MARXISM AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

May Day, a labor holiday, is symbolic of the unity of the laboring masses throughout the world in their quest and struggle for a better world, free from ruling class exploitation and social survivals. The observance of the first of May, known as May Day, as a labor holiday, is not legally sanctioned by capitalist governments. In fact, its celebration as an International Labor Day is discouraged if not actually forbidden by the capitalist ruling class. It has been denounced as something alien, the “creation of foreign radical agitators and rabble-rousers.”

Contrary to such denunciations, May Day’s origin has an American background. It arose out of the early struggles between capital and labor, culminating with the demand and movement for better working conditions and the shorter working day, the 8-hour day movement during 1884-86. In these early class conflicts, the militancy displayed by many thousands of American workers had few parallels. That period had also its courageous and honest labor leaders, who did not flinch even in the face of death, those Chicago labor leaders, known as the Haymarket Martyrs, who were executed in 1887 by the capitalist ruling class.

Shortly after, in 1889, the first of May was chosen as a day of “international demonstration” against exploitation upon the recommendation of the American delegates to the Paris congress of what later came to be known as the “socialist” 2nd International. Since that time, each year, May Day has been celebrated by the class conscious workers the world over.

This very often took the form of huge demonstrations and parades in the main cities of the world. America had its share of this agressive display of “worker’s might” and “strength of their numbers” particularly during the Depression Days of the 1930’s. With the doldrums of the capitalist system in the air, and singing the “International,” the workers marched down the city streets in defiance of capitalist law and order. They had “nothing to lose,” for in truth, the depression had really swept many bare, and they had much to gain, once capitalism would be abolished. Is it any wonder then, that capitalists fear and hate May Day!

But what about May Day, this year, 1957? In spite of the capitalist reaction in America and attempts to suppress its observance, nevertheless, the class conscious workers will celebrate it, even tho their meetings will not be as large as in the past, or as large as elsewhere in the world. The objective conditions in the U.S. are not favorable for huge demonstrations, mainly because the majority of the workers are salaried, socially and politically speaking. Most of them are still steadily employed, and influenced by capitalist propaganda. It has been drummed into their ears that “they nev’er had it so good,” that they are “free laborers” and much better
(Continued from page 1)

MAY DAY, 1957

CLASSES, NOT INDIVIDUALS

Fielding against master-class rule, which together and at

the same time expressed strong resent-

ment against their conditions of oppression. Right down thru feudalistic

and then, the many peasant revolts against serfdom.

In modern capitalism, or bour-

geois society, class antagonisms have

been amplified, but they have been simplified, as the Manifesto says. They have also

become intensified. We have two great classes, the capitalist or bosses, and capitalists, and the proletariat or

the wage-working class.

That which characterizes capi-

talism is the conflict between societies

and their own class interests, as Marx

have their best chance, their best

resolution is theirs.

The proletariat is the leading class in the labor

force. Its economic and political insecurity.

The peaceful overtures of the Soviet Union have won for her

many friends, like India, for ex-

ample. But at the same time the Soviet Union has warned the whole capitalist world what it can expect if it precipitates a nuclear

war. Particularly, it warned those Western European nations who have been encouraged by the U.S. armed forces that they would be the first to be devastated in the event of such a

war.

The spread of capitalism, especially by the U.S. im-

perialists, the Soviet Union had no alternative but to keep herself

well-armed, as she is today with nuclear weapons and even guided missiles This May Day she will

rejoice in her strength—but will also look forward to that day when nuclear armaments threaten the peace

of the world.

However, peace on a world-wide scale will only be brought about when capitalism in the remaining two-thirds of the world will have been abolished. To achieve this, Karl Marx put it: "The proletariat of every country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie."

Then, this is the message of the Communist Party of America on this May Day, 1957.

Al Wysocki

has all to lose, and it stubbornly clings to all it can get, trying to keep the world at bay. They have but to grasp the revolutionary and scientific content of Marxism and the world is theirs.

R. Daniels
The Ebb and Flow of Working Class Consciousness

The general organized movement of the working class, in all of its economic and political phases, is affected by every social breeze that blows, most often unfavorably. At times, it surrenders almost completely to capitalist ideology and drifts with prevailing conditions. It allows its own interests to be overshadowed by those of the capitalist class. In its struggle with the employers, it takes the initiative only when those are broken down or destroyed.

Altogether, the organized movement of the American workers is in a pitiful condition. The economic development of the world, with the rise of the working class, is moving in a different direction than that of the American working class. The American working class is being undermined by the capitalist class. The American working class is being satisfied with the role of rearguard, and is allowing itself to be used as a tool of Wall Street's imperialistic policies.

As U.S. capitalism moves toward total war, and as the new world of war is born, the workers—organized and unorganized alike—are spinelessly drifting along with it. The new money-bag colonialism either is unable to comprehend or tacitly approves. Its sons are in uniform in many parts of the world, propping up decadent monarchies and semi-fascist republican governments. And all of this, with practically no protest, test, or check against it.

The depression has fallen upon the American workers. How come that they have not had themselves to be sucked into this sub-serve world role? Have they forgotten the depression years, the hungry thirties? Is it now a case of the bosses and the capitalist class? Or is it national pride that has carried them away because America has assumed the task of world savior of a decadent social system, and all that Americans previously denounced as undesirable, such as the Japanese monarchy and its ancient ruling class, the remnants of German Nazism, British Toryism, and similar obstructions to human progress?

What a price the American workers may have to pay for this imperialistic scavenger job they have allowed the political henchmen of Wall Street to jockey them into! The ups and downs of this social system, its boom and bust, its rise and fall, have something in common, the mass mind. That we must expect, but there should be a measure of social vision, some comprehension of the disastrous drift, on the part of the leadership of America's mass movements. That does not seem to be forthcoming. On the contrary, the top leaders of the labor unions are cooperating in the building of Wall Street's financial empire, with its "verge of war" diplomacy.

Big business is firmly in the political saddle. Congressional opposition to its policies is practically nonexistent. The workers are convinced that nothing stands in the way of its world-wide activities. At home, it even has taken the initiative against the docile labor unions. In many states it has set up anti-union laws, under the euphonious title of "the right to work." However, that is not the only line of attack. It uses many undermining methods.

Just at present, under the pretext of driving corruption from the labor unions (a job the workers themselves neglected) the capitalists are driving the strikers out of their organizations, and render them inefficient through ob-structive red-tape measures. However, abolishing the labor unions is not the aim of the capitalists, but rather to undermine their strength, to blunt their solidarity, and force them to work against cross-purposes. A lifeless labor movement will serve capitalism's purpose better than its destruction.

Unfortunately, there will be no worthwhile internal change from the top. The labor leaders, and their special privileges, are not menaced, but the dues-paying membership is. It is there that the union practice must be overhauled. Careerism must be discouraged. Big salaries promote contempt for those who pay them, the card-carrying membership. The economic interest of the highest paid officials is, in general, and especially in the field of big business, and such, and that the union must be weakened and sometimes acted stupidly, but they never deliberately betrayed. They constantly fought big business.

With the "lefts," especially avowed communists, eliminated, the bosses now turn their attack upon the "rights." But it won't be a frontal attack. That would be too clumsy. Besides, they need the "right-wing" leadership. For the mass membership, they are almost in a toehold. It will be an indirect attack, "the crushing embrace of a friend." A Jesuitic approach will work far greater destruction to militant unionism than an open breach.

The American capitalist politicians are clever and unscrupulous. They realize that the time is propitious for their undermining, anti-union work. The apathy of the workers—following the line of least resistance, as they think— has deprived them of their indifference to social questions, their political unconsciousness, has reduced the mass movement of the workers to an invertebrate body.

This spinelessness has not always been true of the American workers. They have a fine record of militancy and courageous struggle behind them. They were victorious in many industrial battles. The American labor movement has been tested and it has measured up well in many desperate crises, many adverse situations. However, it is not true to itself when it pursues a pro-capitalist policy and dis-arms the workers within its ranks.

And a stab in the back is often the reward of their rich overlords for such servitude. That is what is now being prepared for official labor's subservience to capitalism.

The capitalists don't like labor unions, but, they reason, if such must be endured, it is best that they be weakened and rendered as harmless as possible. There are many ways of achieving such aims. The internal spies and informers are a good method. But it is a limited way. It is the greater objective, the tying up of whole industries, that the capitalists fear. Legal enactments, with heavy penalties, in-just处罚, become a more efficient method. It is safely used to checkmate the labor unions. More of that sort of thing can be expected from labor's political "friends," the Republicans and the Democrats.

Depression, however, does not always work as the capitalists desire. It has frequently happened that during times of extreme suffer-er, the workers have put forth their best efforts and made their greatest gains. For instance, it was in the depths of the depression, out of the spontaneous situations, that the greatest mass movement of the workers took place. It was then when the C.I.O. suc-ceded in organizing the Auto Industry, Steel, and Oil and such, and that the union also had its greatest numerical gains. This quantitative development, unfortunately, was not followed by a corresponding qualitative development. The theoretical level has remained low, and class-consciousness today is conspicu­ous by its absence.

It is almost incomprehensible that workers in the most advanced industrial nation, literate and skilled, could be lagging behind in the forward march of the world's workers in general, and especially in the field of politics. There is scarcely a nation in the world today where the working people have not developed their own political party, separate and apart from the parties of their employers. Yet, the American workers are still, in the main, without independent political action, and the socialists, who are in the vanguard of the world's workers, have a mass labor party. At least, whatever its theoretical and practical shortcomings may be, is a decided advance, by comparison. In most countries there is a network of working class parties with mass support. All of which indicates a higher degree of class conscious­ness.

It may be said that such a party is not necessary by American labor because they have a mass labor party. That, at least, whatever its theoretical and practical shortcomings may be, is a decided advance, by comparison. In most countries there is a network of working class parties with mass support. All of which indicates a higher degree of class conscious­ness.

As the vast numbers of Chinese, Russians and peoples of eastern Europe are drawn closer together upon a classless basis, the American workers because they enjoy a higher standard of living than workers elsewhere. That, in itself, altho greatly exagger­ated, may account for much of the Ameri­can workers' apathy, but it is not the entire story, nor does it explain the workers' blind­ness to Wall Street's foreign policy. Will it be necessary for them to lose millions of their sons? Before discovering why they were sent to those foreign lands?

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The Ebb and Flow of Working Class Consciousness

(Continued from page 3)

non of their concern, but they are being dragged into it. Here the labor unions have offered no mass resistance to this drift. Their political opposition is almost non-existent, and time is running out. However, it is not yet too late for labor to assert itself in relations both national and international affairs. It is high time that the American working class shook itself out of its torpor and took up with the vanguard of the world's workers in the universal struggle to break the bonds of exploitation and reorganize the whole world upon a classless and warless international system of world peace and plenty. This great change is in the making. This new world is on its way. It would take a tremendous leap forward if the American working class took its place in the revolutionary ranks.

John Keracher.

THUMBNAI LS

THE MANY AND A FEW: Reasons for the U.S. "reversing" her previous position and joining the U.S.W.I.A. are now very evident when the U.S. and Great Britain announced plans to put the squeeze on Egypt. They are studying ways of by-passing the Suez Canal by running an oil pipe line through the Baghdad Pact nations (Iraq, Iran and Turkey) to the Mediterranean.

Private capital, ignoring repeated demands for an oil-cut bottom prestige among Arab nations, is very interested in financing such a pipe line provided they can get diplomatic guarantees of protection for such investments.

Of course, the first step is to join the team and become a Pact member, no matter what effect it has on future relations with hostile Arab states.

So, once again the "representative" lives on. Fosage has now committed the lives of the whole nation to another explosive situation in the Middle East for the sake of making the world safe (!) for the greed and profit of the few.

WHO'S WHO: The trade union movement is currently engaged in a game of "good guys and bad guys." As you know, in order to have good guys you must have evil—so UAW-CIO leaders unload the bad guys (in this case Beck and the like) so they can be the good guys. But in order to good guys must have a reason (or excuse) for making someone look bad—and they didn't have to look very far.