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# Speech Delivered at Blackhawk Park, Rockford, Illinois — June 17, 1917.

by Adolph Germer

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*Speech delivered by Adolph Germer at Blackhawk Park Sunday, June 17th [1917], at about 3 o'clock pm.*

Mr Jenner:—

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, comrades, friends, and fellow citizens:—

Last fall when I was in Rockford I did not have as large an audience as I have this afternoon, because at that time we all believed in the slogan that “he would keep us out of war.” (*Laughter.*) That slogan seemed at that time to strike a very popular chord and seemed to hypnotize the great mass of the people because on election day they voted because “he kept us out of war.” Since that time the situation has changed considerably and while we said last fall [1916], “praise God, he kept us out of war,” Wall Street now says: “praise God, he got us into war.” (*Laughter and applause.*)

But now that we are in the war is no reason why we should despair and become disheartened but it is all the more reason why we should take heart, for if it is logical, if it is in good judgment, to prepare for war during times of peace, it is also good judgment and logical to prepare for peace during times of war. (*Ap-*

*plause.*)

This war will not last forever; it cannot last forever; its end must come sometime, and the question for us to determine is when that end shall be. I am not going this afternoon to appeal to your passion; I am rather going to appeal to your intelligence, to your reasoning and I want to present some facts to you; at least they are facts, in my judgment that will perhaps give you a different conception of this war which you

are not able to get out of the daily papers in Rockford or out of the *Chicago Tribune*. (*Laughter.*)

## Democracy for Whom?

Since Congress declared that a state of war exists and since the mobilization of troops has increased from day to day, we are beginning to ask: “What are we fighting for?” and the reply has been given us that we are fighting to make the world safe for democracy. But if we are to make the world

safe for democracy, then why is it that we have singled out one country and declared that a state of war exists between this country and that country when there are other countries in this world that we are trying to make safe for democracy that are just as undemocratic and just as autocratic as the government against which we



have declared war. (*Applause.*) Is it that we are going to make the world safe for democracy only for Germany or are we going to make the world safe for democracy so far as Ireland is concerned, so far as India is concerned, so far as Austria is concerned, so far as Turkey and Belgium and Italy and Serbia and Romania? Are we going to make the entire world safe for democracy and if so, then why not declare war on every country in which democracy does not exist? (*Laughter and applause.*)

I know and I concede that there is no vestige of democracy in the German empire, so far as the Kaiser is able to prevent it. I now that he is autocratic and despotic as Theodore Roosevelt (*applause*) but I have some confidence in the people in Germany, just as I have confidence in the people of America. (*Applause.*) And if we claim the right to live our own life and to make our own form of government, we ought to be democratic enough to leave that same privilege to the people of Germany and to every other country, because it is an historical fact that a democracy cannot be established in any country until the people of that country are ready for it and want it. (*Applause.*) This country did not force democracy on Russia; the people of Russia did that themselves, though they had the arch-autocrat as their ruler and just as the people of Russia threw over the government of the Romanovs, so will the people of Germany throw over the house of Hohenzollern and the people of Austria will throw over the house of Hapsburg. Leave it to the people of those countries, just as we expect the people of those countries to leave it to us. Oh, but someone will say, "Unless we join the Allies now and lick the Kaiser, they will come over here and take the United States, (*laughter and applause*) and some actually believe the Kaiser is already on his way and about to land in New York harbor and make a charge on the Statue of Liberty. (*Applause and laughter.*) You need not be surprised if on waking some morning you read in some paper here, or the *Chicago Tribune*, the mandate has gone forth that before retiring every night you have to look under the bed to ascertain that the Kaiser is not there. (*Laughter and applause.*) What a terror this one man has created all over the world. And why? They are not afraid of the Kaiser; they know the Kaiser wouldn't come over to this country, put [it] in his vest pocket and take it back to Berlin and put it in the beer gar-

den. That is only a snare to excite and arouse the people of this country in order to get their assent to the military program that has been mapped out in order to protect the material interests of Wall Street. (*Applause.*)

### War Good for Wall Street.

I am not saying this without some facts and I am going to present them here this afternoon. Perhaps some of you have read them for they are published in some of the papers. So the war is not to make the world safe for democracy; the war is not to give Germany a democratic form of government, but I repeat that the war in which we are engaged is only fundamentally, principally, and wholly in the interests of the munitions ring and the Wall Street interests. (*Applause.*) Let us see! The previous speaker said that some of the prominent manufacturers in Rockford, be it said to their credit, went on the bond of a number of the men who are imprisoned and he said that they did it in order to get sufficient help in the factories. Now, these men were working for their economic interests. It was a case of economic determinism, that more or less actuates all of us. Wall Street (and when I speak of Wall Street, I don't mean that little narrow street on the south side of New York, but I mean the people that have their headquarters there) is actuated by the same motives that most of us are, and the figures that have been given us by even the capitalistic press prove it, and these figures have been printed in *The American Socialist*. Some of our skeptical Democratic and Republican friends wouldn't believe it because they say: "Well, those Socialists are fanatic and irresponsible but the *Chicago Tribune*, like George Washington, can't tell a lie." (*Laughter.*)

I have here the figures from 42 industrial corporations, which give the profits for 1914 and 1916 — and their profits in 1916 exceed those in 1914 by more than \$611 million. And each one of these industrial corporations is directly or indirectly furnishing the means with which to carry on the war. I am not going to read all of them, just the principle ones, and the first on is Armour & Company. Now, Mr. Armour is one of the gentlemen who is on the State Council of Defense. He is one of those gentlemen who is concerned about your material welfare, to see that the Kaiser doesn't get you and take you back to Berlin.

(*Laughter.*) The earnings of Armour & Company in 1914 were \$7,509,000. In 1916 they were \$20,100,000 or an increase in 2 years of \$12,590,000.

...By the way I want to tell you a little about Mr. Armour — a very interesting person. I have a friend in the wholesale grocery business in Chicago who called my attention to the ads run in the Chicago papers, “Eat less meat and more rice.” In other words, become Chinafied. (*Laughter.*) “Eat less meat and more rice.” “Well,” he says, “we have been selling rice from 3 and a half up to 5 cents a pound to the retailers. I came into a grocery store one day and the grocer said: ‘Why, you have a new competitor in the rice business.’ ‘Why, who is it?’ ‘Why, Mr. Armour, and by the way, he has raised the price.’ ‘Well, I told the grocer, we are still selling at the old price.’” He said, “A few weeks after that we tried to go on the market and buy rice and we found we had to buy from Mr. Armour. They sent out their agents broadcast and bought all the rice that was salable and, of course, when they got a corner on it they began to send the price skywards and that explains why Armour & Company urges you to ‘eat less meat and more rice.’” (*Laughter and applause.*)

A similar story was told me by a representative of a New York banking house the other day. He lives in New York but he said, “I saw where the food commissioner distributed 50,000 circulars urging the people to eat more rice and less meat; I decided that the price of rice would go up so I bought a carload of rice at 3 cents a pound, had it shipped to New York, stored in a warehouse and the price of rice went up to 5 cents, 6 cents, 7 cents, 8 cents and I sold; the party who bought my rice held it at 11 cents, but I found that the food commissioner who went out and urged people to eat more rice and less meat bought 50 tons of rice and was selling it at an advance price. Now, the food commissioner doesn’t hate the people of America; Mr. Armour doesn’t either, but they are actuated by their material interests. That is business, and of course during this wartime, while we are sending our food-stuffs abroad it is much easier to corner the commodities and consequently raise the prices.

Next is the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company. There is a singular interest attached to this concern; I spent 15 months in Colorado, that at that time was a

twin sister to Siberia, so far as industrial conditions were concerned. We conducted a strike against Mr. Rockefeller...† (And by the way Rockefeller owned the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company, and Mr. Rockefeller boasted before the strike was called that he had \$5 million to spend to break up the union mining districts of that state, and in 1914 the strike was on — 1913 and ’14.) In 1914 the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company had a deficit of \$905,000. In 1916 the profits were \$2,210,000, an increase in 2 years in profits of \$3,107,000. Of course Mr. Rockefeller could well afford to buy \$15 million of bonds and raise the price of gasoline 2 cents.

The DuPont Powder Company... Mr. DuPont is one of the leading lights in the Navy League; he wants a larger navy and of course a larger army, to see that the working class of America is well protected, that no ill becomes it. (*Laughter.*) The profits of the DuPont Powder company in 1914 were only \$4,831,000. In 1916 the profits were \$82,107,000, or an increase in 2 years of \$77,275,000. I suppose your wages increased in the same proportion. (*Laughter.*)

The Lackawanna Steel Company in 1914 had a deficit of \$1,652,000; in 1916 they had a profit of \$12,218,000, or an increase of net receipts in 1916 over 1914 of \$13,870,000.

The United States Steel Corporation, the arch-patriot and arch-American J. Pierpont Morgan’s company... In 1914 the profits of the United States Steel corporation, where a union man dare not sneeze, were \$23,496,000. In 1916 the profits were \$271,531,000, or an increase of \$248,034,000.

Now, let me ask you men and women, can you understand why these arch-patriots want war? (*Laughter.*) Isn’t there an economic reason for war? Isn’t there a reason why we should not buy liberty bonds, in order to prosecute the war and enlarge upon it? It is self-evident from these figures that do not come from Socialist, but come from government sources. But have you seen anywhere the slightest indication where J. Pierpont Morgan has rushed to the recruiting office in order to don a suit of khaki at \$15 a month, in order to protect this country from the invasion of the Kaiser? (*Laughter and applause.*) Nor will you see it.

†- Germer was an official in the United Mine Workers of America.

That single blessing is left to you men from the factories and the mills and the mines and the railroads and the farms and the workshops. There is absolutely no competition in that line and that is one profession on which J. Pierpont Morgan does not attempt to get a corner. (*Laughter.*)

### **War Profits Raises Cost of Living.**

What else has happened? The profits of J. Pierpont Morgan & Co. and all of the other industrial establishments connected with the war have increased but there is something else that has increased and it is not your wages either. I am going to give you some Chicago prices that we pay when we go to the grocer and the markets and buy the necessities of life. These figures, too, are taken from a government document. From the *Congressional Record* of May 12th [1917]. If you doubt them, go to your *Congressional Record* of May 12th and see if you do not find these figures. Congressman Galloway, of New York, inserted in the records a statement giving 100 different commodities — necessities of life — on which there was an average increase of 54% from the 1st day of October of last year to the 1st day of May of this year. Here are just a few of them:

Flour in October 1916 was \$10 per barrel. In May of 1917 it was \$15.20 per barrel, an increase of 52%.

Baked beans in October 1916 sold for 9 cents per can. In May of 1917 at 18 cents per can, or an increase of just 100%.

Navy beans in October [1916] sold for 9 cents per can. In May [1917] they sold for 19 cents per can, or an increase of 111%.

Potatoes in October [1916] sold for 42 cents a peck. In May [1917] they sold for \$1 a peck, and increase of 138%.

Onions in October [1916] sold for 13 1/2 cents per pound (evidently they made a mistake in copying this) but they increased 185% in 6 months.

Sweet potatoes in October [1916] sold for 30 cents a peck. In May [1917] for 75 cents a peck, an increase in 6 months of 150%.

Cabbage in October [1916] sold for 5 cents a pound, in May [1917] for 15 cents a pound, an increase of 300%.

Apples in October [1916] sold for 35 cents a peck. In May they sold for 60 cents a peck, an increase of 71%.

But have your wages increased correspondingly? What has happened in the light of this increased cost of living to a number of workers who have felt it necessary to go out on strike in order to increase their wages? In East St. Louis, this state, the men employed in the aluminum works went on strike for an increase in wages and the right to live. Within 24 hours a federal judge sent down an injunction, robbing them of every constitutional right, and they sent the troops down there to protect the imported scabs that were brought to East St. Louis to take the place of the Americans who wanted higher wages to meet the increased cost of living.

This same story could be told of numerous other places. No matter how patriotic you are (and I am patriotic but my patriotism is of a different kind than Wall Street's; my patriotism is a patriotism to the people of the country and not to the special interests)... (*Applause.*) No matter how patriotic you are, you may wrap yourself in the stars and stripes every night you retire (*laughter*) but if you go out on strike tomorrow to get a 10 percent increase in wages to meet the increased cost of living, every power of the government will be used against you to drag you back to your workshops or send you to jail. (*Applause.*)

### **Militarism on the Rise in America.**

But, we are told, we should make all these sacrifices because we are going to crush the Prussian military machine, and in that cry, disguised by the slogan to crush the Kaiser's military machine, we are building up one in the United States that will make the Kaiser look like a piker. (*Applause.*) Who of you 6 months — yes, 3 months ago would have believed that we would have had the draft law in the United States and that we would be a nation of conscripts? Who of you would have believed it 3 months ago? Why, you would say I was insane if I would suggest that. You know that in this country, in this great country, this home of the brave, this land of the free — why did you think for one moment that Congress would enact a law to force men into the army? Why, no, you would say, "That is un-American, it is unconstitutional,

and undemocratic and not in keeping with our democratic institutions.” And so I say yet — I still say that it is unconstitutional, I still say that it is undemocratic, I still say that it is un-American, and if we are really going to fight to make the world safe for democracy let us begin democracy right here at home by submitting the question of war to the people of the country and also the question of conscription. (*Applause.*) Yes, but the warlords know which way the wind is blowing. (*Laughter and applause.*) They know what would happen to the war. If they left it to a vote of the adult men and women citizens of the United States, they know that the war would be snowed under so deep that Wall Street would never be able to find it again. (*Applause.*)

The same thing would happen to the conscription law. Go around, speak to whom you may and it is rarely that you will find someone who approves of the draft law that was whipped through Congress by President Wilson. Speak to the average congressman and he will tell you that the draft law, making a nation of conscripts out of the people of this country, is undemocratic and un-American, but of course, as congressmen they had to stand behind the President, right or wrong. (*Laughter.*) Because he kept us out of war. (*Laughter.*)

Now, that is the situation and what are we going to do about it? There is only one thing to do and that is to do it by the methods that Wall Street and Congress did it, and that method is to put true representatives of the people of this country in Congress, in the state legislature, and in every branch of the political government and then repeal the conscription law and bring about an early peace. (*Applause.*) (*A bystander and listener: “Should have done that last fall!”*)

This war has been brought about because the great mass of the people of the United States, not intentionally, but they did it nevertheless, placed the power of the political government in the hands of those who favored a war program. They were ensnared and deluded, I admit, and the question arises with you, those of you who voted for the present administration because it kept us out of war — the question arises whether in the future you will be tricked and trapped in the same way. Everything that is done in organized society must be done in an organized way and in this country, where we have the ballot there is a much easier

way of establishing true democracy than the people of Russia were compelled to resort to and there is one organization in the United States to which Wall Street does not belong, to which Wall Street does not contribute, and I deny the oft repeated charge and I am in a position to deny it — not even the Kaiser nor the Krupps contributed to this organization and the organization that I speak of is the Socialist Party, made up of working men and working women, with working class ideas and with a desire for the best interests of the people of this country. (*Applause.*)

Now, let us see whether the Socialist Party would have prevented the war. At the outbreak of the war in Europe they said, “Where were your Socialists? You Socialists are against war and militarism and why didn’t you prevent the war?” Well, the reason why they didn’t prevent the war in Germany are the same reasons for not preventing war in the United States and that reason is that not enough working men and women were Socialists. Had there been more Socialists in Germany and France and England and Austria and Italy and Russia they would have prevented the war. The war came in spite of the Socialists and so it is here in the United States. We are not in the war because of the Socialists; we are in the war in spite of the Socialists. It was the only organization in this country that stood unalterably and unflinchingly against the war. (*Applause.*)

Now, what do you think the Socialists advocate? First, that these 42 establishments that I referred to and all other like establishments, instead of belonging to Armour & Company and J.P. Morgan & Company, that they shall be the property of all the people of this country and that they shall be operated in the interests of all the people of this country. You say: “Well, that is impractical.” Well, let us see. Is the present crisis in which we find ourselves a practical one? Do you consider the human slaughter by the hundreds of thousands and millions a practical arrangement? (*Laughter.*) Let us see.

### **Capitalism is Inequitable.**

Most of you have heard of Harry Thaw — read of him. Some perhaps have seen him. For 9 years he was in an insane asylum, in fact he is there again now. Harry Thaw committed a crime; he murdered a man

on Madison Square Roof Garden about 10 years ago; he was arrested and went to jail. The Thaws, through their hard work, not in a furniture factory or store or any place like that, but through working the American people, had accumulated several millions and they engaged counsel and the counsel says: "Why, the dear beloved boy, Harry, was not insane" but the state of New York said no, Harry was not insane, he is perfectly sane of mind; and they went to court and the court finally held that Harry was insane and Harry went to the insane asylum and was there for 9 years. After that period the Thaws said, no, Harry is not insane; and the state of New York said, yes, Harry is insane. They simply reversed positions, first the Thaws said he was insane and the state said he was not and then the Thaws said he was not insane and the state said he was; and again they went to court and the court again held that Harry was not insane and he was released. But during those 9 years that Thaw was insane and in the insane asylum, whether he was insane or not, his income was upward of \$40,000 a year.

Harry Thaw didn't work in the insane asylum. He created no value; he didn't make one single toothpick or a pair of shoes. Someone did create values and those values that Harry Thaw received but didn't create, were created by someone who didn't get them. In other words, those who were permitting to escape the insane asylum were creating an income of upward of \$40,000 a year for Harry Thaw, while the average income of an American worker is only about \$500 a year. That is the kind of system that is supported by our good Democratic and Republican friends. Create thousands for men in the insane asylum or men in the penitentiary, while only reserving to themselves a bare existence. Let me ask you, in all candor, my friends, isn't it practical? Would it not be a practical arrangement if those who created the \$40,000 in a shop or a factory or mill or on a farm or in a department store or elsewhere — don't you think it would be much more, a much more practical arrangement if those who created the equivalent of \$40,000, received it in the form of wages? (*Applause.*)

### **Socialism Not Impractical.**

Let me give you another illustration: On the Pacific coast there are ranches of hundreds of thou-

sands and more than a million acres, the Lux Miller estate is upwards of a million acres of land; the O'Neil ranch is 204,000; the Irvine ranch, 106,000; and so forth. Now, the Irvine ranch is a very fine bean ranch. Now, Mr. Irvine perhaps never sees his 106,000 acres of land; he never works on it but he gets workingmen and workingwomen; they rent that ground, they furnish the labor-power, they furnish the tools, they furnish the seed, they sow the seed, they till the soil, and when the crop is to be harvested, then Mr. Irvine sends his agents over to see that he gets one-third. Would there be any beans raised if Mr. Irvine didn't get the third? Now suppose that the people that raised the beans got them all? Isn't that practical? Can't we have an arrangement of this kind? That is what the Socialists want. They want those that raise the beans to get all the beans; those who make the shoes to get the shoes, or the equivalent thereof; and those who did the coal to get the coal, or the equivalent thereof. (And by the way, I know something about coal — I dug coal for about 15 years.)

You pay 5 and a half, 6 and a half dollars a ton for coal up here. How much do you think the miner gets? He gets from 66 cents to \$1.41. The coal for which the miners gets on an average of 60 cents is sold in the city of Chicago for 6 dollars and a half per ton. The average man thinks that coal is high because the miner is getting 10 or 12 dollars a day for mining it. No, the railroads get a portion in freight, the man that owns it and never sees it — and, by the way, during the West Virginia strike it developed that some of the of the men who owned the mines had never seen America, yet coal was dug that was sent at a profit to persons residing in Italy, Germany, England, France, and all the other European countries — so after the miner gets his 60 cents a ton for mining the coal, the operator who owns or leases the mine gets his profit, he turns it over to a railroad that gets their profits in the form of freight rates; it then turned over to a jobber who gets his profit; then turned over to a retailer who gets his profit; and then turned over to the consumer who pays all the profits.

Now, they say it is impractical to have the mines owned by the people of this country, and if a ton of coal sold for so much that it all goes to the miner, except the necessary operating and producing expenses — it isn't practical, they say. And if we had that ar-

rangement, if those who created the values, who mined the coal, and make the shoes, and did the necessary work, mental and physical, received the full equivalent of their product, they could buy back out of the market the amount they put into the market and there would be no surplus belonging in any country that would be dumped into other countries which they call exports and foreign trade.

### **Capitalism Cause of Slaughter.**

The war in Europe is not a war for democracy; the war in Europe is not a war against the Kaiser, but it is a war of one group of capitalists, who live on a piece of soil known by a certain name against a group of other speculating capitalists who live on a piece of soil in another country of another name, each striving to get a market in which to dispose of their surplus products. (*Applause.*) In other words, those who make shoes and make more shoes than can be sold, are required to join the army and the navy and go to some other land and shoot someone they have never seen before or be shot by someone they have never seen before, in order that the surplus amount of shoes be sold in another country. Because you make more clothes than are able to be bought, you must join the army and the navy and go to some other land and shoot some other mother's son whom you have never seen before and with whom you have never had any quarrel, in order that the surplus goods may find a market in another country, against the surplus of the other country. (*Applause.*)

That is the underlying cause of the European war. That is the underlying cause for workingmen to slaughter each other by the hundreds of thousands and millions. And it was not sufficient that the workingmen of Europe slaughtered each other. Now we in this country are to raise an army of several millions and send them abroad to the oceans of blood, and all of this in spite of the blessed commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Kill." It is strange indeed that it is the Socialists in this crisis who are charged with being irreligious, that the Socialist Party in this crisis is the only organization that stands true to the commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Kill." (*Applause.*)

And now since we are advocating the practice of that commandment the jails are thrown open to us.

When we begin to advocate peace, the cessation of that human slaughter, then we are arrested, indicted for conspiracy to stop the killing. (*Laughter.*) The word "Peace" seemingly is the most terrifying in any human language. The peace advocate who at one time was heralded as the exponent of the doctrine of the lowly Nazarene is now thrown into jail for conspiracy and an alleged traitor to his government. A member of Congress, elected by the people of the United States, in a letter recently written to me says that "I and others should be hanged to a lamp post or a tree, as they hung Benedict Arnold." I suggested to him that he had better learn something about the end of Benedict Arnold and I could quite understand how one who was so stupid on a subject of that kind could suggest that those who advocated peace should meet with mob violence.

### **Socialist Party the Solution.**

My friends, we are in this crisis; we must get out of the crisis sometime, somehow and I submit to you that the only way to get out is by the organization of the people into the Socialist Party. Our economic foundation is predicated on the material welfare of the great masses of people against special interests. Build up the Socialist Party and use your ballot on the next election day and put men in Congress, in the legislature, in every other political office where an election is held; put the powers of this government in the hands of the people, rather than in the hands of a special set. (*Applause.*) And in spite of the warning issued by President Wilson a few days ago — "Woe be unto them who stand in our way" — thousands are flocking to the Socialist Party and it is only a question of a short time, if this prosecution and persecution continues, until the Socialist Party membership will not only be a few hundred thousand but perhaps a few million and the people of this country will march rapidly to a true democracy, as did the people of Russia. (*Applause.*)

When Tsar Nicholas entered the war he had no dream that his throne would fall till it would tremble and decay; he was as certain as the rising and the setting of the sun that he would come out of that war still the Tsar and the despot of Russia. But his oppression, his despotism, inflamed the people of Russia, who yearned for democracy and for freedom and they re-

sorted to the only way open to them in order to establish that form of government. The fires that were kindled by the Tsar of Russia and that received their fuel from its people will find their way into Germany; Germany will follow suit and democracy will be established there — either during the war or immediately thereafter the people of Germany will want their pound of flesh for the sacrifices they have made. (*Applause.*)

Those fires will find their way into Austria, they will find their way into Italy and into every other country and here in the United States as well, where we will establish an industrial and social democracy in which there will be no master and no slave. (*Applause.*) The accomplishment of that end must be the mission, yea, the duty of every man and woman who yearns for liberty and democracy. It will only be accomplished by organization of the masses of the people. (And by the way, Germany was the country that was the nearest to the realization of that aim and the one force the Kaiser feared more than any other in Germany was the Social Democratic Party and the 110 members in the German Reichstag.)

### **Ruling Class Fears Socialists.**

The ruling class of every country fears its socialist movement for they know that when the socialist movement triumphs that the rule of special interests will fall and will decay, and I entreat you, my friends, I appeal to you with all the earnestness at my command to give this matter your most serious and considerate thought. I appeal to you, not in my behalf but in your behalf, in the interests of the people of the United States, in the interests of a world democracy. I appeal to you to think and to reason through organization and with you all united, your organization strong at the ballot box, to capture that power that are now in the hands of the enemy, for the liberty and democracy of the people, and use those powers to bring about your own freedom and the establishment of democracy. It can be done. If the special interests by the manipulation of the political machinery can keep themselves enthroned, then by the working class. (And by the way, the working class is not confined to those who wear a pair of overalls and a jumper and a greasy cap. The two-by-four business who is feeling the pres-

sure of big business more and more is equally a member of the working class, because it is only a question of time until he will take his place in the shop and the factory and the mill.)

I appeal to you as workmen and workwomen; those who want liberty and democracy and a democracy that will give you the full social value of your labor. I appeal to you to join hands with us of the Socialist Party. Let me impress on your mind that it is far cheaper to vote right than to strike right and to mob right and when I say that I speak from experience. I know that had the men and women of Colorado voted right they would never have had this strike in Colorado and Ludlow would never have disgraced the pages of history or that had those men and those women of that state placed the political power in the hands of themselves through their representatives, Jeffries and Governor Armons would never have been heard of — but they voted for their friends, they rewarded their friends and punished their enemies.

They forgot, however, that it is much easier to be a friend to workmen than to be a workman. Then when you understand that, that you have a mission to perform as a working man in the union, that you have a mission to perform as a workman and workwoman, if you please, in the union and in the political field; that on both fields you are a man in your class when you assume that class consciousness and organize with your fellow workers and with your fellow men and women and use that united force in the ballot box and through the union — then all the powers of Wall Street, in spite of the millions they can make out of the war, will not be able to defeat your purpose. The working class united is an army that not the combined force of capital can resist and if you but realize how comparatively easy, how easy it is for you to be the ruling class of the nation, then all the slogans such as “Praise God, he kept us out of war” would never again trick you into the trenches. (*Applause.*)

### **People Have Right to Know War Aims.**

Just one more word with reference to the war. Conscription is upon us. The war is upon us, but the battle against conscription and the war is not at an end. We shall continue to agitate; we shall continue to educate; we shall continue to prevail on Congress and

upon President Wilson to bring about a speedy termination of this war; we shall continue to insist upon the President that he tell us why we are in this war and we are going to request of him that he tell us in more definite and specific terms than “fighting to make the world safe for democracy.” (*Applause.*) It may not mean the same thing to President Wilson and the members of Congress — they are in the war but democracy may mean something entirely different to you and to me. Therefore we are not satisfied with the vague statement, “fighting to make the world safe for democracy.” We want to know what our war aims are and what the terms are upon which this nation will make peace. We have a right to know that. If we are to enlist, if we are to join in this mad dance of death and offer ourselves as a sacrifice on the battlefield, we have a right to know what it is all about and what the end will be. If not that, they have no right to expect us to walk blindly into the trenches and be shot to ribbons and pieces.

We have a right to know every turn of our aims and our objects and we have a right to know just what the situation will be after the war is at an end. Surely that is not conspiracy; surely that is not treason; surely that is not unpatriotism. But I submit to you, my friends, that it is the greatest loyalty to demand that — that we can explain to the people of this country and that the people of any other can explain to the inhabitants of that country. (*Applause.*) Not only that — we have a right to know what our aims are and what the basis of a termination of the war will be.

### **Liberty Bonds are Fetters to War Chariot.**

We are expected to give our nickels and our dimes for Liberty Bonds. Let me make a brief reference to the Liberty Bonds. What do those Liberty Bonds mean? They tell us they mean liberty. For whom? Liberty for whom? For us, they say. Well, if conscription is liberty, I don't want very much of it. (*Laughter and applause.*) The Liberty Bonds that you are expected to buy are the fetters that chain you to the war chariot. When you buy a Liberty Bond, you invest in the war debts and you are going to insist when the war is over that those debts be paid. The Liberty Bonds are not sold only in the United States. Similar bonds are sold in other countries. Why? Because the people are threat-

ening to repudiate the war debts and in order to avoid and obviate that it is necessary that every man, woman, and child buy a Liberty Bond. When you buy a Liberty Bond you have \$50 or \$100 or \$500, whatever it may be, invested in the war debts. When the war is over you want your money back but who is paying the Liberty Bond? The people of the United States. Whose bonds are they? The people's bonds. The people sell themselves their Liberty Bonds and pay themselves 3 and a half percent for 30 years and at the end of that time they redeem their own war bonds. (*Laughter.*)

Besides what does the war cost? Secretary McAdoo in Chicago, the other night, told us it is going to cost about \$16.5 million a day — 16 and a half million dollars a day? About 16 and a half cents for every one of the hundred million inhabitants or about 82 cents for every family in the United States. That is the price that we are going to pay for liberty, a little over \$77 a year. Now, let me submit to you, would it not be more reasonable and a saner proposition, and a more humanitarian and Christian proposition, if every living being in the United States paid 16 and a half cents per day for one year and that we send that to Belgium, if we are to rescue Belgium and keep our men at home. We will keep the flower of manhood in the United States and at the same time rescue Belgium and keep the homes happy and contented. (*Applause.*) It wouldn't require that much.

Ten million dollars a year we are to pay, and if we don't buy the Liberty Bonds, why, the president of the Central Trust Company told one of the salesmen, “When you approach a man and he doesn't buy one, knock him down and make him buy it.” The *Chicago Tribune* told us so at least. Sixteen cents per day for every one of the 100 million inhabitants — 82 cents per family per day for each one of the 100 million inhabitants or — according to Secretary McAdoo, and his estimate is not exaggerated, perhaps underestimated — \$10 million per year. Would it not be far better, would it not be a more reasonable proposition, wouldn't we be doing the greater service to humanity and to ourselves if we collected that fund and sent it to Belgium to rescue Belgium and kept the future of our government here at home, rather than to send them to the trenches, to have their arms and their legs and their heads shot off and their bodies shot to pieces? Oh, but of course we are dreamers and fanatics. We

should always remember that we are fighting for democracy. We are fighting for the freedom of the world, and when we ask for some of that freedom here to begin with, to establish some of that democracy, some of that freedom on the borders of our own country, then we are charged with and indicted for conspiracy; we are charged with treason; we are charged with every hideous crime that can be invented. There is but one way, I again repeat, out of this crisis and that is by the complete solidification, the complete unification of every man and woman, irrespective of religion, to organize in that one grand movement that has for its aims and its objects the end of capitalism with all of its hideous consequences, wars included, and the establishment of an industrial social democracy were men will not be reduced to tramp to work across the highways in search of some master to give him the right to live; where women will not be torn out of the home and thrown into the sweatshops and the factories and the mills and where childhood will not be stolen from the schoolhouse to be ground into glittering gold for an idle aristocracy. The end of capitalism and the ushering in of that greater and grander day, the industrial and social democracy is the mission and the hopes and the expressions of the Socialist Party and in your behalf as well as in the behalf of that movement I appeal to you to put your application for membership with the local organization and become one of the active soldiers in this army for the common good.

*Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.*

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