

should be abhorrent to any one under thirty. The youthful reactionary appears to me abnormal and loathsome.

But while we need not be ashamed of our romanticism, we must none the less admit that it is a most deceptive refracting medium through which to observe facts.

Most of us have realized at least subconsciously, that we were at heart dreamers. And here was the irresistible strength of the appeal materialistic Marxism made to us. It gave or appeared to give us an absolutely scientific foundation for our romantic dreams. And so we eagerly and blithely swallowed whole Marxism—or whatever weird grotesque conception of Marxism we were able to form. But the label "Marxist" had no magic power to banish our dreams. We remained romanticists. In fact, fancying we had placed a solid scientific foundation beneath our fanciful superstructures, we but gave a freer rein to our imaginative faculties. We created fantasies that bore little or no resemblance to anything that ever was on sea or land, and went out gaily to do battle in a world of cruel facts with weapons forged on the anvil of fantasy.

The choicest product of our uncurbed imaginations was a kind of Marxian economic Man, a sort of Gordon Craig marionette without red blood or emotional impulses, who responded solely to economic stimuli. Just show this curious monster where lay his economic interest, especially if our refracting medium could distort it into a *class* interest, and he could be depended to pursue it ruthlessly through fire and blood, over the bleeding corpses of his nearest and dearest if need were. Such a demon never cursed the earth by existing on it. Marx, very likely, would have been the first to repudiate him. But nevertheless we Marxists have striven futilely for years to build up a tactic on the hypothesis of a world peopled by these grotesque marionettes.

Since August 4th, 1914, even the dullest of us are beginning to realize that men and women of flesh and blood do not act like economic marionettes.

Our romantic idealism has also endowed the proletariat with intellectual and moral attributes worthy of sages and saints.

In spite of our insistence that the workers have for centuries been robbed of almost all opportunities of intellectual and moral, even of proper physical development, with incredible inconsistency we have proclaimed that by some uncanny miracle they had been endowed with those mental and moral qualities that fitted them and them alone for world leadership and world rule. Were they as stunted mentally as we claimed capitalist slavery had made them, surely it was vain to expect them to have the far-seeing and broad vision necessary to cope with a world crisis. We now know they did not have such a vision when confronted by the world-wide peril of democracy; but many of us cling to our romantic conception of a proletariat made up of supermen.

If we are to see straight and think clearly in the present crisis, not to say act wisely, we must first of all resolutely tear into shreds and tatters our romanticism and face the facts of life.

There is no use in discussing this question on the assumption that there is now or ever has been an International Socialist Movement in the sense of a world-wide proletarian brotherhood bound firmly together by real solidarity. We must face the fact, as stated on the second page of the first number of this magazine, "that the Second International, instead of being a perfect union of the working class 'one and indivisible,' was, in reality, to most of its adherents, a mere confederation of national units to whom first allegiance was due in case of a conflict." There is no use and no sense in discussing what should have been the action of a body that never was on sea or land.

Another romantic assumption we must cast aside is the notion that the various national units of Socialism were strong enough to have prevented War, had they so willed. There is no country in the world save Germany where the Socialists were strong enough even to have delayed appreciably mobilization. In Germany they had the power to cripple the Empire by delaying mobilization for weeks, if not to have prevented it altogether, but they lacked the will to use the power.