

that or any other nation are equally interested. And on the other hand, separate action by the Socialists of the country involved threatens the very foundations of Socialist internationalism—the very life-blood of the Socialist movement. Both, the true interests of the nation involved, as far as the masses of the people are concerned, as well as the interest of the future of our civilization, which is intimately bound up with the growth of the power of the revolutionary proletariat, demand that whenever action in such a matter is necessary it should be taken concertedly by the Socialists of the entire world. In the domain of international relations we recognize the principle, long recognized by us in the domain of intra-national relations, that an injury to one is an injury to all. The Socialist movement denies the duty of national defense, but it also denies the right of so-called “neutrality” which is its nationalistic complement, both being based on the good capitalistic-individualistic maxim: “everybody for himself, and the devil take the hindmost.”

In place of both it seeks to substitute concerted action by the international revolutionary proletariat to prevent war in any part of the world and to prevent aggression by any nation against any nation.

The considerations which lead to a denial of the doctrines of national defense, also determine our position on the subject of defense of democracy as a cause for or a justification of our participation in war.

*We are not indifferent to the fate of democracy.* On the contrary—we believe that the Socialist movement is particularly charged with the duty of preserving and extending all democratic institutions. Furthermore, we believe that the revolutionary working class is the only social power capable of doing it. But far from this being a reason for our supporting any of the governments now at war, we believe that the interests of true democracy require that we refuse to join hands with any of these governments and the interests which support them and that we work for a speedy termination of this war by the action and pressure of the working class and the Socialist movements of the belligerent nations.

We deny that any of the nations engaged in this war fight for democracy, or that the ends of democracy will be subserved by either side winning a complete victory. This war is largely the result of the general reactionary trend which is one of the most essential characteristics of the imperialistic era in which we live. Modern imperialism is a world-wide phenomenon, although it may be more pronounced in one country than in another. Similarly, the reactionary trend which accompanies it, is as broad as our “civilization,” although in some countries it may assume particularly revolting forms while in others its *forms* may be less objectionable. The only hope of democracy lies, therefore, in those revolutionary elements of each country which are ready to fight imperialism in all its manifestations and wherever found, including the absolute refusal to participate in any imperialistic war whatever. The working class has no interest in the imperialistic ambitions of “its” “national” capitalist class, and must therefore refuse not only to fight for them aggressively, but also to defend them when “attacked” by “foreign” capitalists.

That no capitalist government can be depended on to fight for democracy, or indeed for any thing but sordid capitalist interests, is conclusively proven by the role which the United States government has played during this war. When the great war opened with one of the most lawless and ruthless acts in history, the invasion of Belgium by Germany—an act not merely abhorrent in itself, but completely annihilating the entire fabric of international law which must lie at the foundation of any international arrangement looking toward the ultimate abolition of war—our president solemnly enjoined upon the people of this country the duty of remaining neutral not only in deed but also in thought. By that declaration President Wilson officially and authoritatively announced to the people of this country as well as to the world at large that the existence of international law, the dictates of humanity, the fate of small peoples or of democratic institutions are matters that do not concern us. Not only will we, the ruling powers of the United States, not intercede in their behalf by some appropriate action, but we are entirely indifferent to them. We must not take sides for them even in the secrecy of our thoughts, lest we might betray our thoughts in some unguarded moment,