

to foreign parts, it might be peace by revolution at home instead. Our ruling class was not insincere, and it did not make a mistake in declaring war—the rest of the country did.

Also, it merely proves again, and once and for all, that war is the work of imperialism and not of militaristic inheritances and military castes, which are after all results and not causes; and the saddling of wars on the latter elements is simply a matter of choosing convenient cases instead of making a genuine diagnosis.

Granting all this, however, we must still ask ourselves how it was that this country of ours went to war if it was wanted not by the majority, but by a minority.

Wall Street, representing the concentrated power of the ruling class, used its political powers and functionaries to declare war in the first place. The problem then remained to deal with any possible opposition. The possible opposition was the middle class and the working class. The middle class is disorganized politically because it is industrially decentralized. Those of the middle class who accepted the interests of the big capitalists as their own joined an existing compactly centralized organization and made their influence felt. The remaining big mass of the middle class were unable to organize with sudden rapidity and efficiency and their efforts to do the impossible collapsed.

The working class had only a national and not an international program, therefore while it did not want war in its heart and soul it had no constructive policy with which to check big capital. It did not understand how to present a communistic basis of operation as an alternative to the capitalist form, and on the other hand it accepted and had to accept the maintenance of the continuity of production as fundamental. Thus the capitalist program of action had the field to itself, and it did not permit so favorable an opportunity to escape. As a result also of this situation the working class could not rally to its standard, that large portion of the middle class which opposed war, and would gladly have joined a powerful proletarian movement for international peace. Thus a minority carried the day in free America because its industrial compactness stood out against the decentralized disorganized condition of the majority.

For the organization of big capital is inherent in industry and is consequently automatic. The middle class and the working class are automatically disorganized by industry, and must reach a stage of organization comparable to that of big capital by a mental realization of the supremacy of proletarian interests—in short, through class consciousness and the class struggle.

Socialists and War

By ROBERT RIVES LA MONTE

I.

The editors of *The Class Struggle* have honored me by inviting me to debate "on the proper attitude of the Socialist Movement toward the War." For convenience of discussion, I take it, we must divide this subject into two parts; first, we must consider the proper attitude of the International Socialist Movement toward War with a big W—war in general; after that we can take up the more specific question of the proper attitude of American Socialism toward this particular War.

In approaching the subject at all we at once find ourselves confronted with an obstacle that appears almost insurmountable. I refer to the incurable romanticism of Socialists. For we Socialists are intense romanticists. Facts are for us seen only through a distorting medium of theories and hopes. We are above all else dreamers, idealists, utopians. In saying this I do not imply any note of disparagement. On the contrary our chief distinction is that we have had the courage and persistence to stick to our ideals amid the sordid horrors and grim realities of Twentieth Century Capitalism. I remember Maeterlinck in one of his finest passages likens Society to a sailing vessel in which the conservatives and reactionaries perform the function of ballast, while the idealists and radicals are the sails that carry the ship ahead. Any one can be ballast; it takes a forward-looking brain and a warm heart to fit one to be a sail. The role of ballast