

Documents for Future Socialist History

FORWARD!

By LEON TROTZKY

Our paper is to be the organ of revolutionary socialism. Such a declaration would have been sufficient a short time ago. At present these words have lost value. For, both socialism and revolution are now professed by such elements, such classes, as, in their social nature, belong to the camp of the enemy whom we cannot conciliate. The yellow journals call themselves non-partisan socialists. The papers financed by the banks resort to the camouflage colors of "practical socialism," just as the bank buildings themselves hang out, for safety's sake, the red flags of revolution.

This feverish growth of socialism and this camouflage substitute for socialism are all the more unexpected, since it is but a short time ago that, in the earliest phase of the war, the entire capitalist world spoke of a complete breakdown of socialism. And as a matter of fact, in this tremendous cataclysm which war brought in its wake, international socialism underwent a crucial test. The most powerful organizations of the International capitulated before the fetish of the capitalistic state, and, under the completely dishonest banner of "national defence," they gave their blessing to the mutual extermination of the European peoples. The breakdown of socialism, the last hope of humanity, appeared more tragic than all the slaughter and all the destruction of material civilization.

But socialism did not perish. It was merely sloughing off in this terrible internal crisis, its *nationalistic* limitations, its opportunistic illusions. In the crucible of this war the laboring masses have been undergoing a process of purification from the spiritual slavery of the national ideology and of hardening into an irreconcilable hatred of the capitalistic state. In the place of the leaders of the Second International—the Scheidemanns, Guesdes, Vanderveldes, Plekhanoffs, who went bankrupt in the presence of these gigantic happenings—there arise new leaders, who flourish under the onslaughts of the new epoch. Karl Liebknecht, Fritz Adler, Macklin, Höglund and many others—these are the pioneers and the builders of the New, the Third International, which is erected in the storms of war to meet the storms of the Social Revolution.

In this crisis of socialism, the worst is already far behind us. The Russian Revolution is the beginning of the great European tide. The bourgeoisie is attempting with all its might to tame the Russian Revolution and to nationalize it. That is why the bourgeoisie is camouflaging itself behind the defensive minority of socialism. The servants of the bour-

geoisie and its political agents are exerting all their efforts, in the name of "national unity and defence," to castrate the proletariat, to tear it away from the International, and to subjugate it to the discipline of an imperialistic war. We consider this policy to be a mortal foe to the interests of socialism. "The revolutionary defence" is our domestic brand of social-patriotism. Under the mask of populism or of "Marxism," this "revolutionary defence" in reality involves an unalterable desertion of the independent policy of the proletariat, and brings with it the poison of chauvinism and a complete degradation of the proletarian ideology.

The fight against the disintegrating influence of social-patriotism and in defence of the principles of revolutionary internationalism will be the most important task of this paper.

We are issuing the first number of FORWARD at a moment when internationalism has the upper hand over the "national defenders" in the ranks of the Petrograd proletariat. Our paper will, we hope, aid in this salutary process by deepening the formulation of the question more than can be the case in the daily press, and by a stubborn fight for the fusing of all the currents of revolutionary internationalism. Friends! FORWARD counts on your sympathy and your support.

[This article appeared in *Vperiod*, a paper edited by Trotsky, on June 2 (N. S. 15th), 1917. *Vperiod* means "Forward"; the number referred to was the first one to appear.]

THE COUP D'ETAT OF OCTOBER 25

A MENSHEVIST VIEW

At the Second Pan-Russian Congress of Councils of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates, L. A. Martov proposed the following resolution:

Whereas, *First*, the coup d'état, which placed all authority in Petrograd in the hands of the Military-Revolutionary Committee but a single day before the opening of the Congress, was accomplished by the action of the Bolshevik Party alone, and by means which were exclusively military in their nature;

And Whereas, *Second*, this coup d'état threatens to produce bloodshed, civil war and a triumph of the counter-revolution which will drown in blood the entire proletarian movement and thereby destroy all the achievements of the revolution;

And Whereas, *Third*, the sole remedy for this situation, which might still prevent the outbreak of civil war, is an agreement between the insurgent section of the democracy and the remaining democratic organizations, concerning the formation of a democratic government that would