

The Voice of the People

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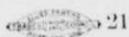
B. E. Nilsson, Editor

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CASH MUST ACCOMPANY ALL ORDERS.



Wm. E. Bohn, in his "international notes" in the International Socialist Review, attempts to defend the European "Comrades."

"The Socialists did not stop the war. But no one had a right to expect them to do so. In all countries except Germany they constitute a rather small minority."

That seems to imply that Socialists are powerless to stop a war unless they are in the majority. I certainly don't agree with that. I believe that a small minority—even as small a minority as the regular members of the Socialist parties in the countries which are now at war—could prevent a war. That, however, is a matter on which opinions may differ.

But the Socialists need not have voted for war budgets; they need not have been in quite so big a hurry to join the armies; they need not have done recruiting service for the armies—and without pay; and they need not have made such enthusiastic pleas in defense of their countries.

Bohn concedes that "When the time came to vote on the war budget the Socialist Group in the (German) Reichstag went wrong. Of the 112 members of the group, 80 attended the caucus at which this action was determined upon. A strong minority was opposed to it."

That establishes the status of German Socialism. That caucus had to decide whether to stand by International Socialism or to stand by the German Kaiser. The majority voted in favor of the Kaiser.

The minority had to decide if they should uphold the interests of the Workers, or uphold the party discipline—and they choose party discipline. Which, to my mind, damns the whole bunch of them.

I don't want to waste too much time and ink on these "Socialist Leaders." There are more important phases of these matters. That is, the lessons which the workers may learn from this calamity.

Lesson No. 1—The revolution will not be started in the Reichstag.

If you know of any rattlebrained windbag in the revolutionary movement you may as well send him to the Reichstag, where he will be out of harm's way. But keep the real men out of there. You may need them.

Lesson No. 2—Measured in terms of human lives and in suffering, revolution is cheaper than war. Those patriotic comrades would have saved themselves the agonies of the battlefield, if they had lined themselves up against a wall in their home town and waited for the firing squad.

Lesson No. 3—Rebellion can not be lead by a "strong machine."

Both the Socialist Party and the labor unions in Germany are very strongly centralized. The rank and file only moves where their "machine" leads.

The members never learned self-reliance, they were not allowed to learn self-reliance. They depended on the "machine" to do their thinking. When the crisis came the "machines" had quit thinking; the leaders had deserted. And the rank and file were helpless, because they were not accustomed to think for themselves.

The great crime of those prominent Socialists was not their utter failure in a crisis; their really great and unpardonable crime was in teaching the workers to depend on them, both as individuals and as an organized machine. This is as true of the Unions as of the Party.

On July 25, 1914, at a secret conference in Brussels, Joubaux, secretary of the C. G. T., met Carl Legien, secretary of the International Trade Union Movement (and also secretary of the German trade union movement) in the presence of M. Mertens, secretary of the Belgian Synd. Comm., and M. Dumoulin.

Joubaux asked Carl Legien these two questions:

"What do you intend to do in order to avoid the war which is now brewing?"

"Have you decided to act?"

Carl Legien made no answer to either question.

Joubaux: "For our part, we are ready to respond to your appeal, or to act in conjunction with you, should you decide."

Translated from La Bataille Syndicaliste, by Eug. Krauss.

The above shows that the C. G. T. was at least trying to induce the International Trade Union Movement to take some action to prevent the war.

It also shows that the German Unions were not prepared to co-operate with the C. G. T. It was quite in order for Joubaux to ask Carl Legien for instructions. It was up to Carl Legien to take the initiative.

Yet I should have expected something more from the C. G. T. I should have expected it to decide upon its own plan of action, and to present that plan of action to the International Trade Unions, saying, "This is what we propose to do. What will you do? Will you co-operate with us? Or have you any better plan of action to offer?"

That would have been in keeping with the revolutionary agitation of the C. G. T. But then, the C. G. T. probably knew that it would get no co-operation from the German Unions.

The phrase "I told you so," is in bad repute, but there are times when it is in order.

In 1911, at the time when we made that misguided effort to affiliate with that International Trade Union Movement, I wrote something like this in an article in Solidarity.

"The C. G. T. believes in revolutionary unionism, yet it has affiliated with the conservative political unions of Germany and other countries, which are doing their best to stifle revolutionary unionism in their respective countries. The C. G. T. is thereby placed squarely on the back of the real revolutionary unions—while devoutly wishing they would grow."

Of course I was wrong. Everybody told me I was wrong.

But, what has the C. G. T. ever gained by being hooked up with that International Trade Union Movement? What results have been obtained by the C. G. T.'s boring in that great Social-Democratic corral of voting cattle?

Carl Legien's silence is a very eloquent answer.

Recognition by the comparatively powerful C. G. T. would have meant life and growth to the struggling revolutionary unions in Germany and in other countries. It would have meant co-operation between real revolutionists in all countries. Such co-operation might well have turned a war between Nations into a war between Classes.

At any rate, it would not have left the anti-military element without efficient leadership. Moral: Don't worship numbers.

DE KIDDER, LA.

Livingston, one and a half miles from here, had a mass meeting of the negroes last night, called by the bosses. The negroes were all advised to trade with (Us) the company, and not at De Ridder, as the company sold as cheap as they could afford; and gave them work. The speakers also told the negroes (it was a meeting just for negroes and bosses) that this was a time when (we) want you to stick to (us) and (we) will stick to you.

Just had a report that Langrille laid off 100 men, Fullerton 125, and that Elizabeth will run four days a week with one crew, and four nights with another crew.

Nearly all mills in this section have cut wages 10 to 15 per cent and are working part time or intend to soon.

Strong, able bodied men are on the bum and can't do better. Yours to win,

W. E. H.

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THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE,
309 Davis St., Portland, Ore.

Since the war began the sanest occurrence was the destruction of 5,000 German soldiers by German soldiers.

PRISONER'S LETTER

Butte, Mont., Oct. 25, 1914.

I feel that it is my duty to acquaint the public with the frightful conditions which we have to put up with under Sheriff Berkin's regime. Realizing the penalties I may have to pay while at the mercy of this inhuman monster Berkin has proved himself to be, for voicing these truths, I am willing to go before a notary public and swear to the following facts: Twenty-seven men were locked up in one corridor containing four cells each 6x8 feet in diameter. Some of us were refused blankets. Upon calling the attention of the jailer to this unbearable condition, we were threatened with the dungeon. The fireman let's the steam die out every night, we assume at the behest of the higher-ups who no doubt think we will contract pneumonia and die, thereby saving them many thousand dollars which we believe they will have to pay us for false imprisonment and unlawful convictions. We get two meals per day consisting of, in the morning, one-fourth loaf of bread, mush, mutton stew, and black coffee. At 2 P. M. we get a small piece of meat which smells to high heaven, something called soup, a small piece of bread with either rice or beans, a pie plate and tea. No. 1 corridor is supposed to be set aside for dope fiends. One or two of these fiends are allowed to go out with our money to secure morphine for as many as 15 men. How they secure this dope, which is expensive, I will leave to the sheriff to answer. One of these men who is charged with robbery was allowed to go several days ago. Upon another occasion when he wished to go out, Captain Morse asked him what he was charged with and upon being informed he hesitated about letting him go. The sheriff no doubt felt he wouldn't come back and told him of his capabilities. This man was recommended to the officials as a good one to bring home the bacon. He was turned loose by Driscoll and failed to return. Before the troops arrived these unfortunates were only able to secure dope with the few pennies their comrades had in their possession when arrested, or as previously stated. But under the Berkin regime there is more efficiency as it were. Men who are not addicted to any drugs, mostly foreigners, who have money when arrested, are herded in this corridor with these wrecks. After thoroughly searching these individuals and failing to find any money on them, the jailer is asked how much money the victim has in the sheriff's care. The man is then compelled under threat of punishment to sign an order on the sheriff to turn over as much as \$5.00 to corridor No. 1 for the purpose of buying dope. When these snow-heads are in a pleasant frame of mind, due to an unusually large and prosperous number of victims, those who are not addicted are invited to join them in the use of the drug.

I claim if Berkin allows the present state of affairs to continue in the county jail, Butte will soon be over-run with dope fiends. I suggest that instead of trying to scare timid people with the I. W. W. bogymen, chasing working men out of town and trying to make believe that every man unfortunate enough to be out of work is an awful (?) I. W. W. that he apply some of his cleverness to the duties which the taxpayers are paying good money for.

FINANCIAL WRITERS

Some time there will be a day of reckoning for financial writers when they will have to come forward and justify their existence. It is a very serious matter to keep on covering acres and acres of good white paper to no apparent purpose.

Is it the sincere intention of financial writers to bring clarity into the fiscal field? If so, why doesn't one pop up here and there who is able to carry out this intention? Or is it their aim to perpetuate our confusion upon this polyhedral question? This is the most obtrusive suspicion, but why should they wish to confuse us? To whose interest could it be to have us in darkness? Woe unto you, financial scribes, if you are still so foggy when the great day comes.—Life.

AN INAUSPICIOUS PERIOD

The reports that crime is increasing on account of the war would seem to illustrate one of those eccentricities of human nature for which there is no accounting.

We beg those who have in mind any large crimes to wait until peace is declared and we have settled down into the usual routine. Then the newspapers can advertise the perpetrators properly and do justice to the crime.—Life.

NEWS WANTED.

Don't forget that members and other workers want to know what is happening in your part of the country. Send us the latest news about things that concern the workers.

HOW MUCH CAME TRUE?

By Wilby Heard

To you who have toiled since your childhood day,
And visioned sweet dreams in the far away,
And hoped that your labor so earnestly sewed
Would yield in your noontide a rich harvest load;

You figured returns as all planters do—
Now tell me, how much of it ever came true?
You dreamed as you toiled of the sweet scented wood

Of the warbling bird and the dove that cooed,
You longed for the streams and flowers aglow,
And the skies of blue with their clouds of snow,

You longed to enjoy them as all children do—
Now tell me, how much of it ever came true?

And then as you waned into later years,
You could have vowed you'd avoid bitter tears,

You felt in your bones Love's blossoming force;

Planned to sail smooth o'er its life filling course,

New dreams then awoke as Love's visions do—
Now tell me, how much of it ever came true?

You labored and trusted, faithfully prayed
The God of your sires beseeching his aid.

You gave to your master your brain and your hand

In hope that some day together you'd stand,
But you drifted apart, all opposites do—
Now tell me, how much of your prayers came true?

You labored and thirsted, hungered and sought,
While your masters did maw all that you wrought.

Your God never answered pleading proved vain,

The thieves have the riches you have the chain.

But still you slave on as all good slaves do—
Now tell me, you wage slave, say, isn't this true?

The forest, the bird, the dove and the streams,
The flowers, the skies, and the clouds of your dreams,

The love of your youth, and the visions it bore
Are still within reach, and waiting in store
For those who'll rebel, who'll dare and who'll do—

Just try it you toiler, you'll find this is TRUE.

MY POEMS

Word just received from the Illustrator says that the poems will be out in time for the holiday season, that is the volume will come out in November or December. The title of the book will be: "Songs of Love and Rebellion," and it will contain several poems never before published anywhere, such as "The Last Message," "Night," "My Woman," and other songs. The cost will be about 50 cents a copy, but don't send me any money until book is advertised as ready for sale; just let me know how many copies you want and your address.

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