
Then and Now,

April 6, 1917 — April 6, 1921.

[leaflet of the CPA, distributed April 6, 1921] †

Transcription in Dept. of Justice Investigative Files, case 2020600-1465, NARA M-1085, reel 937.

Four years ago, on April 6, 1917, the United States entered the World War. The declaration of war was made by WOODROW WILSON, who was returned to power on the promise of the Democratic political machine that he would keep us out of the bloody mess. Congress simply rubberstamped the President's action.

It was bound to be so. Bourgeois democratic government is but the instrument by which the capitalist class — the ruling class — maintains its power. The capitalist class are the owners of the means of production. The capitalists wanted war because they could greatly increase their profits. And increase them they did beyond those of any other country. The United States before the war was a debtor nation. Today the capitalists through their government in Washington hold a mortgage on almost every other country in the world. That is why they want the biggest navy in the world — so they can collect the debts, invest their stolen fortunes, and dispose of the goods stolen from the working class of America.

But the capitalists didn't do the fighting. They stayed at home and hired out to their government for one dollar a year. Their sons were placed in positions that afforded security for life and limb. The working class was called upon to do the fighting and the paying and to produce the munitions of war. You'll remember the heatless days, and the wheatless days, and the Liberty Bond drives, and the work or fight laws, with everyone singing "The Star Spangled Banner," and everyone determined to "lick the Kaiser" in the "war to end war" for "the rights of small nations" and to "make the world safe for democracy" and to "make

the world a better place to live in."

And the workers didn't go willingly into the valley of death. They were torn from their families by the capitalist state. Conscription was a bitter pill to swallow and the capitalists tried to sugarcoat it. "Selective Service," "the conscription of the willing" the prostitute press called it, and tried to make it appear that the workers went joyously to the slaughter, while conscientious objectors were sent to jail for 20 years.

Those who pointed out that it was a war for commercial supremacy were hunted down like wild beasts with a ruthlessness never exceeded in any European despotism. The Communists and the IWW were ground under the Iron Heel with the brutality of the Russian Tsars. The capitalist White Terror stalked through the land. The churches draped the flag around their altars, the priests, ministers, and rabbis offered prayers to the god of war, and Christians smeared the face of Christ with war-paint and placed a sword into the hands of the "Prince of Peace."

Oh, the rosy promises that the capitalist government and their henchmen, the labor fakers, made to you during the war, when they needed you to work and fight and die for them. You remember the meeting in Washington of the 110 Presidents of trade unions, where they promised that you would not strike and sold you out to the bosses in order to save their own precious skins and their fat, soft jobs.

Well, now that it is all over how do you like the results? Fourteen million men died like rats; died tearing at each other's throats like wild beasts. Fourteen million workingmen have slaughtered each other to decide whether the German Allies or the Anglo-French-

†- A document in the Comintern Archive, RGASPI, Moscow, indicates that 541,000 copies of this leaflet were produced. The Dept. of Justice Bureau of Investigation report filed by agent J.S. Apelman states that 40,000 of these were shipped to the Detroit district of the CPA and that the leaflet was scheduled "for nationwide distribution April 6th, the anniversary of the declaration of war."

American Entente should have the exclusive right to exploit the toiling masses of the world. America won the war — how about you, the working classes of America? Did YOU win?

After sizing up the situation do you not think it would have been better if you had turned your guns upon the class that is robbing you right here in America, and then gone over and helped the German workingmen to lick the Kaiser and the Capitalists of Germany?

The capitalist system is based upon the production of commodities for profit — for the profit of a small group who own the means of production, and who do no useful work. This means exploitation, wage-slavery, and misery for the masses who do all the useful and necessary work. The only way out is to introduce a system of society in which production is carried on for use, for the benefit of all, with every member doing his share of the work. But clearly such a system can only be instituted by a government of revolutionary, class conscious workers. The present government of the United States is a capitalist government upholding the right of a few men to own all the railroads, shops, factories, mills, mines, land, etc., as their private property. The capitalist government of America protects the rich and assists them to rob the poor and toiling masses. When you ask for more wages and go out on strike to enforce your demand, this government sends police to club and arrest you and soldiers to shoot you.

And that is the fight, the only fight that you as a worker should be interested in, the struggle between the capitalist class and the working class for political power and the ownership of the machinery of production. It is the age-long class war. It is a fight to the death and must inevitably result in a civil war — in the forcible overthrow of the capitalist state.

In all history no ruling class has voluntarily abdicated. No tyranny has ever been overthrown by supplication. The government of the English King George III was overthrown in this country by FORCE OF ARMS. The slave owners of the South were defeated and their government destroyed in 1861-65 by

FORCE OF ARMS. The working class will be free only after they defeat the capitalist class and destroy their government by FORCE OF ARMS, just as the American capitalists defeated the Germany capitalists by FORCE OF ARMS. When you are on strike the government does not VOTE you back to work, nor do they simply pass resolutions. THEY EMPLOY ARMED FORCE AGAINST YOU.

Remember the lessons of the World War. There can be no peace while the few have the power to exploit the masses. The road to peace lies through world revolution. The working class — the overwhelming majority of the people — must become the ruling class. They must establish their own government — the DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT — THE WORKERS' GOVERNMENT IN THE FORM OF SOVIETS. This Workers' Government will suppress the counter-revolution of the capitalists. It will take over the factories and the railroads and the land. This Workers' Government will gradually introduce the Communist Society. After the capitalists' resistance has been broken and their stolen property restored to society; after they have been reduced to the labor strata, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat disappears; the state dies out and the human race, at last free, will produce and enjoy wealth in the Communist Society upon the basis of "From each according to his ability and to each according to his needs."

This is the program of the COMMUNIST PARTY OF AMERICA. It calls upon the toiling and oppressed masses to unite under its banner and to march on to the conquest of political power for bread and peace and freedom.

WORKINGMEN OF AMERICA! YOUR CHOICE LIES BETWEEN CAPITALIST-IMPERIALIST WAR AND WORLD REVOLUTION! YOU WILL EITHER FIGHT FOR CAPITALISM AND SLAVERY OR FOR COMMUNISM AND FREEDOM.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

**Issued by the Central Executive Committee,
Communist Party of America.**

Edited by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2007. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.