

The First of May.

In a Period of Uncertain Stabilisation and of the Winning of the Majority of the Working Class

By John Pepper.

May 1st. has always been the festival of the international solidarity of the proletariat; it is therefore a matter of course that the traitors of the proletariat, the leaders of Social Democracy, have just now, a few weeks before the first of May, once more shown in Geneva, that they are in the service of their "own" bourgeoisie only.

May 1st. has, for a long period, been a day of fighting for "social revolution" — nothing else therefore was to be expected but that Social Democracy, as a traitor to the socialist revolution in the whole of Europe, would take its stand as the "younger partner" of the various bourgeois Governments, that it would finally and irrevocably establish itself on the basis of capitalist Europe, that the Social Democratic "Pravo Lidu" should declare with jubilation: "The capitalist order in Europe is ensured for at least a century".

Social Democracy (and of course the bourgeoisie) gives the workers the following analysis of the world situation:

1. An economic crisis in the Soviet Union.
2. Defeat in China, i. e. on the most important battle-field of the national revolutionary fight against imperialism.
3. No revolutionary situation in Europe.
4. Powerful advance of American imperialism.
5. American imperialism with its growing export of capital is making the European countries more and more dependent on it; at the same time however it is rescuing Europe from "famine", but also from "revolution".
6. General fraternisation of the imperialist Powers; the conclusion of the London agreement, the realisation of the Dawes plan, the conclusion of the Locarno pact.

This analysis does not reflect the truth; it is only a distortion of the facts, a caricature of reality. It skims over the surface of daily events, it does not see (and does not wish to see) the underlying connections, it fails to recognise the fundamental revolutionary character of the world situation or smothers it up. This falsification in the analysis of course is not an accident. Social Democracy recognises more and more clearly that the duration of its existence depends on that of capitalism. It prophesies another century of undisturbed existence and prosperity for capitalism in Europe because — it hopes for a long life itself. The Marxist Leninist analysis of the international situation however asks both European capitalism and European Social Democracy the question which Frederick the Great put to his soldiers who were hesitating to rush into the battle: "Dogs, do you want to live for ever? Do you not see the insoluble contradictions of capitalism, the growing dissensions between the imperialist Powers, the increasing strength of the storm-attack of the proletarian revolution?"

The Social Democrats only see the short, transient crisis in the Soviet Union; they do not however notice — they do not wish to notice! — the basis of this crisis, the rapid growth of all the vital forces of the first Worker and Peasant Republic in

the world. They only see the small crisis and hush up the fact that this is only a consequence of the all-round progress of the economic life of the Soviet Union, only a symptom of the rapid all-round construction of Socialism in the proletarian State.

The Social Democrats only see the defeat of the people's armies in China, they only perceive the going over of part of the Chinese large bourgeoisie to the foreign imperialists, they are however completely blind to the fundamental fact of the great Chinese revolution — the progressive industrialisation of China. The Social Democrats only see that a part of the Chinese bourgeoisie is going over to the imperialist enemy; they do not see the opposite pole, the development and strengthening of the Chinese proletariat. They only see the cleft in the Right Compradore of the Kuomintang party who want to trade with Great Britain and Japan; they do not however notice the great, independent actions, strikes and demonstrations of the revolutionary proletariat in Shanghai, Canton and Hong-Kong. They do not see that it is just the increase of power of the proletariat which has driven part of the Chinese bourgeoisie over to the imperialist enemy, and that it is just this which has led to a temporary weakening of the fighting front of the Chinese revolution. The fundamental fact is that the industrialisation, the general capitalistic development of China persists and gains in strength, and with it the fundamental forces of the fight for independence in China, which guarantee the victory of the national revolutionary movement. The fact that a part of the Chinese large bourgeoisie has gone over to the imperialist enemy does not imply the defeat of the Chinese revolution; the Compradore are conspiring with Great Britain, the Kuomintang party, however, has during the last year increased sevenfold and the Communist party of China threefold.

China is only one example. We have the same picture of industrialisation in all the colonies and semi-colonies of imperialism. The imperialist countries of Europe are finding it increasingly difficult to exploit their colonies. At one time the "Communist manifesto" was justified in stating that "the cheapness of its (the bourgeoisie's) commodities is the heavy artillery with which it lays low all Chinese walls, with which it compels the most obstinately hostile barbarians to capitulate". The "Barbarians" of the colonies now have their own "artillery"; they have built up their own industry which, with its even cheaper prices, demolishes all the "European" walls of the various mother countries.

In the Far East the progressive industrialisation of the "Barbarians", in the Far West the growing supremacy, the hegemony of America. American capitalism is still following an ascending line. American imperialism also possesses its "artillery", its export of capital. The world owes the United States no less than 21 milliards of dollars. The countries of Europe must work for 62 years for the American imperialists in order to wipe off their debts.

The industrialisation of the colonies, the increasing economic supremacy of America — between these two milestones present day capitalist Europe is being ground. Europe is in a period of decline and, on the soil of capitalism, there is no remedy against decline. Production in Europe has not yet reached the pre-war level. Europe has to-day five million unemployed. Actual wages are falling; taxation is increasing; militarism is growing. The antagonisms between the individual European Powers cannot be settled. Locarno was followed by — Geneva, in other words the public declaration of bankruptcy of bourgeois and Social Democratic pacifism.

In this situation, the Communist International has issued the slogan of the united States of Socialist Europe. No salvation is to be found for the European working class on a capitalistic basis. Nothing but the victory of the Socialist revolution can prevent the war of annihilation of the European Powers against one another, can save Europe from the exploitation of American imperialism.

The great changes in the world situation are bringing about deep-rooted changes in the labour movement.

A swing to the Right of the American working class is going on hand in hand with the progressive development of American imperialism.

In correspondence with the industrialisation of the Orient, quite new branches of the labour movement are developing in the colonies.

In consequence of the process of decline in Europe, the European labour movement is step by step becoming more revolutionary. For the first time since the world war, the three most important countries of Europe, Great Britain, Germany and France are simultaneously passing through a deep social and political crisis; and as the crisis progresses, the proletarian armies are carrying off great victories. In England, in 1921 there was still "Black Friday", in 1925 came the day of the victory of proletarian solidarity, "Red Friday". The great conference of the Minority Movement on March 21st 1926 included delegates of no less than 957,000 workers — nearly a quarter

of the organised workers of England — and was under the leadership of the Communist Party of England, which only numbers 6000 members.

The Communist Party of France carried on a heroic fight against the Morocco war, and the recent elections show how it is continuing to gain the confidence of the proletariat.

After the October defeat of the German revolution in 1923, our opponents announced the death of the Communist party of Germany, and to-day the C. P. of Germany with its 150,000 members is able to drag Social Democracy in its wake and to fan into flame the powerful people's movement of 12,5 millions of workers, peasants and petty bourgeois in the "Volksbegehren" (people's demand for a plebiscite). The Communist parties are now experiencing great success because they have seriously and with resolution taken up the **fight for winning a decisive majority of the working class**. The Communist parties are now beginning to devote themselves heart and soul to the tactics of the **united front**. The more Social Democracy shows itself to be a disintegrating element in the working class, the more energetically must the Communists promulgate the idea of the unity of the working class, the unity of the trade union movement. The festival on May 1st. 1926 must preserve the best fighting traditions of the early days of the 2nd International. On the banner of the international solidarity of the working class may be seen to-day the slogans of the united front of the working class, the international unity of the trade unions, international support of the greath fight of the British miners, solidarity with the Soviet Union and fraternal sympathy with in the Chinese revolution.

The diplomats of the European imperialist Powers declared at Geneva in Briand's words: "We must speak a new language, the "European" language. The proletariat however should recognise that this new "European" language of new wars is the language of the old oppression. On May 1st., the proletariat should everywhere find its own universal language, the language of international solidarity, of the socialist revolution, of world peace.