

The Need of A Socialist Revolution

By Justus Ebert.

THE war is forcing millions of young men to look about for some way to avoid its terrors. They are turning to the Socialist movement for relief. It will not be able to give them any, unless it first undergoes a radical transformation, in keeping with the general tendencies of the times. For the Socialist movement builds on a foundation in which Socialism is turned topsy-turvy and thereby rendered impossible of any achievement, except that of helping along the capitalist cataclysm. Socialism is primarily an economic philosophy, based on the irreconcilable class struggle caused by the evolution of capitalist property and exploitation. The Socialist movement is primarily a political movement, seeking office—so-called political power—and engaging in political jobbery and capitalist imperialism to secure and retain it. Having no economic basis—no definitely organized class interests to back it and through which to exert its power—the Socialist movement, as defined above, has become a movement of national reform and compromise, if not worse. It is now in a position of less actual power, though possessing greater prestige, because of its possibilities, than ever before. How then can it help the young men who come to it in this, their hour of extremity? Only by a change of base, a revolution in accordance with the times!

These words, be it said, are not written to discredit Socialism and to aid Capitalism. On the contrary, they are written to strengthen Socialism, in order that it may ultimately triumph over Capitalism. The most essential way to do this is to look the facts in the face. And the facts are that Socialism to-day is powerless because it has built a political structure on a foundation of capitalist exigencies rather than working class economic power. Is the Socialist movement going to continue to make this time-honored and tragic mistake? It looks like it!

There is an old proverb according to which one cannot make a fist without fingers. But the Socialists of the world are trying to make a political fist without economic fingers. According to their own Socialist philosophy this is an absolute impossibility. Yet they are, apparently, intent on persisting in the impossible. That France should have had Millerandism, Germany Scheidemannism and pro-Kaiserism, Australia, Hughes and Imperialism—that every country on the face of the globe where Socialism and Laborism have attained commanding political power should be a capitalist-istically governed, though socialist-cally legislated, country has been a puzzle to these Socialists because they are surface-thinkers ignoring the fundamentals of their own teachings. They are so naive and innocent (?) to believe that a Socialist commonwealth is possible on a basis of capitalist ownership and exploitation, if only Socialists of their own kind are given powers of administration! So far as they and their working-class victims are concerned, Marx lived and died in vain. They never got the kernel of his economic

philosophy, according to which the mode of production and distribution is the main factor in determining the superstructure of society. And what is more, despite their high-sounding academic titles and extremely learned theoretical hairsplittings and excuses, they never knew how to apply the Marxian philosophy. The result was that they became the handmaids and gunmen of imperialistic capitalism—traitors to the working class, all!

Now, if Socialism is to become something else than a ghastly historic mistake—if it is to become a factor in modern life—it must stop standing on its head and get back on its feet—back to first principles and proletarian sources. Take notice that in the world-war, capitalist newspapers watch with much anxious attention, strikes abroad that may prove a means of crippling military plans and ending the war in favor of the Allies. Strikes have also been watched with intense eagerness by Socialists, who see in them hopes of working-class peace achievements and progress. Take notice also that in Russia the working class, armed by means of the economic resources of the bourgeoisie, turns its arms against the forces that provided them, only to be compelled, in turn, to reverse their arms once more, through the financial pressure exerted principally by the United States of America. Take notice, further, that the Petrograd elections were favorable to Socialism only as a result of the perversion of capitalist military economics by the workers themselves. Take notice, still further, that, in this country, imperialism triumphs politically because, back of it, there is an imperialism that triumphs economically. The government is powerful in proportion as the ultra-financiers provide its war loans and dominate in the contract awards, price control and export decisions of the defense council, which is composed of the representatives of the dominant interests. Turn where we will, in the world-war it is the power of economics, both as a motive and controlling force, that impresses the observer—and gives proof of the soundness of Socialist philosophy once more. Against this power, what does political Socialism offer by way of a combative contrast? Only this—and little else—a repetition of office-getting on the old basis (now intensified in favor of the world's rulers) of capitalist ownership and exploitation!

Oh, yes; political Socialists say we must organize "industrially as well as politically." But, as the industrial organization which they have thus far created is only subsidiary, to their political organization and is shamelessly patterned after the trade-agreement, "no general strike nonsense" capitalist industrial unionism approved by Congress, the Civic Federation and the Council of National Defense, of what real intrinsic value is it to the working class and Socialism? What the working class and Socialism need is an industrial unionism that, like capitalist imperialism, dominates politics instead of being dominated by it! Socialism needs working

class control of industry for the workers' economic welfare. Not control of working class organization by labor lawyers, doctors, dentists, preachers, journalists, intellectuals, and others who have middle class aspirations and interests to perpetuate and advance. Socialism, in all its phases, and principally in its basic phases, is a movement of the workers for the workers by the workers. Not of lawyers, journalists and others, by protocols, for capitalists. Socialism is a class struggle in which the working class must rule or be made the football of middle-class interests and capitalist reaction. First we had Socialist corruption a la Millerand in France, Lunn in America, Hughes in Australia. Then we had Socialist reaction a la Scheidemann in Germany, Hyndman in England, Spargo, Walling and Russell in the United States of America. Are we to believe that there will not be a repetition of these events because the men who, in their cowardice, inflicted the infamous Section Six on

American Socialism, have now become brave enough to fight American imperialism via the back door of bourgeois "peace and democracy"? Whoever believes that must ignore Socialist economic philosophy, Socialist political history, and must deprive his senses of Socialist discernment. What American Socialism needs is a Socialist revolution to keep pace with the capitalist revolution. We, for one, refuse to believe that the leopard (opportunism) shows any evidence of changing his spots (compromise with bourgeois elements for votes and office). We, for one, know the animal; and we shall expect him to spring upon the proletariat when the necessity therefore again compels it. Note our "friend" Kerensky, "Socialist minister of war" and field marshal for imperialism.

Conditions make men, not men conditions. Given Socialist economics, Socialist politics will follow, as a matter of course. All else is a myth!

International Notes

THE food situation in Holland caused serious rioting in Amsterdam in the early part of July. Demonstrations were held, in which women took a prominent part and food was taken from shops and warehouses. Military troops were rushed to the city and in a great number of instances salvos were fired. Eight were killed and several seriously wounded, and the number of victims would have been even greater but for the refusal of many soldiers to shoot. One detachment simply refused to obey and in a great many instances the soldiers took it upon themselves to fire over the heads of the rioters. A railway worker refused to handle the signals for a train transporting troops to the capital, and other encouraging facts are reported in connection with this first uprising of masses of Dutch workers against starvation and threatening war. A spontaneous protest strike of 24 hours broke out, in which about 20,000 workers participated, which is a fairly good result, taking into account that the official leaders of the labor unions were strongly opposed.

The executive government of Amsterdam, which is responsible for the demand to send troops, contains two members of the majority Socialist Party (S. D. A. P.). They accepted the responsibility for the murder and continued in office, with the approval of the Social-patriotic Party. The acceptance of "civil peace" logically results in betrayal and murder of the workers; in Germany as in the United States, in Russia as in Holland.

Hopeful signs of coming action against the social patriots are increasing in France.

Newspapers, such as Echo de Paris and others demand energetic measures from the Government to suppress peace propaganda by soldiers and a check to the "demoralization" in the French army.

Herve, as energetic a social patriot as he was formerly an anti-militarist, appeals to Minister Thomas to explain

to the French soldiers, that the Russian revolutionists are willing to fight to a finish. This is considered most essential, because the Russian Revolution has had a magic influence on the French soldiers. Herve reports that he receives letters from the trenches, urging a revolution in France the way the Russians did.

Five Socialist sections of the French Party strongly denounced the writing of Herve in his paper La Victoire and demand his expulsion from the party.

The French Government had to suppress several issues of the Left Wing paper La Libertaire and 1224 arrests were ordered at one day in connection with peace propaganda.

Viviani, once a well known Socialist, introduced a bill in Parliament to better suppress the pacifist propaganda and the distribution of leaflets.

The problem of labor and its relation to capital after the war is being considered by the ruling classes of most of the belligerent countries.

In England a report has been issued by a sub-committee of the reconstruction committee for the permanent improvement of relations between employers and workmen. It will be remembered, that the English government in taking all the rights and union rules from the workers declared solemnly and even embodied in a law, that the trade union rules and customs suspended during the war, were to be restored in peace time.

The above mentioned report considers already the possibility of setting aside these guarantees permanently by substituting a more definite cooperation between employers and employees. The committee advocates "National Industrial Councils" to secure this cooperation; granting to workingmen and women a greater share in the consideration of matters affecting their industry.

The new national imperialistic slavery throws its shadows in advance; will the workers be prepared to meet the situation before it is too late?