Debs: The Day of the People {Feb. 1919]

The Day of the People
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Upon his release from the Kaiser's Bastille —
the doors of which were torn from their hinges by the
proletarian revolution — Karl Liebknecht, heroic
leader of the rising hosts, exclaimed: “The Day of the
People has arrived!” It was a magnificent challenge to
the junkers and an inspiring battle cry to the aroused
workers.

From that day to this Liebknecht, Rosa Luxem-
burg and other true leaders of the German proletariat
have stood bravely at the front, appealing to the work-
ers to join the revolution and make it complete by
destroying what remained of the criminal and corrupt
old regime and ushering in the day of the people. Then
arose the cry that the people were not yet ready for
their day, and Ebert and Scheidemann and their crowd
of white-livered reactionaries, with the sanction and
support of the fugitive Kaiser, the infamous junkers
and all the Allied powers, now in beautiful alliance,
proceeded to prove that the people were not yet ready
to rule themselves by setting up a bourgeois govern-
ment under which the working class should remain in
substantially the same state of slavish subjection they
were in at the beginning of the war.

And now upon that issue — as to whether the
terrible war has brought the people their day or whether
its appalling sacrifices have all been in vain — the battle
is raging in Germany as in Russia, and the near future
will determine whether revolution has for once been
really triumphant or whether sudden reaction has again
won the day.

In the struggle in Russia the revolution has thus
far triumphed for the reason that it has not compro-
mised. The career of Kerensky was cut short when he
attempted to turn the revolutionary tide into reaction-
ary bourgeois channels.

Lenin and Trotsky were the men of the hour and
under their fearless, incorruptible and uncompromising
leadership the Russian proletariat has held the fort
against the combined assaults of all the ruling class
powers of earth. It is a magnificent spectacle.

It stirs the blood and warms the heart of every
revolutionist, and it challenges the admiration of all
the world.

So far as the Russian proletariat is concerned,
the day of the people has arrived, and they are fighting
and dying as only heroes and martyrs can fight and
die to usher in the day of the people not only in Rus-
sia but in all the nations on the globe. In every revolu-
tion of the past the false and cowardly plea that the
people were “not yet ready” has prevailed. Some inter-
mediate class invariably supplanted the class that was
overthrown and “the people” remained at the bottom
where they have been since the beginning of history.
They have never been “ready” to rid themselves of their
despots, robbers and parasites. All they have ever been
ready for has been to exchange one brood of vampires
for another to drain their veins and fatten in their
misery.

That was Kerensky’s doctrine in Russia and it is
Scheidemann’s doctrine in Germany. They are both
false prophets of the people and traitors to the work-
ing class, and woe be to their deluded followers if their
vicious reaction triumphs, for then indeed will the
yokes be fastened afresh upon their scarred and bleed-
ing necks for another generation.

When Kerensky attempted to sidetrack the revo-
lution in Russia by joining forces with the bourgeoisie
he was lauded by the capitalist press of the whole world.
When Scheidemann patriotically rushed to the sup-
port of the Kaiser and the junkers at the beginning of
the war, the same press denounced him as the betrayer of socialism and the enemy of the people. And now this very press lauds him to the heavens as the savior of the German nation! Think of it! Scheidemann the traitor has become Scheidemann the hero of the bourgeoisie. Could it be for any other reason on earth than that Scheidemann is doing the dirty work of the capitalist class?

And all this time the prostitute press of the robber regime of the whole world is shrieking hideously against Bolshevism. “It is worse than Kaiserism” is the burden of their cry. Certainly it is. They would a thousand times rather have the Kaiser restored to his throne than to see the working class rise to power. In the latter event they cease to rule, their graft is gone and their class disappears, and well do they know it. That is what we said from the beginning and for which we have been sentenced as disloyalists and traitors.

Scheidemann and his breed do not believe that the day of the people has arrived. According to them the war and the revolution have brought the day of the bourgeoisie. Mr. Bourgeois is now to take the place of Mr. Junker—to evolute into another junker himself by and by—while Mr. Wage Slave remains where he was before, under the heels of his master, and all he gets out of the carnage in which his blood dyed the whole earth is a new set of heels to grind into his exploited bones and a fresh and lusty vampire to drain his lifeblood.

Away with all such perfidious doctrines; forever away with such a vicious subterfuge and treacherous betrayal!

The people are ready for their day. THE PEOPLE, I say. Yes, the people!

Who are the people? The people are the working class, the lower class, the robbed, the oppressed, the impoverished, the great majority of the earth. They and those who sympathize with them are the people, and they who exploit the working class, and the mercenaries and menials who aid and abet the exploiters, are the enemies of the people. That is the attitude of Lenin and Trotsky in Russia and was of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in Germany, and this accounts for the flood of falsehood and calumny which poured upon the heads of the brave leaders and their revolutionary movement from the filthy mouthpieces of the robber regime of criminal capitalism throughout the world.

The rise of the working class is the red specter in the bourgeois horizon. The red cock shall never crow. Anything but that! The Kaiser himself will be pitied and forgiven if he will but roll his eyes heavenward, proclaim the menace of Bolshevism, and appeal to humanity to rise in its wrath and stamp out this curse to civilization.

And still the “curse” continues to spread—like a raging conflagration it leaps from shore to shore. The reign of capitalism and militarism has made of all peoples inflammable material. They are ripe and ready for the change, the great change which means the rise and triumph of the workers, the end of exploitation, of war and plunder, and the emancipation of the race. Let it come! Let us all help its coming and pave the way for it by organizing the workers industrially and politically to conquer capitalism and usher in the day of the people.

In Russia and Germany our valiant comrades are leading the proletarian revolution, which knows no race, no color, no sex, and no boundary lines. They are setting the heroic example for worldwide emulation. Let us, like them, scorn and repudiate the cowardly compromisers within our own ranks, challenge and defy the robber-class power, and fight it out on that line to victory or death!

From the crown of my head to the soles of my feet I am Bolshevik, and proud of it.

The Day of the People has arrived!