbial bear intended to render service to his good master, the traveler, by throwing a stone at the fly that alighted on the latter's forehead, but it smashed his master's head. Our "leaders" apparently are following the example of this bear.

Still, comrades, we should not be discouraged on account of this, although we must realize the danger in which the party can be placed by stupid leadership. The rank and file of the party must pull themselves together, gather up strength and proceed to carrying into practice the program of action proposed by the majority of the Emergency Convention. We must realize once and for all that it is dangerous to trust leaders. If you want to keep them to your aims and ideals, you must rigidly control them, and the more they are controlled, the better they will be. *Let us not let our leaders betray you and your principles, and the whole movement will be set back for years.*

It is your duty now to repudiate their stand in this conference as unsocialistic and at variance with the established principles of our movement and the views expressed by our recent party convention on the question of political trading and other entangling alliances. You should make known to the labor world that they were not representing your views and ideals there, but were acting as individuals. Only a class conscious labor movement will be able to cope with the monsters of militarism and conscription by waging a relentless fight on capitalism. There is no short cut to our victory. The fights that are facing us must be taken up and must be carried on clear and definite class lines. Take the management of the party in your own hands, elect representatives from your own midst, and work out a more perfect control of their activities than we have had heretofore. Let the old leaders go to the Councils of the People for a job; they should have no place in a truly revolutionary Socialist Movement. We hope that our party as a whole will have nothing to do with it. However, we cherish one belief, and that is this: that the days are not far off when we shall have a Council of Workmen and Soldiers on the same pattern as the one now in operation in Russia. Then there will be an end to militarism and conscription, capitalism and world wars. Thither lies our salvation and the emancipation of the proletariat of the world.

It is a well known fact that venereal diseases among the soldiers in the field and at home threaten to affect seriously the recuperative power of the warring nations. Perhaps still more disastrous is the influence on the women. Dr. Engel, member of the City Council of Berlin, reports that the percentage of so-called illegitimate births in the large cities of Germany increased from 15 per cent. in 1914 to 45 per cent. in 1916, and that in the same period the number of reported venereal diseases of women increased tenfold. Such figures combined with those illustrating the physical, mental and moral degeneration of the youth, mark the end of the present period of "civilization."

# THE CLASH AFTER THE WAR

By ANTON PANNEKOEK

WHILE the war is in progress, the highest duty of the socialist proletariat is the fight for its speedy conclusion. But even when peace has been declared, his struggle is not finished. For the effects of the war remain. New problems arise, and must be met.

When the soldiers return to their homes, new misery and new want are grinning at them. Awful as have been the sufferings that war has brought, in one respect the lot of the proletarians is still worse in times of peace. In war times the workers are needed; the bourgeoisie needs their enthusiasm, their willingness to sacrifice, their good will, the spirit of the army is an important factor in warfare. Money, therefore, becomes a secondary consideration, subservient to the aims of the war; aid and assistance are granted with unaccustomed liberality. The working class suffers, it is butchered, but those at home at least maintain a certain livelihood.

That ceases with the coming of peace. The workers are no longer needed as soldiers; they are no longer comrades, defenders of the fatherland, heroes. Once more they become beasts of burden, objects of exploitation. Let them look for work, if they are hungry.

But how about work?

After the war has stopped, the whole industrial economy of the country must again be readjusted. Conditions somewhat similar to the crisis at the beginning of the war will result. At that time the mobilization, in spite of the vast numbers that were drafted into military service, was followed by a terrible period of unemployment which lasted several months until industry had adjusted itself to war conditions, and war orders began to come in. After the war the situation will be exactly reversed; the country must pass from war-production to peace production. But this crisis will be much more severe. In the former case, the old market with its hundredfold demands upon production was replaced by the nation, by the army with its uniform requirements. In place of thousands of competing, hating customers, there was a single one, and with a single aim: to win the war. He was exceedingly liberal with his money, for he had billions from which to pay his debts, billions raised by successive issues of war bonds. Small wonder that every one soon found employment. But when the whole business of war ceases, production must once more be regulated to meet the varied demands of private buyers; and this presents the greatest difficulties.

The old markets are gone. New markets must be found, new connections established. All this takes time. The enormous ante-bellum export to the belligerent countries cannot at once be resumed, upon that subject we need entertain no illusions. National hatred, influenced to a white heat will continue, and will create bitter antagonism on the industrial field, as surely as they will leave their mark even in the world of culture and science. Each country will strive to become industrially independent and self-sufficient. In the neutral nations necessity, and golden profits have given a palpable impetus to industrial development, have encouraged them in securing foreign markets. The outlook for the rehabilitation of industrial conditions in the belligerent countries are anything but promising.

No doubt there will be periods of activity. The terrible ravages of war must be mended, while the replacement of war material, likewise, for a time, will encourage production. Enormous general losses have been sustained, and will for a time, increase production on every hand. But this cannot mean a lasting state of prosperity, chiefly because the destruction of capital itself has been so great Europe will emerge from this war, poor in capital, deeply in debt to America. It is generally conceded that we will meet a period of general industrial depression. The bourgeoisie will strive to accumulate new capital by intensified exploitation, low wages and unemployment will be the gifts that war will bring to the proletariat.

In the coming years the problem of unemployment will be the burning question, the weightiest problem in the struggle of the working class. The demand for effective, and sufficient unemployment insurance must, therefore, be one of the most important demands of the socialist proletariat. It must be raised

immediately, must be impressed upon the nation during the great crisis of readjustment.

What, after they have fought and bled for imperialism, shall the workers return, to lie hungry upon the streets? Is not this crisis a direct outcome of the war and shall not the government, having spent billions for the war, add a few more billions to its debt, in order to guide its erstwhile soldiers safely through this critical period? What shall we say of a government that allows its returning, victorious army, to starve on its way home through the desert?

To be sure, such arguments will not be nearly as effective as stern necessity itself, in forcing the bourgeoisie and the government to take heed. But they will maintain their old principle, that in a peaceful, capitalist state of society everyone must take care of himself. Their support will take the form of scanty, charitable gifts, enervating pauperization under humiliating conditions, entailing perhaps the sacrifice of important rights.

In view of this, the workers must demand security of existence for the employed as a right. This is a revolutionary demand, to be sure, one that will effect the very foundations of capitalism. Can the government, however, easily refuse to consider its justification, if a demand is voiced by the millions of armed workmen that constitute armies? This demand unites the immediate problem of existence of the proletarian with the aims and problem of revolutionary socialism. For it not suffice to simply give expression to this demand. If it is to be realized must be fought for with all the force the masses that the proletariat can be to bear.

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For the ruling class there is and will be no end of the difficulty. Reproduction of war material that has been destroyed and new armaments, will be the first most consideration for both governments and bourgeoisie. They will demand more effective preparedness for coming wars.

This will necessitate the mobilization of labor, labor that is now being released from the army only to be employed in a round about way, into military service. Were it not much more efficient to retain these workers in their military capacity, to retain them as soldiers under military discipline for the production of new war material?

The experiences gained from the organization of industry and trade under national control, have impressed the idea of State Socialism favorably upon many bourgeois minds. The advantages of uniform, controlled production, over chaotic private production have become too apparent.

The most important of the large industrial branches could be brought, easily, into national ownership. This could be done, without difficulty with the direct war industry.

The question of employment for the returning soldiers, too, would be solved for the bourgeoisie. The danger that threatens, when great rebellions make call for work, bread, assistance, could thus be averted, by drafting them immediately into the war industries, and then, gradually, as conditions in private industry become more settled, dismiss them from military service.

Other advantages, too, might arise from such a plan. In the first place production would be greatly cheapened, by the exclusion of all middlemen. Everyone realizes how much could be saved by government organization of production. All technical and organizational improvements of the war period would be applied. It would do away with the problem of unemployment insurance. Wages could be regulated; for against this powerful employer labor unions would be powerless, even if they were permitted to exist. It would mean for the workers increased dependence; would mean greater curtailment of their personal freedom than was possible under private ownership. National ownership of large branches of industry is synonymous with their militarization. Unquestionably, the ruling class fears the day after the war, when military dictatorship, war-laws, press censorship and the state of siege have become things of the past. The militarization of the national industrial forces will present itself as the most effective means of keeping great masses in harness, and curbing their desire for political opposition.

To the proletariat this state socialism can mean only an aggravation of its sufferings and increased pressure upon the burden of life. Notwithstanding this, it is to be expected that a large part of our Social Democracy will not oppose this plan but will lend its heartiest support. Their old ideals make them the prisoners of this new system of national exploitation.

Even before the war every proposal to pluck the consumers by new monopolies was heralded as a "beginning of socialism, which deserved our heartiest support!" Socialism is not based upon national ownership, but upon the strength, the might of the proletariat. In the past the conceptions of socialism and state industries have been hopelessly confused in the minds of our Social Democracy; in the future, this party will face the state socialist plans for the increased enslavement of the working class, with neither mental weapons nor a clearly defined attitude.

To the revolutionary wing of the socialist movement belongs the duty to strike the first blow at these new and dangerous shackles upon the proletarians. The fight against State Socialism will bring in its wake a radical clarification of ideas concerning the relations between the proletariat and the new imperialism. It will issue in a period of new, practical conflict. As the new, imperialist state more and more unmistakably assumes the guise of oppressor and exploiter the proletariat will see in the nation its great enemy, against whom it must fight, before all others, by means of mass action. And the Kautsky tradition that we must preserve the state in order to use it for our own purposes, will be practically shattered.

A third cause of coming oppression and new conflict will come to the working class out of the war. The nations of Europe will emerge from this war burdened with enormous debts. War loans have followed war loans, until the war-debts of the belligerent nations amount, already, to more than two hundred billions. National economists and statisticians everywhere are asking the question: "Where shall we raise the billions necessary to pay the interest? Where can we raise new taxes?" In the parliaments, in spite of civil peace, class fighting, class, on the tax question. Every class tries to push the burden off on to the shoulders of the other; yet they all know that all must suffer, that it is at best but a question of who shall assume the greater, and who the lesser burden.

The social-democrats, consequently, with the exception of logical social-imperialists of the Cunow type, have reiterated their resolutions against indirect taxation, and insist that the burden of war be borne by the possessing classes. Unquestionably they are right, when they maintain that the masses cannot bear added burdens, that added taxation would reduce the standard of living of the working class even more than before. But they forget that the standard of living is not fixed, that it is determined by that which the worker is in a position to demand, and to win from the capitalist class. A militant, firmly organized working class, can win a higher plane of life; where it loses on the political field, by increased taxation, what it has won on the industrial field, this but proves its political weakness and ineffectiveness. Where since August, 1914, the social democracy threw itself at the feet of imperialism and kissed its feet, it so weakened the proletariat, and condemned it to such hopeless stagnation, that it must not be surprised to receive, as a reward for its actions, a rapidly sinking standard of life for its proletariat. Their resolutions are ridiculous and therefore promote opposition to their own actions. *The protest of the working class must express itself in actions. Active opposition against taxation on articles of consumption that must be borne by the proletariat.*

Does that mean that we shall demand property taxes? Bourgeois representatives are partly right, when they maintain that taxation levied upon all incomes derived from the interest on the loans will prevent the accumulation of capital, and will, moreover, encourage the capitalist to unload them upon his employees in the shape of wage reductions. Now the payment of war debts means, in the last analysis, nothing more

than the robbery of the working population of all classes in the interest of the holders of war-bonds, by means of taxes of one kind or another. Had the perpetuated classes acted from motives of true patriotism, they would, when the state needed the money to carry on a war in their interests, have placed a portion of their war profits at the disposal of the nation. Not having done this, shall they have the right to demand tribute for all future times from the population? Of all kinds of capitalist incomes, the interests that accrue from state bonds are, socially considered, the most useless. A revolutionary, socialist government will always tend to repudiate this tribute, to annul all national debts. Conditions are such that only this measure, the annulment of the enormous state loans can save the nations from the threatening financial débâcle. It is not to be expected that capitalist governments will turn to this measure, for, to them, capitalist interests are holy. The more will it be the duty of the proletariat to raise this cry against every attempt to burden them with new taxes for the payment of war-debts. Together with the confiscation of all war profits, this measure will make it possible, to avert the most awful consequences of this war, from the mass of the people.

When the proletariat, during and after the war, resumes its political struggle, it must have a clear cut program of action.

The struggle for socialism is always a class struggle for the momentary interests of the proletariat. The methods, the means employed in this struggle, determine its revolutionary character. Of course, a part of the old demands retain their importance in the new program of action, as, for instance, the fight for full democracy in the nation, and the fight against militarism. But both will be given a new meaning, a new increasing prevalence of state socialism will weld industrial exploitation and military enslavement together with political oppression into one reactionary whole.

—Translated by Lily Lore.

## Scenes from a War Hospital

During the first week in the hospital the sheer physical strain was terrific. It seemed as if I were in a strange, mad, nightmare world, where everything was reversed; instead of health—disease, and mangled and torn bodies and suppurating wounds, some of them hideously green and yellow, like decayed meat; and smashed wrecks of men, with arms and legs swung up on apparatus that resembled nothing so much as the old torture racks of the Inquisition; as if shrieks and cries and groans and smells were the natural and normal order of things. For days I was nauseated. The sight of raw mangled flesh, the blood-saturated linen, the stench of gangrenous wounds, the nervous strain of bandaging freshly amputated stumps, and the screams of the dressing hour simply bombarded the unaccustomed senses and hit the newcomer fairly in the pit of the stomach. When I confessed this to the ward surgeon he laughed.

"That's nothing—the rebellion of healthy nature against disease. When I was at the Front, at the commencement of the war, at one of the base hospitals, I used to retire and gag at regular intervals. It was awful, for we had nothing to work with. But mobilize your emotions. Don't let them mobilize you. Imitate the sangfroid of the *poilu*. Yesterday I stopped by the bed of a youngster who's had a leg off and is dying of gangrene. 'Well, how goes it?' I asked him. 'Ca va. Ca va mieux.'—It goes. It goes better, he replied simply. And he was dead man and he knew it, and he knew that I knew that he knew it; and still he looked me straight in the eye and said 'It goes. It goes better!' There's mobilization of spirit for you!"

Nevertheless, when the dressings were over I breathed relief. Never did I learn to control my nerves completely; to listen without a tremor to the cries of pain, the high, piercing screams, "Oh, la, la!" "Ah, Nom de Dieu!" "Ah, doucement, docteur! Easy there!" "Oh, bon Dieu, how I suffer!" The quality of pure agony in those broken cries was too much for me.—Elizabeth Fraser, in *The Saturday Evening Post*.

## The International Movement

THE General Committee of Labor Unions in Germany writes to the secretary of Hindenburg: "We declare ourselves in full harmony with the contents of the letter of General Hindenburg (in which H. demanded no strikes during the war). Strikes must be avoided under present conditions. The safety of the country is of the first importance. Irresponsible people have tried with only very slight results to call strikes in munition factories, to further their political interests. We request that you submit this letter to General Hindenburg."

This is where the defense of "our country" leads to.

The minority Socialists in France are organizing their forces. The Committee for the Defense of International Socialism, of which Longuet, Deguise, Goudé, Mistral and others are members and which is supported by the *Journal du Peuple*, organized a congress to which both factions of the minority were invited with the main purpose of discussing instructions for delegates to Stockholm.

The minority Party in Holland (the S. D. P.) decided not to participate in the International Congress at Stockholm, unless the leaders of the revolutionary Left Wing in Germany and Austria, Liebknecht, Adler and others, have been released.

The labor convention held in Leeds (England) expressed sympathy with the Russian revolution and endorsed the "no annexations and no indemnities" demand for an immediate peace. The congress showed a bitter spirit of opposition against the English Government and its suppression of any and all liberty at home. The brutal imprisonment of strike leaders and the fact that seventy-four were in jail already for a long time without any form of a trial, was most emphatically criticized.

The most important result of this conference, in which 1,500 delegates from all over the country participated, was the decision to meet in Stockholm, Sweden, in August, after the Russian pattern.

The latest congress of labor unions in Italy fully discussed measures to be taken during the period of readjustment after the war. It is expected that an unprecedented unemployment will follow the demobilization of the armies.

The disturbances and strikes in different parts of Spain continue to develop. It has been reported under date of June 1, that in Barcelona soldiers participated in the demonstrations and held as prisoners several officers of high rank.

The Brazilian Federation of Labor has issued a manifesto denouncing the defense of the Fatherland, as long as class rule exists: "We will never co-operate with those whose principles have reduced humanity to nothing and who have abused civilization." It is high time for Gompers to crush these rebels.

The demonstration and protest strike in Stockholm on June 5 resulted in a conflict with police forces, which charged the crowd, killing and wounding a dozen.

A general demonstration in Norway against high food prices developed without bloody incidents, hundreds of thousands participating.

DEMONSTRATIONS in Bohemia were of a revolutionary character and developed into revolts in Prostnitz, Maltrisch, Osttau and Budweis, according to a cable of the General Secretary of the Bohemian National Committee in Paris.

THE workers in Petrograd conquered the six-hour day and other reforms, among which is a minimum wage for women of 150 rubles per month, after a successful general strike.

COMRADE Hoglund after serving one year in prison, was released and welcomed by thousands of fellow workers. Hoglund is one of the best known radical Socialists in Sweden and organizer of the Young People's League.

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