

# THE CLASS STRUGGLE

Vol. III

MAY, 1919

No. 2

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## The First of May, 1919

Ever since the first day of May was adopted by the International Congress of Paris in 1889 as the International Socialist holiday it has been the milestone from which the class-conscious labor movement has looked backward over another year of activity to gage the work it had accomplished. On that day workingmen and children, in every civilized nation in the world lined up in impressive demonstrations to demand from a capitalist world greater political and industrial freedom and better conditions of livelihood. It was conceived particularly as an international demand for an 8-hour day, for social legislation, for equal suffrage for men and women, and as a protest against militarism and war. In most countries the first of May was celebrated as a workers' holiday. On this day the class-conscious workingmen and women asserted, if only for a day, their freedom from capitalist domination. And by this token it signified to them the great international brotherhood of the working-class, fighting for liberation from capitalist oppression.

Then came the war, and the first of May became a day of sorrow. May 1, 1915, was one of the most tragic days in the history of the International. Instead of brotherhood there was mass murder and hatred, in the place of anti-militaristic propaganda there were war-credits, in the place of better industrial conditions had come industrial slavery, political freedom had made way for political oppression. But events move swiftly in war times, and a year later the black despair of that first May Day had given place to a new, more hopeful spirit. The neutral countries once more celebrated their proletarian holiday with