

## Current Affairs

### A War Anniversary

Since the appearance of the last issue of the *Class Struggle* America has completed her first year in the World War, and Russia has completed her first year in Revolution. A year has also passed since the Socialist Party's St. Louis National Convention which resulted in the adoption of the now famous "St. Louis Resolutions." This year has been fraught with great events for the world in general, and for us Socialists in particular. Some of these events are reflected in the changed attitude of the Socialist Party membership towards the St. Louis Resolutions, which is discussed elsewhere in this issue. Here we would like to call attention to a factor which has remained unchanged during this year—a factor that has played an important part in the decision reached a year ago by many of us who did not agree with the premises and reasoning of the St. Louis Resolution but who nevertheless accepted its conclusions, and which must be taken into consideration now in considering the question of a change of attitude towards the war. We refer to the question of the auspices under which the war is being fought, the power that has decided the question whether and when we should enter the war and that will decide the question when and upon what terms we shall conclude peace, and the motives that animate and move it.

In an editorial article on "Ideals and Interests," which appeared in the *New Republic* at the close of the first quarter-year since our entry into the war, that esteemed contemporary of ours said:

"Two sets of hard-headed people have been made uncomfortable by the statement that America is in the war for the sake of ideals. On the one hand the conservative tariff-Republican kind of man objects. He is belligerent, but he wishes to make war for some private and exclusive right, or to avenge some concrete injury. He distrusts the more generous reaches of the mind.

To him the world is in reality a crowd of aggressive individuals, each trying to get as much as possible for himself, and it is dangerous self-deception to act on any other theory. This opinion is shared by pacifist supporters of isolation. If Germany has sinister imperialist designs, so have the Allies. No American really wanted war except those who had something immediate to gain by it, or those who were fooled by the profiteers. The only individuals in the world who combine integrity of purpose with a sufficient measure of cynical wisdom, according to these objectors, are those who refuse to accept the deceitful ideology of a war to organize peace."

The editors of the *New Republic*, refusing to accept either of these two positions, then proceed to explain their own, "realistic," attitude towards the problem, thus:

"To the realist the attitude of both the standpatter and the suspicious pacifist toward the war is supremely irrelevant. He does not distrust the expression of an ideal, if it seems to him likely to translate itself into some kind of desirable reality. He does not become hopeless of that realization because he is aware of selfish motives on the part of people who are taking the action which he for the moment advocates. He has faith in the validity of his purpose, but he is humble as to his means. He does not believe in any necessary opposition between ideals and interests. He knows that unselfish ideals may in the end serve interests, and he knows that interests often serve ideals. . . .

"At the same time the realist has his own dangers to fear. He cannot become a romantic partisan. He cannot cast up accounts once for all and then throw himself blindly into relentless action. *He must check up his partners as well as his enemies.*"

When the war broke out, we, who are neither "tariff-Republicans" nor "pacifist supporters of isolation," and who flatter ourselves with being the real "realists," tried to "size up" the situation "realistically" as to the different forces involved and their relative strength, and other matters of consequence that a true "realist" should consider before he embarks on a perilous