

## Discussion

### Boudin's Policy in Peace and War

More deliberately than in his "Socialism and War," Boudin accentuates his stand on war in a recent article, "Socialist Policy in Peace and War," in the second issue of the "Class Struggle." It is worth while to analyze his stand more closely because it is representative for those groups of Marxian Socialists, Kautsky among them, who continue to represent a passed-by period of economic development. Their influence is the more objectionable because their often keen and sharp analysis and criticism of opportunists tends to secure them a mental leadership among groups of Left-Wing Socialists, not less destructive to proletarian *action* than the leadership of the politicians of the old party machinery in the pre-war socialist parties.

Typical for the above-mentioned article is that not only the word "Imperialism" is not mentioned at all, but that no reference whatever is made to the new developments in capitalist society and capitalist policy the world over. The article of Boudin would have been a clever advocacy of the participation of Germany in a war against Russia fifty years ago, but at present his failure to take into account modern developments makes it decidedly reactionary.

His distinction between a trade-union, a socialist and an anarchist point of view not only is arbitrary, like every distinction of this character, but it plays directly into the hands of those reactionaries who deliberately want to discredit the revolutionary socialists as "anarchists." In fact, the purpose of the classification is to discard on one side the opportunists and reformists and on the other side the extremists, and to keep in the fullest glory of intellectual superiority the socialist "centrum," the "swamp," as it is called by Liebknecht. The struggle becomes a "very complicated one." We need, in the first place, the good advice of the great intellectuals of the Centrum.

To the true socialist, according to Boudin, "nothing that is of human interest is a matter of indifference," and "his interest extends to the internal or family fight of the capitalist class." This interest "becomes a passion" whenever his great enemy, the capitalist class, is battling against the remnants of feudalism and feudal order. Now it goes without saying that nothing human is "indifferent" and that it is no crime to extend our interest as far as we see fit. But the spirit of Boudin's arguments is typical of a bygone period: the emphasis on the family fights and its complicated nature is based upon the political game in a period of development of capitalism, when parliamentary parties representing distinct groups of interests were willing to pay with certain concessions for the support of

labor. And the passion to fight feudalism, together with capitalism, was very appropriate in the French revolution and in Germany until 1848, but since Capitalism rules the modern world undisputed, and since the remnants of feudalism made a pact and became tools of modern capitalism, the passion to fight the feudal order, together with capitalism, is a little out of date. There, is practically speaking, no longer a possibility for a fight together with capitalists against capitalists, and whatever may suggest itself in this line is unimportant and rapidly disappearing. There exist differences in methods of fighting against the working classes, and this certainly prevents our becoming indifferent to the particular acts of our enemies. Certain groups of capitalists would like to use machine guns as the *only* argument; most groups believe in different methods of misleading and making sham concessions, and it is to the interest of proletarian solidarity to expose these methods as different forms of the fundamental class struggle.

The capitalist class may not form one "uniform" reactionary mass, but it certainly becomes more and more "one reactionary mass," against which the organized POWER of the working class alone can gain results. To develop this power and to apply it in the most efficient way requires, of course, study and experience in the methods of fighting your foes. Parliamentarism CAN serve both ends—both the demonstration and the efficient application of proletarian power—and, therefore, deserves our interest, although in a different form than the skilful exploitation of family fights.

Our internal policy is undergoing a fundamental change, and it is no disadvantage that our future practice will be more in harmony with certain other groups of class-conscious workers, the syndicalistic groups in Europe and (more so) the I. W. W. in our country. We even may join hand (and this is all but a disadvantage) with certain groups of communistic anarchists in our practical fighting, and a prospect opens of greater solidarity in broader groups of fighting workers, the surest guarantee for a proletarian victory.

So much for the peace policy, of which the war policy is only another form.

Having lost sight of the new developments in **our** peace policy, Boudin cannot be expected to give a constructive war policy. Here he fails to such an extent that he is losing his influence even on those who stand behind him in his fight against opportunism in the Socialist party. The trouble in St. Louis was not only that a number of opportunists played a trick in voting for a fairly strong anti-war resolution, knowing that paper would be patient, but as well the failure of Boudin to rally round his minority resolution the enthusiastic support of all the revolutionary forces present at that emergency congress. In his war policy, Boudin again overlooks the fact that the relations between the classes have been influenced