Laborism and Socialism

An Analysis of the Inter-Allied Socialist and Labor Program on Peace, and the British Labor Party Program on Reconstruction after the War.

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I.

Socialist activity, activity that is dynamic and prepares the Revolution, consists in expressing fundamental Socialism by means of clear, uncompromising analysis of facts and tendencies as the basis of action, in relating fundamental theory to fundamental practice. If Socialism is in accord with the development of Capitalism, then the realistic policy, the policy of adapting our theory and action to *fundamental* facts and tendencies, is the policy that promotes the Revolution. But the facts and tendencies of Capitalism are multifarious; and revolutionary Socialism, accordingly, consists in appraising and relating itself to those facts and tendencies that are fundamental to Capitalism and the coming of Socialism.

There is a peculiarly naive conception of Socialist activity, which adheres to the slogan, "Teach Socialism!" Under the banner of this slogan two extremes meet—the doctrinaire revolutionist of the Socialist Labor Party, and the pervasive opportunist of the Socialist Party. This attitude evades all actual problems of Socialism: the one, by agitating sterile dogmas; the other, by refusing to deal with decisive problems of action, indulging in all sorts of *petit bourgeois* illusions and reforms. The test of the war has proven the ineptitude of these two extremes. The Socialist Labor Party has played a miserable role during the great crisis, unable to adapt its revolutionary aspirations to immediate problems and practice, evading completely the problems of war and peace; while the Socialist Party opportunists, where they did choose action, chose the action largely of bourgeois pacifism,

which, since the collapse of pacifism, has resolved itself into the theory: War, after all is only an incident in our program; teach Socialism! But what sort of Socialism is it that breaks down under the test of war, that abandons the most important task of relating Socialism to war and formulating an independent, revolutionary policy on war and peace? Teach Socialism—and abandon reality, abandon action, abandon the immediate struggle; teach Socialism—and preach your sterile dogmas which have become perverted into a negation of life, or castrate Socialism by a *petit bourgeois* policy of confusion and compromise, of adopting a multiplicity of "issues" that are wholly alien to fundamental Socialism. One element of the opportunist "teachers of Socialism" evades the problems of the war; while the other accepts the war and its policy of "making the world safe for democracy." In this miserable manner, they reject reality, they reject the determining circumstance that war means a climacteric expression of the fundamental facts and tendencies of Capitalism, on the basis of which alone Socialism may act and conquer.

Precisely the opportunistic attitude is responsible for the enthusiastic acceptance, in some Socialist quarters, of the Inter-Allied Labor and Socialist program on peace and the British Labor Party's program on reconstruction after the war. Uncritical comparisons are made between the proletarian revolution in Russia and these two programs; indeed, many an opportunist in his enthusiasm stresses the labor programs as against the proletarian revolution, implying that the former is immeasurably the more important,— as did Scott Nearing and Algernon Lee at the Radical, Socialist and Labor Conference in April. Now this is sheer nonsense. However important, however revolutionary the Labor programs might be, they are, after all, simply paper programs; they cannot, surely, be as important as an actual proletarian revolution, the assumption of power by the revolutionary proletariat, the development of the *modus operandi* of the Social Revolution. Moreover, the two events are mutually exclusive: the British Labor Party programs and the proletarian revolution in Russia are not comparable except as expressions of fundamentally differing policy. The British Labor Party programs are

the final, if finest, formulation of the moderate, *petit bourgeois* policy that has dominated the Labor and Socialist movement; the proletarian revolution in Russia is the initial, magnificent expression in action of revolutionary Socialism, of the new revolutionary epoch and requirements of Imperialism. The one is a policy for the preservation of Capitalism; the other a policy that means the end of Capitalism.

It is precisely the moderate Socialist who enthuses over the war and reconstruction programs of British Laborism: and they *are* an expression of the policy of moderate Socialism. This characterizes adequately and blisteringly the policy of moderate Socialism; and it determines the attitude of revolutionary Socialism.

II.

Of the two programs under consideration, the Inter-Allied Labor and Socialist program on peace has made the most noise; although the British Labor Party's program on reconstruction after the war is the most important, most adequately pictures the tendency and policy of the program on peace. As in considering the program on reconstruction the determining factor is the social significance of the tendency it expresses, so a determining factor in considering the Inter-Allied program is the conditions under which it was adopted, and the groups that constituted the Conference.

The important fact is that the Labor and Socialist delegates constituting the Conference represented the pro-war groups of France, Belgium, and Great Britain. (Italy was represented, but its Socialist delegates agreed to the program, after disavowing its pro-war declaration, on the ground that it marked progress for the other organizations—which I consider a tactical error.) These organizations have accepted the war, and participated in the cabinets of capitalist governments; they have through four years of war abandoned the policy of international Socialism, the policy on war and peace formulated by the resolution of the Basel Congress in 1912. In other words, the very Socialist organizations

and Socialist policy that were responsible for the calamitous collapse of Socialism under the impact of war, participated in the Inter-Allied Conference and formulated its program.

Upon the declaration of war, and during the war, these organizations unconditionally capitulated to the governments, justifying an imperialistic war and manufacturing its ideology. The Belgian party, the French party, the British Labor Party, accepted ministerial responsibility, and participated in the formulation of the governments' policy on war and peace—a reactionary policy. They acquiesced in the governments' brutal acts of repression; they justified the arrest and imprisonment of Socialists and pacifists; they imposed fetters upon the proletariat, and delivered it to the mercy of the bourgeois governments; they abandoned the class struggle, abandoned fundamental Socialism in the period of a universal crisis, when Capitalism was on the verge of collapse, when Imperialism had issued a challenge to revolutionary Socialism and the proletariat. In this great, historic upheaval, the imperative necessity was an independent class policy, the inflexible adherence to Socialism; and these organizations accepted the government policy and repudiated Socialism.

The capitulation to the governments of French and Belgian Socialism, of British Laborism, was not a mere fortuitous circumstance: it was the inexorable consequence of their general attitude, of their *petit bourgeois* policy. The complex character of the war might obscure this; it is clear, incontrovertibly apparent, from the attitude of these organizations toward the Russian Revolution. Arthur Henderson, Albert Thomas, Emile Vandervelde went to Russia, during the first period of the Revolution, to urge upon the revolutionary democracy a social-patriotic policy, urge it to neglect the Revolution in favor of the war. They urged upon the Russian Revolution the prior claims of France—the Capitalism of which assisted in strangling the Revolution of 1905 by means of the great loans; and the claims of Great Britain—which favored Milyukov and Kornilov, and engineered a counter-revolutionary campaign against the Soviet Republic and the Revolution. These men, these organizations, seduced by the war and Imperialism, wished to degrade the Revolution to their own petty

nationalistic purposes. A subtle, insidious, counter-revolutionary propaganda emanated from these organizations, even during the early stages of the Revolution, when they didn't have the alibi of the "pro-German" Bolsheviki: and so apparent and infamous was this propaganda, particularly from French Socialist sources, that even the Mensheviki in April, 1917, sternly protested against "the so-called majorities of the English and French Socialists" which "have undertaken a systematic campaign for the purpose of exerting pressure on the Russian Socialist proletariat in the sense that it should discontinue all efforts for peace and should waive any independent political policy founded on International Solidarity and the Class Struggle." The protest stigmatizes these Socialists' "complete willingness to sacrifice the freedom of the Russian people and the Revolution on the altar of narrow nationalist interests"; and asserts that "they wish to force on the Russian workers a civil peace together with the imperialistic war aims of the bourgeois liberals, the same as that which demoralized the proletarian movement in England and France"; that "Jules Guesde demanded quite openly in his telegram: first victory, and only then the republic"; and moans: *"never has the revolutionary uprising of a people been so betrayed by those very elements from which it was justified in expecting sympathy and support."* All this refers to the same individuals, groups and tendency that were represented at the Inter-Allied Socialist and Labor Conference (with the exception of the Italian Socialist Party).

But, it may be argued, that is ancient history. It isn't. These crimes against Socialism are not ancient history; they are crimes that must be remembered, that must be held against the perpetrators, that must become an active factor in the coming reconstruction of Socialism. They are crimes that indict for all time the perpetrators and the tendency they represent.

There is a more conclusive answer. The British Labor Party's memorandum on War Aims, subsequently the Inter-Allied Socialist and Labor Program, was adopted December 28, 1917, at a time when revolutionary Russia was proposing to the belligerent nations an armistice on all fronts and general peace negotiations—the Labor Party completely ignored the proposals. While the

Inter-Allied Conference was holding its sessions, revolutionary Russia, desperately and in isolation, was waging a struggle for a general, democratic workers' peace. It had sent its appeal to the proletariat and Socialism of the world, particularly of the belligerent nations. The Conference completely ignored the struggle and the appeal for solidarity; all the more reprehensible because at the time a million or more Austrian and German workers were on strike, protesting against the governments' peace policy and affirming solidarity with the Bolsheviki; its organizations repudiated revolutionary Russia, betrayed it; more, they slandered the proletarian revolution and its representatives steeled their governments' determination to ignore the proposals for peace, and to crush the Soviet Republic at the first opportunity. To-day, the Allies are waging war upon the proletarian Soviet Republic, rallying the counter-revolutionary forces, preparing to crush the proletarian revolution; and the British Labor Party, the dominant French and Belgian Socialism, do not repudiate their governments, do not break with the imperialistic bourgeoisie. The French Socialist Party protested recently against intervention in Russia, but its majority (which is steadily losing strength, however) still clings to tactics that necessarily encourage its government to pursue an imperialistic policy—the tactics of abandoning the independent class policy and action of Socialism.

These general considerations might dispose of the Inter-Allied Labor and Socialist program on peace: a reactionary tendency can produce only a reactionary policy. A fuller analysis is necessary, however, to appreciate its relation to the fundamental facts and tendencies of Imperialism and of Socialism: this is the determinant consideration.

III.

The Inter-Allied program on peace accepts the formula of no annexations, no indemnities, and the self-determination of nations. It declares that "the problem of Alsace and Lorraine is not one of territorial adjustment, but one of right." (This is a petty bourgeois conception of the problem. The clash over Alsace-Lorraine, notwithstanding its ideologic and moral forms, is precisely the

same as that over Morocco—the vast resources of mineral wealth, particularly iron: Alsace-Lorraine produces about 80 per cent. of the iron ore in the whole German Empire. Iron is the basis of the modern industrial technology, and its monopolistic possession is one of the objectives of Imperialism.) The Inter-Allied program proposes a plebiscite to decide the destiny of Alsace-Lorraine. An international fund is proposed as the means of restoring devastated areas, except Belgium, reparation to whom is to be made by Germany. All occupied territory is to be evacuated; Italy is to have the Italian provinces of Austria restored, but the program "condemns the aims of conquest of Italian Imperialism"; Armenia, Mesopotamia and Arabia are not to be returned to Turkey, but, if they cannot set up their own governments, are to be administered by "a commission acting under the Supernational Authority or League of Nations"; the Balkans are to become a federated state; colonies are not to be exploited by Imperialism, the natives to be given "effective protection against the excesses (!) of capitalist colonialism," and the African colonies (not dependencies, such as Egypt) are to be given a system of control under the League of Nations, "which, while respecting national sovereignty, would be alike inspired by broad conceptions of economic freedom and concerned to safeguard the rights of the natives under the best conditions possible for them."

The Inter-Allied Program, accordingly, is a systematic consideration of problems involved in the war, and an attempt at their democratic solution. The only difficulty is that this solution is to be introduced by bourgeois governments; and this conception is possible only through a complete misunderstanding of the character of Imperialism.

This program strikes a blow at German Imperialism, but scarcely touches the Imperialism of Great Britain, France and Italy. Morocco, Tunis, Algiers, Egypt, are not considered at all. It means, in the final analysis, the weakening of German Imperialism in favor of its competing Imperialism, since Anglo-French Imperialism is already established, and Germany's is not. Anglo-French Imperialism can be victorious without new annexations; German Imperialism must have annexations in order to emerge

victorious out of the war. The acquisition of new territory, which may provide raw materials and absorb surplus capital, is an indispensable requirement of modern Capitalism; no territorial and other arrangements can dispose of this requirement and the antagonisms that it develops. The attempt to end the antagonisms of Imperialism on the basis of Imperialism itself is doomed to benefit one or another competing Imperialism: The struggle must be directed against Imperialism itself.

Imperialism is not an accidental or transitory phase of Capitalism; it is a new stage of Capitalism. It means that Capitalism must either conquer and renew itself through Imperialism, or stagnate; and stagnation means unavoidable death. The problems of Imperialism are fundamental to the perpetuation of Capitalism; they are not problems that can be mediated as between competing imperialistic nations, or that can be evaded or solved by means of a vague "democratic pressure" upon the governments, on the basis of the capitalist economy. All nations at the stage of modern capitalist production are imperialistic; capitalist technology is absolutely dependent upon the import of raw materials and the export of capital. New territory must be developed, raw materials secured; and as these are limited, implacable competition develops; and this competition cannot be either evaded or disposed of on the basis of Imperialism.

The Socialist attitude on war and peace, accordingly, relies upon a struggle against Imperialism itself. Our objective, the center of our activity, is not the struggle against annexations, preventing annexations or reducing them to a minimum, since annexations are not the cause of Imperialism, but simply its result. A nation at war, as this war proves, may fight relentlessly without any purpose to annex territory, and still victory will promote its Imperialism. The "democratic" disposition of problems of territory and markets will only provoke imperialistic antagonisms in a new form, not solve them. The struggle against annexations must be a Socialist, proletarian struggle against Imperialism itself. On this basis alone can Socialism conquer.

Many of the Inter-Allied proposals for the solution of terri-

torial problems might be put into effect, temporarily; but its demand for no economic war after the war is utterly incompatible with the requirements of Imperialism. Economic war, waged to the point where it flares up into the military struggle, is of the essence of Imperialism. Raw materials, particularly iron and other metals, are limited, and they are the basis of modern technology; the monopolistic control of these raw materials is one of the objectives of the imperialistic nation. Investment markets for the absorption of surplus capital are equally limited, and each imperialistic nation strives for the monopolistic control of these investment markets. Each nation, by broadening its own economic opportunity through Imperialism, necessarily and inevitably narrows the opportunity of a competing nation. To expect each nation, on the basis of Imperialism, to yield this struggle is to expect that all nations, as capitalist systems, are willing to commit suicide—either by perishing, or by allowing Socialism, without a struggle, to establish its system of communist production. The great fact, the determining consideration, is that the modern productive problems of Capitalism must either mean Imperialism and war; industrial stagnation and a rotting death of Capitalism; or Socialism. Capitalism will not allow itself to rot away, neither will it yield to the coming of Socialism.

The crown of the structure reared by the Inter-Allied Conference is the League of Nations. The *petit bourgeois* character of the Conference is most clearly expressed in its acceptance of the proposal for a League of Nations—under the aegis of Imperialism. "Of all the conditions of peace," says the Inter-Allied program, "none is so important to the peoples of the world as that there should be henceforth on earth no more war." The means proposed consist of a "supernational authority," that "can be no other than the League of Nations, in which not only all the present belligerents but every other independent state should be pressed to join." The use of "independent state" implies that dependent states would be excluded from participation—being amply represented by their imperialistic masters! "The constitution of such a league of nations," proceeds the program, "implies the immediate establishment of an international high court, not

only for the settlement of all disputes between states that are of a justiciable nature, but also for prompt and effective mediation between states in other issues that vitally interest the power or honor of such states." And should a nation or nations resist the mediation of "non-justiciable issues"?—"Refusal to accept arbitration or to submit to the settlement will imply deliberate aggression, and all other nations will necessarily have to make common cause, by using every means at their disposal, either economical or military, against any state or states refusing to submit to the arbitration award or attempting to break the world's covenant of peace." This is the crux of the whole problem: the proposal is not for a League of Nations, but for a League to Enforce Peace, a League that will force peace by means of economic and military war. The ultimate arbitrament is to be the arbitrament of the sword. This is the way to peace!

Nationalism, the inevitable concomitant of the capitalist system of society, is fatedly incompatible with any effective international action to preserve the world's peace, since Capitalism and nationalism are necessarily and fundamentally predatory. The internationalism that is produced by Capitalism, particularly in the imperialistic epoch, and upon which liberals and many a moderate Socialist depend for the automatic, mechanical ending of war, is an internationalism that functions nationally, an internationalism used to maintain Capitalism and the supremacy of the imperialistic nation. It is an economic internationalism that cannot become political because its animating objectives and causes are national in scope and predatory in purpose. Ultimately, it is preparing the world-state only in the sense that its objective conditions may develop the subjective factor of proletarian action for the establishment of Socialism; immediately, it is reactionary. This internationalism, which culminates in Imperialism, instead of bringing peace measurably nearer, has multiplied the horrors and scope of war, has made war an inescapable necessity of Capitalism, is increasing the antagonism out of which wars arise. The fundamental disputes of Imperialism, masquerading as "issues of national honor," are not justiciable, because of the national purpose behind their international aspect; and because these dis-

putes are vital to the existence of Capitalism. The nation is vital to Capitalism, and this acts against a "supernational authority" that could actually function.

The fundamental error of the Pacifist-Socialist, of the Socialist who imagines that war may be "modified" away, is that they completely misunderstand the relation of Imperialism to Capitalism. The underlying assumption is that Imperialism is not fundamental to Capitalism, that Imperialism and its antagonisms might be abolished while retaining Capitalism. But Capitalism and Imperialism are one and indivisible; the death of Imperialism means the death of Capitalism. Imperialism is the manifestation of a relentless capitalist necessity; it is the synthetic expression of the whole of Capitalism; it is the climax of Capitalism, Capitalism in its decadent and final stage, verging either on collapse or the introduction of Socialism.

The tendency expressed in the Inter-Allied Program is, fundamentally, the tendency of the pacifist-liberal, which is precisely the tendency of moderate Socialism. The pacifist-liberal of the *petite bourgeoisie* yearns to abolish war while preserving the causes of war; to abolish the "evils" of Capitalism while retaining Capitalism; to "modify," and ultimately destroy, the antagonisms of Imperialism while refraining to break the relations that produce these antagonisms; to "democratize" the nation and the world while Imperialism systematically suppresses democracy. The pacifist-liberal tendency, which is counter-revolutionary, is an expression of the *petite bourgeoisie,* its insecurity and weakness, and which, wholly dependent upon Imperialism, yet struggles—*in words*—against the "excesses" of Imperialism; and it is equally an expression of the aristocracy of skilled labor, which has been seduced by Imperialism, profits from Imperialism, willingly accepting the spoils of Imperialism while being unwilling to pay the price in the blood and agony of a world war. The pacifist-liberal tendency of moderate Socialism repudiates fundamental Socialism; it breaks down the Socialist struggle equally during war and peace; it is the great enemy of Socialism.

IV.

The theory of modifying national antagonism as the means to peace, and the theory of modifying class antagonism as the means to fundamental social reconstruction, are an inseparable expression of one tendency,—the *petit bourgeois* tendency of avoiding the dynamic struggle of class against class as the mechanics of progress. This tendency assumes an identity of interests that does not exist; it assumes the supremacy of reason and intelligence in the reconstruction of society, and forgets that reason and intelligence are determined by class alignments, are instruments in the struggle of class against class. Arthur Henderson, in *The Aims of Labor,* adequately pictures this tendency: "Reasoned, intelligent and scientific attempt to construct international machinery to administer justice between nations . . . non-justiciable disputes, *i. e.,* disputes which cannot be settled by international jurisprudence, but which can be settled by moral law, provided the nations concerned are disposed to accept moral law as being on at least as high a plane as law made by man." The moralist, and not the revolutionist, is to make the world anew! But moral law, statutory law, reason and intelligence all break down under the impact of the violent antagonisms of Imperialism, the implacable antagonisms of the class struggle.

International reconstruction must base itself upon national, upon social reconstruction; and this means the abolition through Socialism of the antagonisms of imperialistic Capitalism, of the class system of society. Proposals of procedure for a League of Nations are inevitably wrecked upon the rock of the social system that prevails in each nation. The Inter-Allied Program recognizes the necessity of social reconstruction, but it is a reconstruction on the basis of democracy, by means of the modification of antagonism; it says:

"But the sincere acceptance of the rules and decisions of the supernational authority implies the complete democratization in all countries; the removal of all arbitrary powers who, until now, have assumed the right of choosing between peace and war; the maintenance or creation of Legislatures elected by and on behalf

of the sovereign right of the people; the suppression of secret diplomacy, to be replaced by the conduct of foreign policy under the control of popular Legislatures, and the publication of all treaties, which must never be in contravention of the stipulation of the League of Nations, with the absolute responsibility of the government, and more particularly of the Foreign Minister of each country to its legislature. Only such a policy will enforce the frank abandonment of every form of Imperialism."

The fatal error in this program is that the abandonment of Imperialism is predicated upon democracy, instead of democracy being predicated upon the abandonment, or rather the overthrow of Imperialism. All the measures of democracy proposed would not in any way alter the imperialistic character of Capitalism, nor impose the abandonment of Imperialism.

This fatal error is implicit in the British Labor Party's program for reconstruction after the war, "Labor and the New Social Order."

The series of legislative measures, proposed as a means of immediate improvement and ultimate transformation of the conditions of society, constitutes a program that depends upon democracy as the instrument of action. It assumes a limiting of the forces of Capitalism on the basis of Capitalism itself, the "penetration" of Socialism into Capitalism. It is a bureaucratic program, to be introduced by bureaucrats. Reconstruction is conceived as a problem of experts, meeting in conference and proposing their plans, introduced by means of the democratization of the state and Capitalism, the co-operation of classes, understanding between the classes, and the "unity of democracy" for the conquest of parliament and the state. Compromise, and not revolution, is to be the instrument for the transformation of society; "all the classes," and not the proletariat, are to bring "Socialism." British Laborism is becoming more vocal, more aggressive, perhaps, but its policy is still the policy, in tendency, of yesteryear. It is the Fabian policy, expressing itself through an independent political party. It is the old British trades unionism, emphasizing its *petit bourgeois* character by trying to "unite democracy" through an alliance with the middle class.

The program, it is true, abounds in radical phraseology: "What has to be reconstructed after the war is not this or that Government Department, or this or that piece of social machinery, but, so far as Britain is concerned, society itself . . . (The war is) the culmination of a distinctive industrial civilization, which the workers will not seek to reconstruct. . . . The individual system of capitalist production, based on the private ownership and competitive administration of land and capital . . . may, we hope, indeed, have received a death-blow." This sounds well; but the tendency of the plans proposed is of a character to promote Capitalism, to intrench Capitalism. These proposals would injure the interests of this or that particular capitalist group of capitalists, but this would in no sense be calamitous, since under Imperialism the individual capitalist is subordinate to the interests of Capitalism as a whole.

The British Labor Party program represents a tendency that is characteristic of imperialistic State Capitalism,—the unity of ruling class interests, and the placating of labor by means of minor reforms and by making the aristocracy of labor through Laborism a part of the governing system of things. Capitalists may suffer, but Capitalism thrives. Capitalism has nothing to fear from the struggle for the "national minimum," unemployed insurance, "the progressive abolition of the private capitalist," etc. It is, moreover, a policy of reconstruction on the basis of Capitalism that postpones fundamental reconstruction and strengthens Capitalism. Reconstruction is to be a process of parliamentary struggles, of enlarging the functions of the state, of striving for that collectivism which is the ideal of the liberal middle class and the aristocracy of labor,—all of which may easily be absorbed by imperialistic State Capitalism, and, in fact, promotes Capitalism and Imperialism.

Fundamental reconstruction can proceed only after the conquest of power by the revolutionary proletariat. Specific reforms cannot accomplish much because the problems of reconstruction are integral in scope. International peace is made insecure by national antagonisms; national antagonisms prevail because of capitalist rivalry; capitalist rivalry multiplies antagonisms through

Imperialism, and Imperialism is necessary to the existence of Capitalism; the state is repressive and undemocratic because that is essential to Capitalism, as are all the other evils of Capitalism. The "democratization of the state" depends upon the democratization of industry; and the democratization of industry is conceivable only through the industrial self-government of Communist Socialism. The attack must be made upon Capitalism itself; the supremacy of capital must be annihilated; with the annihilation of the bourgeois state and its bureaucratic machinery, with the conquest of power by the proletariat, reconstruction may proceed in a way that is immediately advantageous and ultimately realizes Socialism. Arthur Henderson, in an appeal to the intelligence of the ruling class, warns them of this impending evolution, and suggests that compromise (through accepting the Labor Party program) is the alternative to revolution. This is a policy of conciliation with the bourgeois state and Capitalism, away from Socialism. Capitalism can be overthrown only by the revolutionary proletariat; fundamental reconstruction is a *class*, and not a social process, a process initiated and developed by the proletariat. If reconstruction is a class process, then the supreme consideration of Socialism is the conquest of power by the proletariat as the starting point of reconstruction. Conquest of power by the proletariat means its mastery of the bourgeois state, the annihilation of this state by the new proletarian state of the organized producers. The supreme task of revolutionary Socialism is the conquest of power by the proletariat; all other measures are an expression of petty bourgeois Socialism, and counter-revolutionary,—which is precisely the official character of British Laborism, of the German Social-Democracy, of moderate Socialism everywhere.

The British Labor Party program proposes a systematic plan of intensive social reform. The realization of this program would necessarily depend, considering prevailing conditions and the fact that it is to be introduced upon the basis of Capitalism, upon the prosperity and aggrandizement of British Imperialism. Social reforms are realizable only through a prosperous Imperialism, since Capitalism depends wholly upon Imperialism; and, accordingly, these reforms would be introduced by the oppression of colonial peoples, since this oppression is the mechanism of Imperialism. But, you may say, the Labor Party program declares that its proposed new social order must not be based "on an enforced dominion over subject nations, subject races, subject colonies, subject classes, or a subject sex." This is a lofty ideal; but its realization depends wholly upon the realization of Socialism. The strength of Imperialism, and its danger, lies precisely in the possibility of improving the conditions of its own workers by an intensive exploitation of subject peoples: the spoils of Imperialism are not only distributed among the cliques of the ruling class, but among a portion of the workers. The objective of Imperialism is a "prosperous" nation of a few millions based upon the oppression of hundreds of millions of an alien race. Out of the prosperity of Imperialism, and out of that alone, can come the sinews for an intensive social reform program introduced on the basis of the bourgeois state.

It means not only that: it means the creation of a privileged caste of workers within the nation, who profit not only from the exploitation of foreign workers, but from the exploitation of the great mass of the industrial proletariat of unskilled labor. Under the historical conditions and limitations of Capitalism, the prosperity of the ruling class means the oppression of the bulk of the people; and better conditions for a section of the workers means the oppression of the great bulk of the workers constituting the industrial proletariat of unskilled labor.

There are sections of British Labor which realize this aspect of Imperialism, this inseparable connection between social reform and Imperialism, much more adequately than the official British Labor Party. The London *Nation* recently indicated this tendency very acutely:

"But there is still one element which has been omitted from this ingenious calculation of party interest. The workman (or his head-men) will get something out of the new speculation in empire. . . Hence the new labor party. We say new labor party,

for if the war has almost abolished Liberalism and changed the face of Toryism, it has split the old Labor Party into fragments. A portion Mr. George has seduced. Another part has been honestly absorbed into the work of war administration. A third has had a mysterious origin in the war itself. The British Workers' League is a nominal offshoot of Socialism. But its second birth is of dubious parentage. What is its financial basis? Who finds the funds for its ample propaganda? The trade unions? Hardly. And what explains the ready hospitality of the *Times* and the support which the league clearly obtains in powerful circles of Capitalism? The motive is avowed. The British Workers' league is regarded as a counter-revolutionary body. Its merit in the eyes of the powerful men who watch and would mould the new order in the interests of capital is that it rejects free trade and adopts the program of the Paris conference (economic war after the war). A further reason for treating it as a friend is that it proposes to replace the class war by a minimum wage and the abolition of restriction of output. Here, then, the driving power of the new Capitalism has been found. In exchange for a guarantee of high wages the workmen's leaders are expected to take their hands off the regulator. . . Conscription is the basis of such a society; the soldier-statesman, the master organizer, is its natural head, and slavery to Capitalism and its own fears its form and doom."

The program of the British Labor Party will not determine its coming action, but the struggle of factions within the party each against the other. The party is not a unity. It has the aristocracy of labor, and it proposes, by its invitation to the "workers of the brain," to absorb the middle class: if this combination dominates, its policy will become definitely and implacably the policy of Social-Imperialism. If, on the contrary,, the workers of the character of the miners and dock-workers, the unskilled, prevail, then it must inevitably accept the policy of revolutionary Socialism. After all, the significance of the Labor Party program lies not in the official attitude of its representatives, but in the surge of radical feeling in the membership which compelled an alteration in the official attitude. On this up-surging of radical aspirations and action, which during the war has repeatedly repudiated the compromises of the official representatives, depends the future character of the British Labor movement. In any event, unless the bulk of the workers remain dormant, which is unthinkable, the great industrial proletariat will express itself through its own aggressive action in mass action, will acquire the consciousness and action of revolutionary Socialism; while the skilled workers, the aristocracy of labor, will in one form or another become an integral part of State Capitalism, an appendage of "British Imperialism, which is the coming party, with Mr. Lloyd George as its inevitable head."

V.

The theory that class antagonisms are being modified is not altogether a wrong one. Under the conditions of Imperialism, and the necessity for unity in the ruling class, the old inter-class antagonisms become blurred and disappear. The industrial *petite bourgeoisie,* which formerly struggled relentlessly against Big Capital, has been either wiped out or has been compelled to accept the domination of Big Capital. The formerly actively struggling groups within the capitalist class have, on the whole, made peace with each other, seeking compensations for their compromises in the fabulous profits of Imperialism. The new middle class, an income and not an industrial class, is the product of concentrated, imperialistic capital, and is wholly dependent upon finance-capital and Imperialism. The interests of the individual capitalist or capitalist groups are subordinated to the interests of Capitalism as a whole; the policy is to unite the ruling class, the form of expression of this unity being imperialistic State Capitalism.

The dominant Socialism has in fact accepted this modification of class antagonisms as the basis of its immediate policy. It has accepted this modification of antagonisms because it represents, on the whole, the interests of the remnants of the old *petite bourgeoisie,* the new middle class, and the skilled workers organized largely in the dominant unions. The history of the Socialist movement during the past twenty years, the epoch of Imperialism,

has been one of adapting itself to the new conditions, of working on the basis of the modification of class antagonisms, of subtly, but none the less actually, becoming part and parcel of imperialistic State Capitalism.

The epoch of Imperialism is characterized by a multiplication of the contradictions of Capitalism, proof that Capitalism is on the verge of collapse. Simultaneously with the appearance of the tendency of modifying class antagonisms, has appeared a new series of violent class struggles—the struggles of the industrial proletariat of unskilled labor against Capitalism. The significance of Imperialism, from the proletarian standpoint, is the awakening to consciousness and action of the typical proletariat, the machine proletariat, the proletariat of average labor. A study of labor history for the past twenty years will show that the great labor struggles have been an expression of this unskilled proletariat, the proletariat massed into regiments and battalions by concentrated industry. The concentration of industry, the perfection of the technological process, expropriates the worker of his skill, as it expropriates the industrial *petit bourgeois* of his importance in industry. The necessity of skill in the worker becomes progressively superfluous, skill being now the monopoly of a small layer of the workers, technicians, engineers, etc.; the mass of the workers become the typical proletariat in the Marxian sense, appendages of the machine. Ideologically, at first, this proletariat is a part of the dominant unionism and Socialism; but gradually it initiates its own independent action. The characteristic of its struggles, decisive as to the character of the new alignment, is that they are frequently directed as much against the dominant unionism and Socialism as against Capitalism itself.

Laborism and the dominant moderate Socialism may become absorbed in imperialistic State Capitalism, representing as they do the dominant unionism and the *petite bourgeoisie,* now integral parts of Imperialism. But imperialistic State Capitalism cannot absorb the great industrial proletariat of average labor, since that would mean the capitulation of the capitalists as a ruling class. Laborism and moderate Socialism approach a conciliation with

Capitalism, which means a conciliation with Imperialism; they express and affirm the necessity for the modification of class antagonisms; they act on the policy of the co-operation of classes: but this co-operation means the co-operation of the ruling elements, excluding the industrial proletariat. This proletariat of average labor accepts the theory of conciliation only at the risk of being used to promote the interests of the aristocracy of labor and the *petite bourgeoisie.* There is no part in State Capitalism for the proletariat of average labor, the controlling factor in industry; this proletariat must struggle against the whole *bloc* of the ruling system of things, including Laborism and the dominant Socialism.

The character of the Socialist struggle after the war will be determined by whether Socialism accepts the conciliatory, *petit bourgeois* tendency of Laborism, or whether it accepts the revolutionary tendency of the industrial proletariat of machine labor, which is the tendency of fundamental Socialism and the proletarian class struggle.

The machine proletariat, organized by the mechanism of concentrated industry itself, not divided by distinctions of craft skill, massed in the basic industries of Capitalism, and subjectively absorbing the objective industrial facts of unity and integration—the machine proletariat instinctively turns to industrial unionism and mass action. Laborism, on the contrary, turns to parliamentary action as decisive; and this because neither the aristocracy of labor nor the middle class, which Laborism represents, are a controlling factor in industry. The machine proletariat is belligerent, Laborism conciliatory; Laborism proceeds on the basis of Capitalism, the machine proletariat is compelled, immediately or ultimately, to organize a general attack upon Capitalism as the only instrument of its emancipation. Revolutionary Socialism, basing itself upon the dominant proletariat, accepts political action only as a phase of the general, dynamic and creative mass action of the industrial proletariat.

Mass action is the synthesis of the tactics of revolutionary Socialism, the mechanism of the proletarian class struggle; its acceptance or rejection will determine the success or failure of the

Socialist struggle after the war. Imperialism is the expression of concentrated industry; the industrial proletariat of machine labor is the expression of concentrated industry; and mass action is the expression of this proletariat. Mass action, potentially and actually, immediately and ultimately, is the process of revolution, the animating factor in the action of the proletariat. The proletarian revolution has been objectively introduced by Imperialism, and subjectively initiated by the proletarian revolution in Russia. The decisive factor in the Russian Revolution has been the appearance upon the stage of events of the distinctive proletariat, acting through mass action, determined in a struggle equally against Capitalism and moderate Socialism. As Laborism acted against the industrial proletariat in Australia, as Laborism in England assumed a policy against the class struggle, as moderate Socialism everywhere has become overtly or covertly the ally of State Capitalism and Imperialism—so in Russia moderate, *petit bourgeois* Socialism and the ideology of Laborism were actively, directly counter-revolutionary.

The epoch of Imperialism, its altering of class relations and the expression of class interests, forces the inescapable necessity for an irrevocable formulation of the fundamental differences between *petit bourgeois* Socialism and Laborism, and the fundamental, class-struggle Socialism of the revolutionary proletariat.

Conditions after the war must be used for an uncompromising struggle against Imperialism as the unity of all the forces of Capitalism. The immediate objective must be the conquest of power by the revolutionary proletariat, the establishment of the proletarian state upon the basis of which alone social reconstruction may emerge into the society of communist Socialism. The immediate task of Socialism, the irreducible minimum, is to adapt itself to the tendency of the industrial proletariat of average labor, to awaken the consciousness and action of the proletariat for the conquest of power. This is the immediate program of action of Socialism.

The epoch of Imperialism appears to strengthen Capitalism, but this appearance of strength is fictitious and deceptive. Imperialism means Capitalism on the verge of collapse, Capitalism being strangled by its own contradictions. History abounds with illustrations of a system apparently supreme at the moment when internal conditions and contradictions were about to destroy it. The struggle of revolutionary Socialism against Imperialism is a necessary struggle and a struggle latent with rapid success. The struggle of revolutionary Socialism against Laborism and moderate Socialism is an equally necessary struggle; and as with Imperialism, Laborism and moderate Socialism appear most imposing, apparently impregnable, at the moment when their own contradictions and the awakening consciousness and action of the revolutionary proletariat are about to overwhelm them. Life itself is the supreme factor making for revolutionary Socialism.