

is a decadent culture, the culture of a class that thrives on exploitation and misery. We want none of it. Truly, the conquests of civilization cannot be rejected. We must build upon their basis. But we shall transform and re-create. And the proletariat will accomplish a revolution and achieve "world leadership and world rule," not because it consists of supermen, but because it consists of men and women of flesh and blood who have suffered long and hard, and whose mission it is, historically and humanly, to overthrow this system of tyranny, and in self-defense erect a new and better system of things. The human beings who compose the proletariat want peace and freedom and the joy of life, and they will fight for it—and get it!

## B

I do not see the relevancy of stressing the *fact* of the collapse of the second International. It would have point in a discussion with Morris Hillquit or Victor L. Berger, but surely not in a discussion with one of our group. In this discussion, accordingly, it is *causes* and *consequences* that should be stressed. There never was a real international—granted: is that a reason for acquiescing in this war? American Socialists do not have "the power to affect appreciably the foreign policy of the United States"—granted: is that a reason for acquiescing in this war? If we cannot conquer, we do not necessarily have to submit. A start must be made somewhere, we must develop the necessary power. The revolution is a process and not an ultimate act alone. Our action is based upon the recognition of being a minority. Since when did a minority become a majority by abandoning its principles and striking hands with its foe?

La Monte puts the case in a nutshell in his statement: "We should consider not what it would be fine to do were we able to do it, but rather what with our present power and prestige, or lack of it, we are able to do that will further our ends." But if we are so completely deficient in influence, would it matter any if we participated in this "war for democracy?" But that is incidental. What we are doing, or trying to do, is fully within our power. We do not expect to stop the war, nor accomplish a revolution. But we can maintain our principles, we can assert

our Socialist integrity, we can seek to influence public opinion in the direction of revolution. Does La Monte imagine that a minority such as the Socialist Party is wholly incapable of influencing events, if it rigidly and conscientiously carries on a revolutionary propaganda? Then the revolutionary Socialist minority in Germany should immediately cease its activity and support the Kaiser. The sacrifices of Karl Liebknecht, Fritz Adler and Rosa Luxemburg have been in vain. But it is *that* way madness lies!

The Social-Patriots of Germany could want nothing better than for American Socialism to acquiesce in this war. No greater blow morally could be struck at the minority in France and Germany, and at the Russian Revolution. Are we to fight Schiedemann by adopting the tactics of Scheidemann? Say what you will, our acquiescence in this war might differ in degree, but not in kind, from the action of Scheidemann and his cohorts.

And it is precisely here that we differ fundamentally with La Monte. To him, the collapse of the International is peculiarly a crime of the German Socialist movement. The evils of Socialism were much more marked in Germany, truly, but simply because the movement there was older and stronger. These evils were general. *The whole international movement failed to emphasize the international basis of Socialism and refused to accept aggressive action against militarism and war during the days of peace. The one international characteristic of the Second International was its general rejection of revolutionary tactics, against militarism, against war, and against capitalism.*

German Socialism bears the largest share of the guilt of the great collapse; but the Socialism of the other nations proportionately bears an equal share of the guilt.

It is this peculiar and exaggerated emphasis on the guilt of German Socialism that distinguishes the pro-war American Socialist from the revolutionary Socialist. The pro-war Socialist draws the line, more or less consciously and distinctly, between the Socialism of Germany and the Socialism of the Allies. *The demarcation is not between the Socialism of two groups of nations, but between the concept of Socialism held by antagonistic Socialist groups within each particular nation.*