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Registration and After

THE statistical conscription of the youth of America was a great success—according to the press of the enemy. There is rejoicing over the "patriotism" of these men, who had to be taken by the scruff of the neck in order to compel them to fight across the seas. But there is an under-current of alarm beneath all this rejoicing. A million men, it is claimed, did not register, and the government is arresting all it can lay its hands on. More than 50 per cent. claimed exemption, although the news from Washington is that only about 10 per cent. may be exempted. And there is the Conscientious Objector—how many registrants claimed exemption as Conscientious Objectors is not known. It is being kept secret by the government. But undoubtedly there were thousands upon thousands. The Conscientious Objectors are determined to refuse actual military service. Whether they will accept alternative service is still to be decided. In our opinion, the Conscientious Objector who accepts alternative service is insincere, and much more interested in his skin than in his conscience. Alternative service contributes to the slaughter of war and the C. O. cannot conscientiously accept it. It is not clear whether the government will grant exemption to Conscientious Objectors—probably not, unless the action of the people compels the government to recognize these objections. Organize and act!

A Trial for the Czar?

THERE is an insistent demand in Russia for the trial of the former Autocrat of all the Russias. Originally proposed by Lenine, this demand is assuming formidable proportions. There is historic precedent for this action in the trial and execution of Louis XVI, an act that was the sign and symbol of revolutionary France. Revolutions cannot palter, nor indulge in sentimental aspirations. Revolutions are drastic and brutal. The trial of Nicholas would be a trial of the old regime, his condemnation a blow at the remnants of the old regime that are intriguing against the revolution. It would fire the imagination of the people and contribute to their aggressive spirit. Men are men, and not thinking machines; and the trial and condemnation of the former Czar would be more effective than a hundred proclamations. Revolutions are drastic. They cannot palter.

The Great Crime of War

THE great crime of war is that the courage, enthusiasm and idealism of the people are used for the monstrous purposes of conquest and death. Henry Watterson, in the *Courier-Journal*, recently said: "Men are reached equally through their imagination and their patriotism, and except for the sympathetic and emotional in man there would be no armies." This is the dominant purpose of the lying idealism of this war—to incite men to fight, to arouse the best that is in them for the brutal business of war. War makes heavy demands upon the great potential instincts of humanity, upon the spirit of sacrifice, courage and enthusiasm, and all for purposes that, victorious, proceed to trample these instincts under foot. Men and women are reached through their unorganized, inchoate idealism and courage, to fight for the things they should fight against. Is

there anything more appalling than a young man, full of courage and spirit of adventure, looking upon the world with the enthusiasm of youth, prepared for love and life and achievement, laying down his life for a cause that is reactionary and oppressive? It isn't the loss of life that counts most, it is the circumstances. And that is the great crime of war.

The Judgment of Pilate

In an editorial on the Conscientious Objector, the *New York Globe* says: "Their cry is the old one of Cain, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' They are fundamentally anti-social. They lack the development of beasts, for beasts are far enough along to realize that they cannot take themselves outside their group." This is a contemptible utterance. The particular occasion that called it forth was the arrest of the three Columbia students for anti-conscription activity. The circumstance that among the three is a young girl of nineteen, who is not subject to the draft, who had nothing selfish to gain from her activity, is sufficient refutation of the vile slander. The war mania is inherently incapable of gauging actions at their true value. Is it not more courageous to risk the scorn of friends, the repudiation of parents, to become an outcast and a pariah, than to march in gaudy uniform to inspiring martial music amid the plaudits of the unthinking mob? The greater courage is moral courage—it endures in silence, amid scorn and forces that seek to break its spirit. Nothing has happened in America in recent years of more potential value to civilization and democracy than the activity of our young men and women against the Conscription Act. They are the raw material out of which may be sculpted the revolutionary movement of the future. The hysteria of war will soon in retrospect appear as an evil dream, but their courage and idealism will be cherished as a precious contribution to the glorious annals of revolt which alone make one satisfied to remain a human being.

The Expulsion of Russell

THE expulsion of Charles Edward Russell from the Socialist Party is a merited expulsion. His pro-war stance, his acceptance of membership in the infamous Root commission to Russia—these are things that cannot be tolerated in a Socialist.

But if the expulsion is just, the sincerity of certain groups responsible for the action is highly questionable. The bureaucracy wanted Russell out, because he was not with them and because he was a thorn in their sides. And they put him out. But what of the others, gentlemen, bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, and who are compromising Socialism?

Meyer London in Congress has repeatedly disgraced himself and his party. He pledged the support of the party to "the country" in the event of war. He equivocated miserably on the various war measures in Congress. He has not represented Socialism. What are you doing about him, gentlemen? You did not even criticize his actions! If you are sincere, why not at least discipline Meyer London?

In our opinion, Victor L. Berger is much worse than Charles Edward Russell. The worst that can be charged against Russell is that he is a non-Socialist, a bourgeois democrat. The least that can be charged against Berger is that he is a thorough Imperialist.

It was Victor Berger, in the *Milwaukee Leader*, who a year ago carried on a campaign for the conquest and annexation of Mexico by the United States; who reconciled Socialism with Imperialism; who was reactionary on nearly every problem of the day. It was Berger who was responsible for an Emergency N. E. C. sending a telegram to President Wilson, the day after the severing of diplomatic relations, that was a complete abandonment of Socialism, and worse—a document subsequently tacitly repudiated by the full N. E. C. And it was Berger who only a few months ago vilely misrepresented the Russian Revolution, and said that "we hope the Revolution will not organize pogroms!" If for nothing else Berger should have been expelled from the party for the crime of being responsible for these slanders against our Comrades in Russia.

Victor Berger's support of the majority report against the war is insincere and based on non-Socialist grounds. He is contemptuously flouting the principles of Socialism. He is

a menace to the integrity of our movement. And yet Victor Berger is still a member of the Socialist Party!

The party bureaucracy in New York that expelled Russell are dominated by Lee and Hillquit. And these men are cheek by jowl with Victor Berger, and recently were instrumental in preventing Berger from being recalled from the N. E. C. for flagrant breaches of Socialism.

Sincerity and consistency, gentlemen, are not things that can be waived with impunity.

The Message to Russia

IF the Russia of the Czar was a rebuke to the Allies' claim to be waging an unselfish war for democracy, the Russia of the Revolution is tearing the claim to shreds.

The Allies are in this war for brutal purposes of conquest. Russia has repudiated these purposes, and the Allies are stooping to cajolery and intimidation to force her on to the firing line. The other day, actual threats of reprisal and punishment were made, and the threat of a Japanese invasion is being used to hold Russia in line. The Allies, financially and diplomatically, are encouraging and strengthening the reactionary forces represented by Milyukov, and they are a perpetual menace to the revolutionary democracy.

The issue in controversy is peace and its terms—not a separate peace, but a non-Imperialistic peace. The Allied governments do not wish to accept the Russian formula of peace. They desire victory. They wish to crush German territory, and conclude a general Imperialistic peace. Great Britain wants the German colonies and Mesopotamia; France, Alsace-Lorraine and Syria; Italy, Epirus and the Dalmatian coast. Their programme is the Imperialistic programme of Milyukov, which has been repudiated by the Russian people.

What is the attitude of our government in this controversy?

The entry of America into the war was considered by some people as a strengthening of the democratic aspirations of Allies. On the contrary, it is strengthening their Imperialistic programme of conquest. Moreover, the United States, to-day is the great menace to democracy in Russia, and consequently throughout Europe.

Two months before our declaration of war President Wilson urged a "peace without victory." To-day, a president is determined to impose a victorious peace.

America, according to the president, went into the war without any selfish motives of its own. To-day, the American programme is brutally selfish and reactionary.

The complete change in the president, the assertion of this country's Imperialistic purpose, is amply expressed in President Wilson's message to Russia on terms of peace.

This message strikes directly at the aspirations of Russia's revolutionary democracy. It is an expression of the identical Imperialistic proposals of Milyukov. It is a complete acceptance of the Allies' plans, and the weight and authority of America's power and prestige are being used to promote the Imperialism of Great Britain, France and Italy—and incidentally of this country.

The acceptance of the President's terms by Great Britain and France is a sufficient demonstration of their reactionary character. They differ in no essential way from the purposes covered in the phrase "reparation and guarantees." Their general character may cover all sorts of plans for conquest.

What "effective readjustments" does the president propose except readjustments of territory? "No territory must change hands except for the purpose of securing those who inhabit it a fair chance of life and liberty"—but that will be decided by the Allies. Readjustments of territory have never promoted peace. Readjustments of power to-day cannot promote peace. These "readjustments" simply mean the aggrandizement of the victor. The destruction of Germany's "Berlin to Bagdad" programme would injure German Imperialism and profit the Imperialism of the Allies. The indemnification of Belgium and others can in no sense be the exclusive punishment of Germany, but of all the major belligerents, since all are fundamentally responsible for the war.

The president's peace formula meets all the requirements of the Allied purposes, and may be used for aggression and reaction.

The message frankly comes out in favor of the overthrow of the status quo ante. Very justly, the president points out that "it was the status quo ante out of which this iniquitous war issued forth." But that status quo ante consisted alone of German power and plans of aggression; it was made up equally of Allied power and plans of aggression. That status quo ante will be altered only by the cessation of this clash.

The revolutionary democracy of Russia and President Wilson are in accord in desiring an alteration of the status quo ante. But the president's programme would simply alter the effects in favor of Allied Imperialism; while the Russian programme would alter its basis by arousing the Working Class against Imperialism and for a general revolutionary peace.

Retain the fundamental causes of the status quo ante, and no amount of tinkering with its effects will abolish the menace of war. Nor would the President's proposal that "the free peoples of the world draw together . . . to secure peace and justice, promote peace and freedom. The 'free peoples of the world' are all in the clutch of Imperialism, as much as the peoples of Germany and Austria. The rapidity with which America is acquiring armed power and Imperialistic aspirations, the way in which our government acquiesces in Allied purposes, all this proves conclusively that no "covenant of free peoples" can promote peace and freedom.

The president has not stated what America expects to gain from its support of the Allies and a defeat of Germany. But it is being stated for him. The *New York Mail*, in an editorial on "Our War Aims," June 11, says:

"From all entente powers we should now receive a definite acknowledgment of the Monroe doctrine and a definite acknowledgment of our paramount interest in the Mexican situation. We must have from all our allies an acknowledgment of our right to economic and military hegemony in the territory between the Panama canal and the Canadian border. That acknowledgment must come from Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Japan. They must specifically renounce the right of initiative in Mexico and delegate to us whatever interference in that land may be necessary."

"This is nothing more than the Monroe doctrine developed to fit changing conditions. If now, during war, we attain this recognition from our allies, we can, at the peace conference extort this recognition from Germany also. There-with the defenses of America would be immeasurably strengthened for all time."

And, incidentally, the *Mail* proposes that Great Britain cede to the United States its Caribbean possessions.

This, accordingly, is the "unselfish" programme of America. Our country is becoming a danger to a just and equitable peace. Moreover, it is using its influence against the new democracy of Russia. "The world must be made safe for democracy."

Socialism During Peace and War

THERE is no complete break between war and peace—each is equally the expression of determinant economic and political forces. The war marks a new epoch in Capitalism only in this sense, that it is the sharp, definite, catastrophic expression of forces operative in society during peace, and that precipitated the war. Through the process of war these forces are being transformed into dominant forces, where previously they were latent or insufficiently developed. The assumption, accordingly, that war marks a complete break with the past is without a shred of sociologic truth. The fundamental tendencies dominant in peace are dominant in war.

In other words, to understand adequately the politics and economics of Capitalism during the war its development and tendencies during the era that preceded it must be borne in mind as a basis; and to understand the conflict of policy in the Socialist Movement to-day, we must appreciate the fact that it is the continuation of an identical conflict before the war. The form changes, the fundamental issues are identical.

The action of the Socialist, or of Socialist groups, during the crisis of war is determined by their general conception of principles and tactics.

Whatever defects or short-comings have marred Socialist action during the

war were equally existent before the war, if less apparent. The International did not collapse during the war; it collapsed before the war, the war simply registering and emphasizing the collapse.

The International did not collapse because of traitorous instincts, accident or cowardice. All these are strictly incidental factors. The International collapsed during the days of peace when it made its first compromise with Capitalism. It collapsed because the majority that dominated it compromised with the menace of war, and accepted the fact of war; it collapsed because it placed national interests above international interests; it collapsed because it refused to fight aggressively in peace the conditions latent with the menace of war. In short, the International collapsed because it abandoned the class struggle, nationally and internationally—an abandonment that, begun in peace, was completed during war.

Socialist policy, whatever apparently startling changes it may show, is not at all breaking with the past; the break with the revolutionary traditions of Socialism was made many years ago. Socialist policy to-day is a direct result of our policy of yesterday, and can be considered only in that light. We may couch our criticism of the majority in different language, and cite different facts; the fundamental issue has not changed.

The revolutionist, accordingly, must reject a "civil peace" within the party. As the Imperialist seeks to put through his plans by pleading "national unity," so the Socialist majority seeks to perpetuate its policies and control by pleading "party unity." The revolutionist rejects both—our principles are supreme, and alone vital.

All our action during the war will bear scant results unless we proceed on the principle that our struggle is the identical struggle waged before the war, and that will be waged after the war.

A Socialist may be against the war, but that is not sufficient for our purposes: the test is that plus his general principles and tactics. The circumstance that Edward Bernstein, J. Bruce Glasier and others of their type in Europe are against the war does not alter their essential character as liberal democrats and reformists. And the circumstance that an element of our party bureaucracy, captained by Morris Hillquit, Algernon Lee and Victor L. Berger and the conservative forces they marshal are against the war does not alter their character as opportunists and reformists of the worst type.

Moreover, Bernstein and Glasier are at least sincere and aggressive in their action against the war. Our bureaucracy is not. To their general shortcomings, they now add the crime of saying one thing in theory and virtually repudiating it in practice. Their dominant concern is to perpetuate their power for purposes of their own after the war. And it is precisely because of this circumstance that we cannot suspend our struggle against the majority and their abandonment of revolutionary Socialism.

The underlying conceptions, the motives, of one's opposition to the war are an essential factor in the problem. We are organizing not alone for the immediate, but for the general fight against Capitalism. And our immediate action must square with this general purpose.

The struggle against Capitalism can be waged effectively only on the basis of the class struggle. The struggle against war can be waged effectively only on the basis of the class struggle, which means on the basis of revolutionary action. But as the majority abandoned the class struggle in their fight against Capitalism, so they are abandoning the class struggle in their fight against war. They refuse to adopt aggressive tactics. They are losing their Socialist identity in bourgeois movements and bourgeois peace propaganda. They are pursuing the identical general course they pursued in the days of peace.

These are important facts, vital in the coming reconstruction of Socialism. Peace and war—they are fundamentally identical and each require an identical general course of revolutionary Socialist action.

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Brutalizing the World

By ROBERT H. HUTCHINSON

THERE is an unfortunate fallacy in human thinking, characteristic of class society, which consists of believing that reality of human relations can exist entirely apart from the people. In the middle ages there was a long controversy between the Nominalists and the Realists, the former maintaining that there was no such thing as the church aside from the people who made it up, and the latter holding the opposite, that the church was an entity, which existed over and above its changeable parts. Naturally the latter was the belief of the churchmen and their supporters, for it meant that whatever happened to the people, whatever were their lot in life, whatever was done or not done for them by the church, it mattered very little so long as the ideal which the church held up was maintained.

This disease is now taking a firmer hold in this country. We believe in democracy; and I venture to say that there are really very few people who openly and frankly oppose this belief, but we are not always sure what we mean by that word. Our tendency is to hold on to the word rather than maintain the fact. It is this evil worm in our minds that allows us to send men over to the battle lines to fight for democracy while we at home are rapidly Prussianizing ourselves, that allows us to talk about liberty while we suppress free speech.

For my part I know this, that if I had to go over to the trenches and stick bayonets into men's guts, I could probably do it. If I saw the necessity for it I could probably grit my teeth and set myself to the job and gradually get used to it, for I know that people can and do get used to things and that I do, too. But I know this also, that in doing it I would be giving up something in me that I believe is more valuable to civilization than any good which I could possibly do in killing people. I would lose my hatred of blood-shed and viciousness and oppression and horror, and I would also lose what appreciation I have got for the finer things of life and for beautiful human relations. I don't see how the two can live together, and I am erring enough, some say, to think that the latter of these things is more desirable. How on earth can you separate happiness and freedom from human beings, and how can you have these things if human beings, one by one, are going to brutalize themselves?

I can see the future. I have returned from war, I am quite used to horrors. There is industrial unrest in the land, and I am ordered to go and put down the disputes. At the scene of action I see women and children starved and diseased and without homes, but I merely light my cigarette, for to me that is nothing. Then I am ordered to shoot at a crowd of men, mere trouble makers like those Germans were. I shoot with pride and skill. And then I go home and sleep peacefully when I should be writhing in an agony of conscience.

It is precisely the sort of thing the churchmen of the middle ages did. For the sake of the holiness of the church they sacrificed the people who made up the church. It is a terribly dangerous thing to do—to brutalize members of the community with the idea that the community will be better.

MORGAN takes fifty million "Liberty" bonds and other billionaires advertise their patriotism in a similar way.

It certainly would be a very poor sacrifice to grab hundreds of millions of war profits and allow a couple of those millions to squeeze "only" 3 1/4 per cent. interest out of American labor. But the fraud is far more shameful.

Any capitalist, no matter how big, has to invest a part of his property in such a form that it can be realized at short notice. This part of his capital in the form of bonds yields no more profit in any case than 4 1/2 to 5 per cent. The war tax on incomes over one million dollars will be 50 per cent. and the liberty bonds are exempted from all taxes, including war taxes. The investment in liberty bonds means to the billionaire masters of Wall Street and of the country a clear profit of at least 1 per cent. per year, and this profit has again to be burdened in some form upon the smaller incomes to which the liberty bond may mean a kind of sacrifice.

—S. J. R.