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FIRST OF MAY 1927.

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May Day 1927.

By Bennett.

First of May will be celebrated under the slogan war against the war which has already been started against revolutionary China and is being prepared against the U. S. S. R.

The Nanking bombardment may, to a large extent, be considered as a beginning of the imperialist counter-revolutionary war.

The Nanking bombardment was not unexpected.

Only fools could maintain that soldiers were sent to China for the defence of women and children; only simpletons could believe this legend. Soldiers were sent to China in order to defend imperialist rule by force of arms and in order to resist the victorious march of the revolutionary Chinese people.

Up to the Shanghai victory, the imperialists still hoped that they would be able, by threats and false promises, to stave off the onslaught of the Chinese revolution. Shanghai put an end to these illusions. On the day when Shanghai was taken, the "Daily Express" informed the world that the soldiers of imperialism want to fight. The next day, the "Times" "predicted" that the next 48 hours will decide as to whether peace is possible. The "Times" considered the condition for peace with the national government to be a violent crushing of the Shanghai

general strike by the forces of the revolutionary army. On the eve of the Nanking bombardment the imperialist hirelings, the Shantung clique, "predicted" that the great powers will retort in the event of a victory of the national armies in Nanking, in words of deadly weapons and machine-guns.

The condition of the "Times" was not fulfilled, the revolutionary armies acted in coordination with the revolutionary proletariat of Shanghai. The Shantung threats had no effect and Nanking was taken by the revolutionary armies. The result was a brutal and sanguinary destruction of one of the chief cities of China.

The pogrom was perpetrated by the Anglo-American troops. Prior to the Shanghai strike, the American imperialists hoped they would be the successors of Great Britain in China. But the general strike in Shanghai, which resulted in a victorious armed rising, gave a warning to the whole world that the Chinese revolution is developing in its own way and not as the capitalists would have it.

Such is the force and magnitude of the importance of the Shanghai victory. The marauders still hope to drown this

victory in blood. It is true that they have gigantic instruments of destruction at their disposal. However, they will not be able to turn the wheel of history.

The very day that the imperialists united in order to crush revolutionary China, the Chinese revolution became the cause of the toilers of the whole world.

In Moscow and Calcutta, in Paris and Berlin, in London and in New York, the Chinese revolution is considered as a proud and courageous challenge to imperialism and capitalism.

May Day will be transformed into a day for the beginning of active and militant support to the revolution of the millions of Chinese people who truly display marvellous courage.

May Day has come down to us as a day of struggle against imperialist war. In face of the imperialist war which has already begun, we will transform that day into the beginning of a war against war.

The First of May 1927 and the War Danger.

By Robert Minor.

As the first of May, of 1927, approaches, and as the conscious workers of the world make ready for their annual demonstrations in the revolutionary proletarian cause and against capitalist war, — the flames of imperialist war are flickering at many corners of the world.

Enormous fleets of warships and large military forces are concentrated in the harbours and rivers of China to make war against the Chinese people; the heavy guns have already fired on Nanking, the troops of the imperialists have already passed from the forms of "peace-time" aggression into the forms of active warfare against China.

The military scenes in China are not isolated phenomena in a world otherwise peaceful. In Indonesia the bloody suppression of the discontented masses occurred but a few weeks ago. The military aggression of the United States against the constitutional government of Nicaragua was only the beginning of a new series of actions against the sovereignty of a score of Latin-American republics, the governments of five of which have already been overthrown by the imperialist robber-government of North Africa; and now the planned military manoeuvres on the Mexican border will be the logical connecting link with future events which lead toward an imperialist war against all of Latin-America.

But even this does not begin to sum up the menace of war of the present; the rotting British Empire, whose imperialists are struggling in four quarters of the world to hold its timbers together, passes not a single month in which the question of precipitating a war of conquest in order to escape disintegration is not in the minds of the ruling class. In the Balkans the question of war between Italy and Jugoslavia may mean the question of world war; while the inflamed imperialist puppets of Roumania, acting for the bigger imperialists of the west, act the part of provocateur against the Soviet Republic of the workers.

Was the first of May, 1914, accompanied by anything like so great evidence of impending imperialist slaughter?

We can make the comparison with May, 1914. But the comparison is incomplete and inadequate. What is the tremendous difference? In 1927 the threat of war looms over a world in which one sixth of the earth is firmly in the possession of the revolutionary proletariat, and another twelfth part of the world containing nearly a fourth of the earth's population, is in the grip of a revolution in which the proletariat plays the leading role; — this is a world in which capitalism has passed its zenith and is throwing all of its force of destruction into the struggle to maintain and reestablish itself.

The monstrous provocation in Peking, in which every rule of diplomatic immunity was violated by agents of the big imperialist powers, shows the direction of the plans of aggression.

May Day has come down to us as the day of struggle against capitalist slavery. In face of the plunderers who aspire to wipe the only proletarian State, the first Socialist Government off the face of the earth, we will convert the first of May into a day for the mobilisation of all toilers of the world for active defence of the U. S. S. R.

The imperialists smashed Nanking in retaliation of the Shanghai victory. Complete victory of the Chinese revolution will be the retaliation of the army of labour to the imperialist war.

Under the slogans:

Long live the complete victory of the Chinese Revolution!

Long live the U. S. S. R.!

Long live the Social Revolution!

we will transform May Day into a mighty demonstration of the army of labour against imperialism and militarism.

The imperialists recognise that the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics is the stronghold of the working class of the world, the hope of the exploited peasants of all capitalist countries, and the natural and inevitable ally of all struggling peoples of colonial and semi-colonial lands. The imperialists are ready to plunge the entire world into a blood-bath never before experienced — not even in the world-war of 1914 — in order to maintain the system of exploitation of workers and peasants and colonial peoples and to destroy if possible the only free nation of workers and peasants which exists — the Soviet Union. They seek to destroy the Chinese revolution, and to do this they wish to strike at the obstacle to all such attacks — the Soviet Union.

War is in the air on this May Day. Yet we see on all sides the increase of activities of the imperialist masters' servants, the social-democratic traitors in the ranks of the working class, seeking everywhere to induce the workers to sleep, not to see the intentions of their enemies; everywhere the prattle of peace and submission is spread by the Second International and the Amsterdam International of social betrayal. And everywhere the flunkies of imperialism, in the name of socialism, are busy preparing the way for the attack on the Soviet Union with slanders and lies.

In every land the working class has a huge task this May Day in demonstrating its readiness to play its heroic part; everywhere the conscious workers must redouble their energy in reaching the masses with the message of the revolutionary workers' movement. Oppose the capitalist war-plans! Demonstrate the protest of the workers of the world against the criminal plans of the imperialists! Expose the criminal intentions against the Chinese Revolution and against the workers' Soviet Russia! Fight against your capitalist government's efforts to plunge the masses again into a blood bath — and be ready to do your revolutionary part to secure the defeat of your own capitalist government in the war when it comes. The imperialist war of 1914 which involved nearly all the world, was, in one-sixth of the world, changed into a civil war between the classes, for the liberation of the workers and peasants. The coming war which will be larger than the past, must be met with a courage and energy equal to that which the Russian workers and peasants showed in 1917.

Down with the imperialist war!

Long live the Revolution of the workers and peasants!

Long live the Chinese Revolution!

Long live the workers' and peasants' Union of Socialist Soviet Republics!

Long live the Communist International!

The Main Stages in the History of the First of May.

By Friedland.

The history of the May Day celebration is very instructive. The history of May first is the history of the struggle of tendencies in the ranks of the international proletariat. It is the history of the development and collapse of the II. International. It is the history of its transformation from the revolutionary vanguard of the conscious proletariat into a pillar of capitalism and bourgeois rule.

At the Paris Congress in 1889, the representatives of the French syndicates proposed that May First be recognised as an international proletarian holiday. May First was to be a day of demonstration when the demands for an 8-hour working day and for extensive social labour legislation were to be advanced. May First was to be a day of rest, i. e., a day when the workers of all countries stopped their work. The last paragraph of that resolution read: "The workers of the various countries organise their demonstrations in accordance with the given conditions of the given countries". This was the starting point which gave rise to an opportunist interpretation of that resolution in the immediate future.

In 1890 and 1891, the preparations for May Day were regarded by the bourgeoisie as the approach of the terrible moment — the social revolution. But the Social Democrats were proud of the fact that May Day passed by quietly. To them this quietude demonstrated the strength of the labour movement. May Day began to play a new role which consisted in drawing the balance of the successes of the organised labour movement. Such was the first period in the history of the celebration of May Day. The Paris Congress which was held under the slogan of social revolution ascribed to May Day a definite fighting character. But soon after that a struggle ensued in the ranks of the II. International for the adaption of May Day to the interests of the peacefully growing mass labour movement. That was the second period in the history of May Day. At the Zurich Congress in 1893, the delegates had to record that in most of the countries and particularly in Germany, the May Day celebrations are being celebrated on the first Sunday in May, and that everywhere there is an inclination to avoid conflicts with the capitalists and the capitalist governments, and that May Day is assuming the character of an ordinary bourgeois holiday. The revolutionary wing of that Congress declared war against such an interpretation of the resolution of 1889. No other than Victor Adler appealed to the Germans to fulfil their revolutionary duty. He was opposed by A. Bebel. The speaker insisted on preserving the purely class nature of May Day and on repudiating any attempt to convert May Day into a day for conciliation with the bourgeois pacifists and reformists. He proved that if there is no possibility to celebrate May Day in Germany, it is the duty of the Social Democrats to fight to bring about such possibilities. May First is a day when the energy of the proletariat must be stimulated for the struggle — such was the fundamental idea of Victor Adler. That is why he demanded not only the realisation of the resolution of 1889, but that it should be carried even still further. He declared: "If we will not go forward then May Day will lose its significance".

What were Bebel's objections? He insisted on the right of the individual Socialist Parties to decide for themselves as to the forms and methods of organising May Day demonstrations. He maintained that a decision to give May Day a revolutionary character will lead to increased unemployment and repressive measures. Thousands of workers thrown out into the streets, the organisations will be destroyed, the leaders will be imprisoned. Particularly will this affect the railroad and telegraph workers, — in short all those who are employed in government enterprises. The Zurich Congress arrived at a compromise between Adler and Bebel. Adler proposed the approval of the resolutions of the former congresses on May Day and that it be obligatory for all workers to stop working on that day. "To the extent that the conditions in the various countries will make May Day demonstrations possible such demonstrations should be held and they should serve as a demonstration of the firm will of the working class to destroy the class distinctions by means of a social revolution and thus

enter upon the true path in line with the workers of the world and international peace." Bebel insisted on eliminating the words "social revolution" from the resolution. The words were deleted and replaced by "social transformation". He insisted categorically on giving every Socialist Party the right to decide on the question of the May Day celebrations. This was the triumph of opportunism, the fruits of which were reaped during the next few years.

We do not intend to follow the development of May Day step by step. We want to mention only the fact that during this second period, the first resolution was not merely subjected to opportunist interpretation, but what is more important, it was entirely ignored. In 1908 it could have been definitely stated that the Social Democrats have robbed May Day of its revolutionary spirit. Karl Kautsky wrote in 1909: "May Day is a child of pain of our Party which can neither live nor die". Some revisionists declared in "Sozialistische Monatshefte" that: "There is no pleasure in writing about the first of May". For the opportunists it was fashionable to ignore the resolutions of May Day and a German delegate from Czechoslovakia said, in defending the existence of separate trade union organisations at the Copenhagen Congress in 1910 that, "the resolution about May Day is not enforced by anyone and no one even takes any notice of it".

Nevertheless, May Day prior to the war, although it was not celebrated in a revolutionary spirit, was a day of struggle. The very fact that it was recognised as a proletarian holiday was a demonstration for the 8-hour working day and for peace and for international solidarity. During the war, the Social Democratic Parties became parties of the class truce and they repudiated the celebration of May Day. Only small groups of revolutionaries still continued to celebrate it, endeavouring to draw into the May Day struggles the working masses against their governments and against their socialist traitors.

In Germany, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, people who prior to the war defended the revolutionary significance of May Day, and in Russia the Bolsheviks lived up to the resolution of the Zurich Congress of 1895.

With the termination of the war, the fourth period in the history of May Day sets in. Here and there the victorious "revolution" in the West attempted to legalise May Day as a national holiday. This was done although the propertied classes were left with economic power in their hands. What could have been the result of such a policy? Let us say Mussolini ordered the Prefects to declare April 21 a day of celebration of the "Foundation of Rome". This was a move to destroy the May Day celebrations. The same thing was done in Poland. But this, it would seem did not depend on the Social Democrats. It is true the latter did all in their power to strengthen the Fascist dictatorship in Europe and did a good deal in liquidating the "socialist ministries". Now it could no longer be a question of proclaiming May Day a legal national holiday.

Have the Social Democrats, as a result adopted May Day as a revolutionary holiday, as was fixed in the resolutions of the Congresses of the II. International?

It is characteristic of the fourth period of the history of May Day that not only the forms and methods of celebrating May Day were distorted. May Day was declared on an international scale as a day of struggle for the 8-hour working day and as a demonstration of international solidarity of the proletariat and its readiness "to destroy class differentiations through social transformation", i. e., the social revolution. Even Bebel who proposed to delete the last words only had in mind the preservation of the externally legal character of the resolution and not the departure from the revolutionary class struggle. How does it stand with regard to the May Day celebrations as they have been established by revolutionary traditions?

Let us take the struggle for the 8-hour day. The resolution of the Marseilles Congress of the II. International in August

1925, on the 8-hour day says that the 8-hour day should be recognised in principle and that it should be brought into effect in conjunction with the ratification of the **Washington Convention**. The **Marseilles Congress** formulated the following ethical platitude: "Every state which signed the **Versailles Treaty** is morally obliged to legalise the 8-hour working day". It demands that the States which have not ratified the **Washington Convention** should do so without delay. May Day was considered a day of struggle for the 8-hour working day which was to be brought into effect as a result of the class struggle. The yellow Socialist International transforms the **Versailles Peace Treaty** into a "moral source" for social reforms.

The **Marseilles Congress** also adopted a resolution on "the struggle for peace" in the same spirit as that on the 8-hour day. The Socialist International sanctioned the **League of Nations** and declared it an instrument of peace.

The activities of the II. International serve as an excellent illustration as to what they understand May Day to be. We see their attitude to the recent miners' lockout and to the events in **China**. In all the great class conflicts, the European Social Democrats declined to render their international aid to the toilers and revolutionary masses of the struggling people. Their attitude to **Soviet Russia** is another illustration as to what the Social Democrats understand by international proletarian solidarity.

But the most striking peculiarity of the fourth period in the history of May Day is the rise of the revolutionary celebrations in the U. S. S. R. The Social Democrats usually de-

clare that May Day is in the Soviet Union a national legal holiday and that hence it has lost its revolutionary significance. This is a lie. In Russia, May First has become a national holiday of the victorious working people. It has retained its revolutionary character in the first place because it serves as a mighty demonstration of international solidarity with the fighting proletariat of all countries. This solidarity does not remain platonic solidarity. It is accompanied by action. The British strike and the Chinese revolution are the best proof of that. But the May Day celebrations have preserved their revolutionary spirit in Russia thanks to the uninterrupted struggle for peace of the Soviet Union. Such peace is possible only with the victorious revolutionary movement in the East and in the West. May Day in Russia is a day when the balance of socialist construction is struck. This is the new creative revolutionary element which the last decade in the history of May Day has introduced. Such was the nature of May Day in Russia during the battles at the front, during the national "Saturdayings", and such is its nature in the struggle for the industrialisation of the country.

Such, in brief, are the main stages in the history of May Day. It was proclaimed as a day of international class struggle and it was later transformed by the Social Democrats into a bourgeois holiday. The Communist International following the traditions of the revolutionary mass labour movement, resurrects May Day as a revolutionary holiday which is to serve as a demonstration in favour of the 8-hour working day and as a firm expression of the will of the working class to do away with class distinctions by means of the social revolution.

May First and the Struggle for the Eight Hour Day.

By W. Demar.

How does the question of the eight-hour day stand on May 1, 1927, i. e. 38 years after its proclamation by the International Socialist Congress as a May Day slogan of the proletariat?

The eight-hour day has become a reality. This is a fact. However, the eight-hour day has not yet ceased to be a slogan of the international labour movement. On the contrary, on May 1st, 1927, it is one of the most vital demands and the object of the acute struggles of the working class.

The eight-hour day became the legal working day almost in all large capitalist countries soon after the victory of the October Revolution in Russia. Moreover, in 1919, the **Washington Convention** declared in favour of the eight-hour day which meant that the eight-hour working day was to be recognised on an international scale.

What is the situation at the present time?

In **Germany** 50%, or over, of the industrial and transport workers work more than eight hours a day, and more than 48 hours a week. In the most important branches of industry such as the metal industry, ship-building, and machine-construction, the working day has been lengthened to 9, 10 and even 12 hours (the Ruhr metal industry).

Side by side with the lengthening of the working day on the basis of emergency laws following upon the inflation period and the tariff convention, Germany has introduced unlimited over-time work and, in most cases, overtime is paid at the regular rates of wages. The German miners work 8 hours and more in the mines which means that even for this form of work the 9-10 hour day has been introduced as well as in the factories.

In **Great Britain** the miners lost their 7-hour day only last year. In other industries such as machine construction and ship building industries, the eight-hour day has been subjected to the attack of the bosses for the last five years, on the ground that without lengthening the working day, they cannot compete with Germany and the other countries. In **Italy** Mussolini is preparing to legalise the 9-hour working day, although the

actual 8-hour day has been violated under Fascist rule for a long time.

In **France**, the currency stabilisation period signified the beginning of an intensive attack on the part of the capitalists against the workers. The workers of the metallurgical and coal industries were the first ones to suffer the consequences. The **Comité des Forges** has been agitating for a long time in favour of the abolition of the 8-hour day. The French bourgeoisie petitioned the government as far back as 1924, passing resolutions in which they demanded the abolition of the 8-hour day.

In **Switzerland**, in spite of the national referendum (1924) in which a majority voted for the 8-hour day, the 52-54 hour week is in operation.

It is not necessary to enumerate all countries and all methods by which the working day has been lengthened. One thing is certain, and that is that nowhere except in the U. S. S. R. is the eight-hour working day guaranteed to the working class.

Such are the acts.

Capitalist society is fighting for the consolidation of the existing order. Its forces are engaged in an open class war (the recent lockout of the British miners) and in securing through refined methods the production of surplus value for the bourgeoisie. We have in mind here the rationalisation of capitalist production, and as an example we take contemporary Germany.

One of the forms of rationalisation is the mechanisation of the internal factory transportation, the elimination of simple machines and the introduction of automatic machinery, the organisation of scientific management, etc.

The highest form of automatic transportation is the conveyor. Work on the conveyor intensifies the working day to a maximum capacity. An eight-hour day on the conveyor system and the system of shiftables and furnaces undermines the workers' organism. In this respect it must be stated that in many cases (the number of which is rapidly increasing) the demand of the eight-hour day does not fully correspond with the conditions of industry at the present time. There is no

eight hour day now but even the eight hour day is too long. The worker now needs the six, or seven hours day, or an eight-hour day with two breaks.

More than a year ago the workers put up their demands in the rationalised factories for the 7-hour day. These demands are reflected in the slogan of the Communist Party of Germany in favour of the 42-hour week in the rationalised factories. The first demand of the Berlin metal workers is the 46½ hour week.

Are there any incongruities in this respect? Can we demand a working day shorter than eight hours if there is no eight hour day? Consistency in slogans is of course very important, but the trouble is that here is no "consistency" in capitalist rationalisation. The intensive process of rationalisation is accompanied by the introduction of the 9—10 hour working day.

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If on May 1st, 1927, we are faced with a "deficit" in the loss of the eight-hour day in some countries and the absence of any security concerning the eight-hour day in others, we must blame the reformists for the situation.

Did not the German Trade Union Federation agree in 1924 to a temporary prolongation of the working day? Since the German bourgeoisie got full power into its hands, the working class is beginning to realise the role of the Social Democrats in the development of the German Republic. The German Trade Union Federation, as well as the other reformist unions, have done nothing to restore the eight-hour day.

They have now raised the question, of the eight-hour day, but the capitalists are defending the law adopted in 1924 with the assistance of the Social Democrats and the reformist unions. The reformists of all countries adopt resolutions annually, and sometimes more than once a year, in which they reiterate the ratification of the Washington Convention. Albert Thomas travelled from country to country urging the governments to ratify the Washington Convention. This comedy has been going on for the last six years and is surely not yet finished. No government wants to ratify it.

The Social Democrats stand for progress not only in questions appertaining to the class struggle of the proletariat. The Social Democrats support in every way the Fordisation, and in general, the Americanisation of European industry. The Social Democrats are in favour of capitalist rationalisation without reservations. At the same time the Social Democrats continue to "fight" for the 8-hour working day by proving to the capitalists that a worker is more productive in an 8-hour working day than if he works more than 8 hours. This of course is true. But only insofar as it does not effect modern rationalisation under which the speed of the worker does not depend on his will but on the mechanism introduced by the administration.

Under the present conditions the capitalist is not much concerned about the mood of his worker, as they say in Germany the Lust zur Arbeit of the worker. And therefore the more capitalist rationalisation develops, the less convincing to the capitalists are the otherwise absolutely correct conclusions that the worker works better if his working day is shorter. The Social Democrats leave to put it mildly this circumstance out of consideration.

Summarising the present situation, we must conclude that the present state of affairs in industry is characterised by unparalleled arbitrariness on the part of the capitalists in fixing the working day.

In Germany there is no regular working day in many of the large enterprises. The working day begins at 3, 4, 5 or 6 o'clock in the morning and ends for the various groups at a different time. One week they work 54—60 hours and the next week only 20—24 hours, and the workers naturally receive wages only for the hours they have actually worked. There is, side by side with the increase of unemployment, also an increase in the amount of overtime work.

This arbitrariness of the manufacturers in fixing the working day disorganises every form of social activity in the factories. Such arbitrariness is possibly only due to the complacency of the reformist trade unions, as in a factory where

the workers are thoroughly organised and have a strong factory committee the manufacturers are not in a position to manipulate their workers and their time, at random.

The slogan of the Chicago revolutionaries of 1886 and of the International Socialist Congress of 1889 is thus in full force in 1927. But the struggle for its realisation is proceeding in a new and under a very complicated situation. The struggle for the 8-hour working day, and in general the struggle for a shorter working day, must inevitably become a struggle against capitalist stabilisation. And not in capitalist Europe alone does the struggle for the 8-hour working day lead the working class on to new positions and bring it face to face with problems of the class struggle in its widest aspect. The slogan of the proletariat of the old capitalist countries has already become the slogan of the hundreds and thousands and millions of the Chinese proletariat. Having risen jointly with the other classes in the struggle against imperialism, the Chinese workers have already advanced their own demands, which are also our international demands. The Chinese do not want to and they will not work 14—16 hours a day. They do not want to work even 12 hours a day. They demand the 8-hour working day at least in the large capitalist enterprises.

Our slogans were never as much international and they were never as concrete in the eyes of the broad masses of the world proletariat — from Shanghai to New York, and from London to Cape Town — as they are to-day.

The broad masses have been brought into action. The capitalists still succeed in thrusting back the workers' attacks only because the workers are unarmed and because they act in isolated detachments. Whatever international support is given, it comes in spite of the reformist trade union movement, and in spite of the Social Democrats.

The organisations of the working class, which are the workers' instruments in their struggle, are paralysed by reformism. The reformist unions do not want to fight. The capitalists continue to intensify the attack on the workers. They are rationalising not only industry, but also the methods of counter-acting the action of the working class. They send armies of spies and yellow strike-breakers into the factories with the help of whom they control every move of the worker and know every word the worker utters. They terrorise the workers and endeavour to scatter their ranks by bribes and through the creation of various organisations, etc. The capitalists create by this means huge funds and concentrate their forces in the formation of trusts and even in international trusts (the steel trust).

What do the reformist trade union leaders and Social Democrats undertake in opposition to this capitalist mobilisation? They do nothing except that they appeal to the International Labour Office of the League of Nations and issue meaningless slogans. That is why we must point out to the working masses on the 1st of May 1927, the necessity of reorganising the workers' organisations and adopt them to the new conditions of struggle.

Such reorganisation is possible only in direct opposition to the reformists. We can attain true international solidarity only in conflict with international reformism. The Communists of all countries must intensify their struggle for the capture of the trade unions. This is one of the most important tasks at the present time.

The 1st of May this year will witness a sharp conflict in Germany on the question of the working day; 800,000 metal workers will have to choose on May 1st as to whether they wish to continue to work under the arbitrary terms of their bosses who want to prolong the working day (from 9—10 hours) or whether they prefer to enter upon a determined struggle for their demands of a shorter working day.

Under the slogan of true international solidarity, under the slogan of fighting unity of the workers of all countries, we will demonstrate our forces on the 1st of May this year. Various sections of the proletariat will have to launch upon a decisive struggle not five or ten years from now, but one or two days after the May Day demonstrations. Let us be ready for a united struggle. Let us remember the lessons of the British miners' lockout.

Working Women, Prepare for the First of May!

By G. G. L. Alexander.

This year we look to the first of May amidst the fiery signals presaging the beginning of the fresh murderous wars to be thrust on the peoples, amidst the bombardment of defenceless towns and villages by the warships of the imperialist powers assembled around the coasts of China, and our thoughts for the May celebration broaden into a realisation of the world historical interests involved, a realisation of the necessity of stamping this international socialist festival once and for all with the indelible impress of its original significance as an international fighting day, as a day upon which the whole of the revolutionary forces of the proletariat and of the workers are gathered together against the imperialist powers. The fight is against imperialist war, against the oppression of the colonial peoples, against world imperialism which is bringing up its artillery against China, and against the strongest fortress of the international proletariat, Soviet Russia.

The first of May festival in 1927 must bear the clear and unmistakable character of a day upon which the world proletariat musters its forces against the international front of imperialism. This was the significance given this anniversary at the time of its establishment as the first international proletarian festival in 1889, and this character must be maintained. The first of May, which was intended to be a strike day, a day upon which all work ceased the world over in defiance of the employers, has become a signboard, a grey milestone on the road of remembrance of all the weaknesses of the II. International, a reminder of the insidious treachery of reformism in the years before the war, of its open treachery at the time of the outbreak of the war, and of the despicable compact made by the II. International with the intensified bloodsucking of the imperialism of today.

Precisely at the present time it is as well to remember the past sins of the II. International, for at the present juncture it is of the utmost importance for the organised fighting workers, and for the steadily growing army of women workers joining in common cause with them, to gather together in an efficient fighting front all along the line, to crush the serpent of reformism and betrayal of the working class, and to put an end to the work of reformist destruction and undermining of the fighting front.

We must cast back our thoughts to the Party Conferences of the decade before the war in Germany, when the question of stopping work on the first of May, and the question of the mass strike, were under continual discussion (Jena, Magdeburg). At that time the revolutionary goals could already be clearly distinguished from those reformist sheep who shirked the May strike in their fear of lockouts, of trouble with the police, of the terrible eventuality of bloodshed, and argued that more was lost than gained by celebrating the anniversary. Who does not remember the excitement before every first of May: will the wheels stand still? Will there be demonstrations, or merely an afternoon promenade to the anniversary meeting? Which of the young people who went, filled with great expectations, to these Philistine May celebrations, did not return home disappointed? How often it happened that the slogans issued by the revolutionary elements in the Party were pushed aside and the position of the reformists strengthened by the policy of the trade union leaders, and their declarations against the stoppage of work for the peaceful spring anniversary.

It was the Second International Conference of socialist women in Copenhagen in 1910 which protested, under the leadership of Clara Zetkin, against the tame May promenade of the reformists, and organised an international fighting day of the proletariat, the International Women's Day. The slogans issued by this Conference went out into the war-laden atmosphere of that time, precisely as our slogans go forth today against imperialist war, against the madness of armaments, for legislation for the protection of the workers, above all against capitalism, against the bourgeois state of society as an economic and social regime.

The "Gleichheit", the leading organ of the working women at that time, awakened the proletarian women out of their petty bourgeois resignation to the "God-willet" order of the class state, and pointed out to them the path the Russian pro-

letariat did not fear to tread, although Tsarism dictated very different penalties for the observance of the red first of May than the mere "lockouts" of the Western countries. Prison, penal servitude, banishment, flogging, and bloody oppression were the Tsarist replies to the May demonstrations.

In the West of the Tsar's empire, in the Polish districts with their advanced industrial proletariat, the workers went into the streets year after year on the first of May, though there was bloodshed every time. And the women always went with them — in 1900 three young working women marched bravely at the head of the procession. When in 1907 in Petersburg the metal workers of the Obuchov steel casting works downed tools on 1. May, and the soldiery were called out against them, it was the women workers of the neighbouring card factory who helped the comrades, and barricaded themselves in the card factory with the workers. Among the 37 workers brought up for trial on this occasion, there were 2 young working women who received long sentences of penal servitude.

Gaol, knout, and blood could not suppress the celebration of 1. May in Tsarist Russia. On the contrary, it assumed ever greater proportions, and took the form of a mass action in every part of the country, prepared under a thousand dangers. In 1905 the mass action merged into revolution, in Warsaw the demonstration of the hundred thousand ended in a blood bath. But all the greater was the mass movement and the enthusiasm in 1906 and 1907. And even the defeat of the revolution of 1905, and the increased oppression following it, could not crush the first of May...

After this heroic past, the victorious Russian proletariat has been able to celebrate the 1. May for 10 years, since 1917, as a radiant and glorious festival of triumphant revolution, and of the steady advance to the realisation of the socialist order.

It has taken international imperialism 10 years, since the great bloodletting of the Great War with its resultant economic crises, to arrange its camp, torn and divided by conflicting interests and greeds, into one united front against the growing international forces of the revolutionary proletariat. World imperialism is reopening its attack at the point where its interests are most seriously endangered: in the seething crater of world revolution in the midst of the most promising exploitation territory — China. The path through this flaming front of world revolution is the path to the heart of revolution: red Russia. The Russian proletariat hears the distant thunder of the cannon at Nanking, and prepares, in its 10th year of successful revolution, for a May Day of struggle, of sympathy and support lent by its millions to the Chinese people fighting for their freedom, of protest against the bloody encroachments of the British imperialists.

The eyes, the thoughts, and the deeds of the millions of workers of the world must turn to the warships in the "quiet" waters of the "pacific" Ocean — the name alone is a scathing comment on the "pacific" front of Locarno.

The warships threaten not only China. It is of little importance whether the Powers are more or less in agreement with one another at the present moment. They will agree with one another soon enough, and the more easily where the workers are disunited. But in one point the capitalists are always agreed, and that is in their economic tactics, in their methods of stabilisation at the expense of the proletariat, in their organisation of every available force and means for the ever increasing exploitation of the working class. This is felt only too well by the workers of the whole world. Working time and working power are being robbed all over the world; the eight hour day has practically ceased to exist, either in England or Germany, Poland or Czechoslovakia. And it is the women — data from Poland and Germany prove this — who suffer even more than the men, and cheap female labour is being more and more exploited in overtime, and even night work.

The rôle of executioner of the working class, so long played by Tsarism in Russia, has been taken up today by international Fascism, working in the service of international imperialism. Perverted justice, torture, imprisonment, and the gallows; these

are the pillars supporting the imperialist state governments in the countries bordering the Workers' State, from the Balkans to Finland. The victims are innumerable women and destitute children. The same methods as are employed in Italy are being employed in other countries, where positions already won by the workers are being torn from them by force. In other countries, as Germany, England, France, and America, the methods of the secret political organisation, of imprisonment, of the "dry Fascism", of political suppression and deprivation of the right to speak or hold meetings, and of the robbery of all social protection and elementary human rights, no longer suffice, as may be seen from the recent bloody attacks upon peaceful demonstrations in Berlin. The claims laid before Parliament in Germany and France last year by the proletarian women of these countries, for the social protection of mothers and children, were rejected.

The social reformists have been the accomplices of the imperialists and Fascists in all these measures for the oppression and political suppression of the broad masses.

They acted as accomplices when they helped to spread the pacifist illusions as to the "peace policy" of the League of Nations. Again, it has been the women who have most easily fallen victims to these illusions. The **International Women's Conference of the II. International**, held at Marseilles in 1925 at the time of the war in Morocco, did not utter a single word of protest against this fresh mass murder, so that even their general international protest against war practically amounted to an expression of approval of this imperialist murder, and to a drawing back from the civil war of the revolutionary proletariat. During the course of the campaign for the **International Co-operative Conference**, the **International Co-operative Women's Guild**, under the leadership of the social democrats Emmy Freundlich (Austria) and Hanna Enfield (England), sent out a resolution which has now been circulating in the world for half a year, addressed to the League of Nations and proposing to mobilise women against war — but entirely forgetting to protest against the English intervention in China or the agitation against the Soviet Union.

And the reformists have again become the accomplices of the bourgeoisie, as they have become the murderers of the

Chinese people, in their refusal to accede to our demand that the workers should be called upon to prevent the transport of troops and munitions to China.

It is our task, for the coming 1. May, to mobilise the broad masses of the working women in the fight against the criminal attitude adopted by the reformists in every vital question concerning the proletariat. We must make clear to the women the causes of their exploitation, of their poverty, of the deprivation of their rights, and of the connection between their fate and that of their millions of sisters and brothers in China and in all the colonies under the imperialist yoke. In these far countries, in the plantations and textile factories, our old May day demands of 1889 are as imperative as in the centres of European industry: the elementary demands for political rights, for the eight hour day, for equal political and economic rights for women, for social protection. These are the demands whose complete realisation in the Soviet Union was recently proclaimed to the world by the celebration of victory held by the working women on 8. March. And for us, too, the fulfilment of these demands is only possible if we openly acknowledge our deadly hostility to capitalism and reformism, if we give will and impulse to the working men and women to active struggle and resistance against the war policy and war preparations of the imperialists, to an actual and united adherence to the slogan of: **Not one ship, not one cannon or weapon for the imperialists, to China or to Soviet Russia**, refusal to work in the munition factories, refusal to transport ammunition, refusal to aid in surrounding the Worker's State with enemies, refusal to pay a penny in taxes for the financing of mass murder; and on the other hand the mustering of every force and means available to a united and class-conscious proletariat in support of Soviet Russia, the sole State in which equal rights for women have actually been realised, the home of the women worker, and in support of the struggle for emancipation of the Chinese workers.

It is only if our fight is directed towards this goal that we can hope to fulfil our old May day demands to reconquer those positions which the world proletariat has already paid so much blood to win, and to pass on to the realisation of the world revolution.

The 1st May and the German Socialist Party before the War.

By Ernst Meyer (Berlin).

Since the time when the revolutionary socialists broke away from the social democracy, after that great betrayal by the Social Democratic Party and the II. International which culminated on 4. August 1914, our perception of those highly opportunist tendencies to which the social democrats succumbed even before the war has become much keener. It is true that the Left social democrats maintained a constant struggle against the degeneration of the revolutionary labour movement, even before the outbreak of the war, but it is only now that we are in a position to realise clearly the deeper connections in the preparatory stages which led to the apostasy of August 1914. There is no question in which we cannot follow up a distinct process of preparation, dating from long before August 1914, paving the way to open transition to the camp of the bourgeoisie. The history of May day in Germany is one of the many examples of the process of adaptation on the part of social democracy to the bourgeois state of society. At the same time we may trace in this history many evidences of a growing revolutionary opposition to this line of development within the German Social Democratic Party.

The decision of the Paris International Congress of 1899, on the May day celebration, left it to the judgment of the separate Sections of the II. International to determine the nature of the demonstration, in accordance with the conditions obtaining in each separate country. The Conference of the German Social Democratic Party held at Halle in 1890 followed the example of the Paris Congress in the following resolution, passed on 18 October:

"Should there be difficulties in the way of stopping work on this day, the processions, outdoor festivals, etc., are to be held on the first Sunday in May."

A motion proposed by four Berlin delegates, to the effect that the May day celebration should invariably be held on the first Sunday in May, was withdrawn.

At the Berlin Party Conference in 1892 motions proposing complete stoppage of work on 1. May were rejected by 263 votes against 5. The question of whether evening celebrations should be held on 1. May, or May day celebrations on the first Sunday in May, was decided by 167 votes in favour of the first proposal, against the votes of 73 delegates who voted for the second motion.

The International Congress held at Zürich in 1893 imposed upon the social democrats of every country the duty of:

"striving for the stoppage of work on 1. May, and supporting every attempt made in this direction in different places or by the individual organisations."

The Cologne Party Conference of the German Social Democratic Party in 1893 limited this resolution even further.

It was not until the Party Conference held at Gotha in 1896 that a decision was arrived at making it the duty of every labour organisation to stand for the general cessation of work. But this was followed immediately, at the Party Conference in Hamburg in 1897, by a motion proposed by Stolten on behalf of the delegates of the Hamburg constituency, that:

"The demand for the stoppage of work on 1. May be dropped".

However, the majority of the Party, after the withdrawal of the Hamburg motion, demanded that:

"The general cessation of work be insisted on more strongly than ever."

At the Dresden Party Conference in 1903 a resolution proposed by the organisations of Düsseldorf and Berlin 6., in favour of complete stoppage of work on 1. May, was rejected.

After the Dresden Conference the May day question formed part of the agenda of almost every party Conference. As early as the Bremen Party Conference in 1904 the speaker for the Party Committee, the then extremely radical Richard Fischer, issued a warning against any concessions to the endeavours being made by the trade union officials to abolish the stoppage of work on 1. May. He declared:

"The stronger the trade union movement becomes... the greater the tendency towards a gradual loosening of the external ties binding the trade union movement to the political. And the greater the danger that the trade union movement as a whole, engaged in the every day struggles... loses sight of the great aims of the working class movement, the final goal of the emancipation of the working class from the double yoke of economic and political serfdom, the actual aim and object of the movement: the destruction of the capitalist wage system (Applause). And when our so-called good friends out of the bourgeois camp come and tell us that it is mere waste of energy... to expend money on a demonstration... that the trade unions should be economical and save their funds for the great economic struggles, then we have every reason to remember that this is nothing but the repetition of the melody of that old song of dividing the labour movement into two wings: here the wing fighting for the demands of the day, there the intransigent wing.

Weinheber, from Hamburg, openly demanded the annulment of the obligation to support the complete stoppage of work. Zubeil and Frau Zietz protested energetically against this. Fischer, in his concluding speech, again protested vigorously against the critics from the ranks of the trade unions:

"This means slipping down the path of the English trade unions, the abandonment of the class standpoint, the abandonment of the labour standpoint, and the representation of interests which are rather considerations of the future."

At the Cologne Trade Union Congress of 1905 the General Commission (now the General German Trade Union Federation) brought forward a resolution in which the idea of cessation of work was entirely abandoned, and Bringmann, the delegate of the carpenters' union, even went so far as to declare:

"We must adopt a determined attitude against the decisions of the International Congress and of the Social Democratic Party Conference (which call upon us to help to accomplish a complete stoppage of work on 1. May), and declare straightforwardly and definitely that the May day festival, in whatever form it may be celebrated, is not a form of trade union action, but that the cessation of work on the 1. May, adopted as an item of the trade union programme, is calculated to do enormous damage to the trade unions." (!)

This debate was again repeated at the Jena Party Conference of the German Social Democratic Party in 1905, when Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg protested energetically against the reformist trade union ideology. The actual wording of the Jena resolution is comparatively radical. But its execution by the Party Committee, according more and more consideration to the ideas of the General Commission of the Trade Unions, fell far behind the wording. The radicals therefore opposed not only the trade union bureaucracy, but to an ever-increasing degree the Party Committee also. At later Party conferences the main point of the debate on the May day celebration was the agreements made between the Party and the trade unions, agreements in which the General Commission got more and more its own way.

At the Party Conference at Nuremberg in 1908, Richard Fischer, once so radical, defended agreements between the Party Committee and the General Commission, in which the question

of the support to be given to workers discharged for abstaining from work on 1. May was taken as an occasion for weakening the whole May day idea. Rosa Luxemburg pointed out the example given by Russia and Poland, where mighty May Day demonstrations had been held in spite of the efforts of reaction, and closed her speech with the following words:

"The sole solution to the problem is to propagate the May day idea with all possible emphasis, quite apart from this or that regulation of the support to be given to the discharged, and to cease carrying on the May day agitation in the hesitating and dragging spirit evidenced by the Party Committee and the General Commission during the past year... In Germany the May day celebration... has not only not yet shown what such a demonstration is capable of, but it has a great future before it, and in anticipation of this future it is incumbent on us to insist with the greatest determination upon energetic and unadulterated propaganda of the May day idea."

Robert Schmidt opposed with much indignation Rosa Luxemburg's suggestion that the German workers might learn something from the Russians. His polemical tone, tinged with the "superiority" of a trade union official, was so out of place, that Comrade Pieck rose and protested with refreshing candour against "the insolence of people for whom he did not feel the slightest respect". Pieck attributed the unsatisfactory participation in the May Day celebrations mainly to the hindering tactics and resistance of the trade unions, and declared that the workers of Prussia, fighting against the three class suffrage, were prepared to make sacrifices. Lipinsky, from Leipzig, protested on formal grounds against the Party Committee for requiring that the Party Conference should merely take cognisance of the agreement come to with the General Commission, without having the right of decision, and reproached the Committee with a "cabinet policy".

At the Nuremberg Conference no fewer than 19 motions were proposed on the May day question. The Teltow Beskow motion, proposed by Rosa Luxemburg, was as follows:

"The Party Conference sees in the May day celebration the most powerful manifestation of the class struggle, and condemns most emphatically the attempts being made in certain trade union and Party circles, to check and smother the demonstration. In order to prevent the recurrence of these attempts, so damaging to the prestige of the May day celebrations, the Party Conference expects that all such tendencies be abandoned and more consideration be given to the propagation of the cessation of work on 1. May, as decided upon at every Party Conference.

The agreements on the support given to the discharged, arrived at between the trade unions and the Party Committee, were finally altered in some points, entailing the annulment of the whole agreement.

A new agreement was submitted to the Leipzig Party Conference in 1909. It scarcely differed, however, from the agreement rejected at Nuremberg. Rosa Luxemburg was not present at this Party Conference. There was, however, a resolution from Teltow Beskow, which read as follows:

"The Party Conference declares it to be the irremissible duty of every Party comrade to engage in a far more energetic agitation for the International decision for the celebration of the 1. May by a universal cessation of work. In face of the latest attitude on the part of the trade unions, the Party Conference emphasises the impossibility of permitting any dilution of energy in the urgent and increasingly imperative measures adopted towards the ruling class in the mighty struggle for emancipation..."

A further motion from Elbing:

"The Party Conference resolves to oppose energetically all attempts at weakening the May day demonstration, especially its postponement to a Sunday."

These warnings were entirely justified, for a large number of motions were brought forward in favour of withdrawing the demand for cessation of work. The Party Committee was successful in having an agreement accepted in which the form to be taken by the May day demonstration was made dependent on the approval of the trade unions.

At the Magdeburg Party Conference in 1910, the question of the vote for the budget in the provincial Diets occupied so much

time, and the Left utilised the opportunity for such an exhaustive discussion of the necessity of a revolutionary attitude in this connection, that there was no special debate on the May day demonstration. A motion from Nuremberg: "The 1. May is to be celebrated by cessation of work only", was rejected by 154 votes against 60. Here Karl Liebknecht succeeded in having a special division taken on this question, which the Party Committee had endeavoured to prevent.

At the Party Conference at Jena in 1911, Pfannkuch's report was followed by another great debate on the May day celebration. A large number of organisations opened an attack on the motion passed at Nuremberg in 1908, according to which those members of the Party who suffered no loss of wages, in spite of not working on 1. May, were to contribute a day's wages to the Party and trade union funds. Hamburg, on the other hand, demanded that all members refusing to obey the Nuremberg decision should be expelled from the Party. The Party Committee opposed both motions; its attitude was an expression of national arrogance. Pfannkuch declared:

"The German working class, organised in the German Social Democracy and German Free Trade Union movements, takes the decisions of the International Congress very seriously... According to our experience, however, this is not the case with other nations." (1)

Pfannkuch expressed no word of appreciation for those foreign workers, the Russian workers for instance, who had demonstrated on the 1. May under the greatest difficulties, and at the cost of enormous sacrifices. Although several speakers protested with great excitement against the Hamburg motion, it was accepted by 279 votes against 101 and one abstention.

At the Party Conference at Chemnitz in 1912 a large number of motions were again submitted, having for object the cancellation of the decision that one day's wages were to be delivered up on 1. May. One motion from Magdeburg even demanded that the International Congress in Vienna should be called upon to cancel the decision on the May day demonstration. In the course of the debate, the speaker of the Party Committee, Pfannkuch, informed the Conference that Party employees (editors) had refused to deliver up their earnings on 1. May. The same was reported by Ryssel, from Leipzig, with respect to 3 officials employed by the metal workers' union in Dresden. A Lübeck delegate reported that a member who had been commissioned by his organisation to attend a trial of blacklegs on 1. May, had refused to give up the day's wages on the grounds that he had been "working."

After a detailed debate, in which the principle involved in the May day demonstration was almost entirely ignored, the

cancellation of the Nuremberg decision was accepted in open division by 270 votes against 221. After this Noske brought in a motion on behalf of the complaints commission, expressly stating that comrades obliged to work at their professions on 1. May should not be placed under the obligation to deliver up a day's earnings. This proposal was refused.

Motions were again submitted to the Party Conference in Jena in 1913, requiring a day's wages to be delivered up to the May day funds. The Party Committee suggested that there should be no enforced obligation, but merely the expectation expressed that the Party and trade union employees would do this. It was further proposed that the May day speakers should not be paid, but should only receive their actual expenses. Fries, Cologne, doubted whether this proposal could be carried out, since employees required as speakers would "simply strike" if not beyond paid their actual expenses.

The Left opposition abstained from expressing any definite view in this matter, since they had had the opportunity of declaring their tactical principles on the subjects of mass strikes and taxation.

This brief survey of the development of the May day demonstration in the German Social Democratic Party before the war shows the degree in which the idea of the 1. May as a fighting day fell more and more into the background among the leaders of the Social Democratic Party, and the manner in which purely financial questions were permitted to lead to deplorable debates. The Left endeavoured in vain to maintain the fighting character of the 1. May in the Party. After the initial attempts at opposition had failed, the ties binding the Party Committee to the reformist trade union bureaucracy became firmer and firmer. The Party and trade union employees finally refused quite openly, for purely material reasons, to give up a day's earnings like the workers. And the majority at the Party Conferences of 1912 and 1913 sanctioned this despicable attitude by cancelling the obligation to give up a day's earnings. The tension between the proletarian members of the Party and the Party and trade union employees became increasingly acute. The number of workers participating in the cessation of work on 1. May increased greatly during the last few years before the war.

Despite the paralysing effects of the Party and trade union bureaucracy, the clamour of the masses forced its way through. Even during the war, at a time when the German Social Democratic Party and the trade unions abandoned all idea of the May day demonstration in the interests of "civil peace", the revolutionary workers, under the leadership of the Spartacus League, organised such demonstrations as that held on 1. May 1916, when Karl Liebknecht was seized by the servants of Prussian militarism and thrown into prison.

May Day Festivals in Tsarist Russia.

The First of May is a day when the revolutionary forces are marshalled and when propaganda for the ideas of proletarian revolution is carried on on a large scale. In 1896 at the dawn of the Russian labour movement the achievements of the revolutionary struggle in Western Europe seemed to the Russian revolutionaries far off and almost an unattainable ideal. This is how Lenin described the May Day celebrations in Western Europe:

"Deserting their stuffy factories they marched through the main streets with music and banners, demonstrating to their masters their growing strength. They held large meetings where speeches were made about the victories achieved over the masters in the past year and plans of struggle were drawn up for the future*."

In accordance with the growing entanglement of the Western Parties in bourgeois democratic illusions and the loss of their revolutionary spirit, the celebration of May Day was transformed into a peaceful demonstration in face of the ironical gaze of the bourgeois crowds.

The May Day celebrations in tsarist Russia were of an entirely different character. In this country the workers had

to pay with blood and their freedom for participating in May Day celebrations. But the revolution cannot be crushed by bullets and black-jacks. Hard labour and executions are powerless and they could not destroy the revolutionary Party of the proletariat; on the contrary, they only hardened the fighters of the workers' Party. The May Day celebrations were converted into a school for the proletarian struggle against the armed forces of the tsarist government. The First of May was celebrated in tsarist Russia in one form or another for 27 years. The history of the May Day festivals are invariably bound up with the history of development of the revolutionary struggle of the Russian workers and with the history of their revolutionary Party. The May Day banners of the Russian workers spoke not only of the general tasks in the struggle, but also of the slogans dealing with the burning questions of the day. These slogans and the general character of the festivals changed accordingly as the nature of the workers' organisations and the slogans of the proletarian parties developed.

When in 1889 the First Congress of the Second International decided to celebrate the First of May, it seemed that under the conditions of tsarist Russia it would be impossible to bring that decision into effect. Plekhanov joined the Polish delegation on behalf of the Russian delegates in declaring that in view of the exceptional conditions in tsarist Russia, they "cannot concentrate all their forces exclusively on this agitation and that

*). Lenin, "First of May, a Labour Holiday", Collected Works, vol. 1.

they cannot sacrifice the life of their organisations in order to organise successful May Day demonstrations". That it was impossible to celebrate May Day under Russian conditions was considered also by other delegates. The general reply to this declaration was "naturally".

But already the next year, 1890, May Day demonstrations were organised in Russia.

In the nineties of the 19th century, the May Day celebrations assumed a mass character only in the most industrial districts of the Russia of that time — Poland. The workers of Western Russia who entered on the path of a mass revolutionary movement before the workers of Central Russia, started also the celebrations of May Day earlier than they did. The tsarist police forces prepared ahead of time for that day, they increased their vigilance over all the workers, arresting and expelling undesirable elements. Every attempt at demonstration and even peaceful strikes ended in arrests and bloodshed.

In 1890, May Day was celebrated in Warsaw, where two proclamations were issued beforehand and on May First, from eight to ten thousand workers were out on strike. In connection with this celebration, the government perpetrated mass arrests not only among workers, but also amongst the intellectuals.

The May Day celebrations of that period in Central Russia, were of a different nature. Here, during the first years when the revolutionary labour organisations existed in the form of small circles, studying the fundamental problems of the theory of the labour movement, the May Day celebrations were limited merely to secret meetings which were of a propagandist nature at which small groups of organised underground workers' circles participated.

On the First of May 1890, a revolutionary circular was disseminated in St. Petersburg records of which are to be found only in the archives of the police department. The circular said that "the last decade developed the consciousness of the Russian proletariat (the workers and peasants) to such an extent, that we may hope to celebrate our own First of May in the near future". It is possible that this circular was issued by some insignificant revolutionary circle or perhaps by some individual revolutionary working man.

The celebrations in Petersburg of the following First of May were typical of the narrow circles which existed at that time. On the First of May 1891, a group of workers and several intellectuals met in the suburbs of St. Petersburg for the purpose of celebrating the first Russian May Day. From 70 to 200 people participated. Four workers spoke. The first one was **Yegor Afanassyev**, a blacksmith, calling for a cultural struggle and political unity for the fight for Socialist ideas. The second speaker **Bogdanov**, a working man, spoke of the revolutionary skirmishes of the workers in the West and in Russia. The speaker after him, **Diener**, also a working man, spoke of the West European culture and the political demands of the workers, and finally, **Theodore Afanassyev**, a weaver, depicted the sad picture of the life of the Russian factory workers. In view of the fact that not all who wished to participate in the May Day celebration could come to that gathering, another meeting was held in some private dwelling where 60—70 people were present. At this meeting, there was only one speaker, **N. D. Bogdanov**.

In 1892, apart from the St. Petersburg and Polish workers, the First of May was celebrated in Vilna by the Jewish workers, who organised an underground meeting. The speeches delivered at that meeting were later published in pamphlet form. From those speeches it is felt that they also aspired to a knowledge of the historical processes as did the St. Petersburg workers. But from the speech of a woman worker, a new note was struck. She said: "We know perfectly well that we cannot transform everything with one blow, but we must fight for the time being with our immediate enemies, the bosses whom we have to face day in, day out." This was a result of the influence of the economists, i. e. an opportunist digression which prevailed at that time among Russian Social Democrats. According to the theory of Economism, the workers had to limit themselves to an economic struggle leading the political struggle to the Liberals.

In 1893 the First of May was celebrated for the first time in Kazan. A May Day gathering was organised. They secured boats and numerous young people and workers left early in the morning for some island under the slogans: "an eight-hour working day", "freedom of speech, strikes and assembly", "Down with the autocracy". And that First of May

the Lettish workers also celebrated for the first time. They organised a small gathering of representatives from the workers' circles of the various factories in Libau.

In 1895 Moscow, for the first time, joined in the May Day festivals. About 250 people gathered representing 30 factories and works. Speeches were held dealing with the necessity of organising the working class, the struggle for political freedom, the eight-hour working day, and the workers' successes in Moscow. May Day celebrations were also for the first time organised in **Ivanovo-Voznessensk**. The workers then organised their first organisation, known as the "Ivanovo-Voznessensk Workers' Union". May Day celebrations were held in Odessa. In the districts under the sway of the Bund, the May Day meetings were held in Vilna, Minsk, Warsaw, and Smorgni. Under the growing influence of economism, the May Day slogans were becoming more and more of an opportunist trend. Even the eight-hour day demand of the worker was discarded and replaced by the demands for a ten-hour working day.

In 1896, a May Day circular was mimeographed under the greatest difficulties. When a strike broke out in St. Petersburg within a month, the workers said that the first impulse for unity was given them by that modest circular which spoke of the difficult conditions of the workers and of the struggle with the bosses and about the organisation of the "Union of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class". That proclamation was written by Lenin in prison where he was held in connection with the Petersburg "Union of Struggle". May Day proclamations were circulated that year for the first time in **Nizhni-Novgorod** and a May Day gathering was held in **Saratov**. The celebration of May Day was becoming more general yearly.

In 1897, the Jewish and Polish workers distributed May Day proclamations very extensively. Numerous May Day gatherings were held. An attempt was made to organise a demonstration in Vilna, but it failed as the town was occupied by armed forces. May Day proclamations of the "Kiev Union of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class", just as the circular of the previous year in St. Petersburg vividly proves the extent to which the revolutionary Marxist consciousness had risen.

Shortly before the First of May of 1898, the foundation was laid of the **Russian Social Democratic Labour Party** at the First Congress in Minsk. The second period of May Day celebration in Russia begins with the foundation of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party and ends with the first Russian Revolution and is characterised by the rapid development of May Day celebrations throughout the country, which replaced the hazy slogan of political freedom by more definite ones. One of the clear political demands was the slogan "Down with autocracy". This accompanied with the transformation of the May Day celebrations into open political demonstrations, often ended in skirmishes with the police and the military forces. The tsarist government also intensified its aggressive attitude to the May Day celebrations. In addition to the arrests, searches, and beatings, the government was now organising pogroms and letting loose the black hundreds on the heads of the demonstrators. In 1898, a **national May Day Manifesto** was issued for the first time on behalf of the R.S.D.L.P. That Manifesto is very characteristic of that period of the labour movement and of the nature of the May Day celebrations in Russia at that time. In it we find for the first time definite demands for an eight hour working day, the freedom of strikes, speech, press, assembly, and organisation, the freedom of conscience and faith, equality of nationalities, the convocation of a parliament representing the people elected by means of a general secret and direct equal vote for all. That year other May Day circulars were issued by the local labour organisations. May Day was celebrated in many towns in which it had hitherto not been celebrated.

Side by side with the growth of the labour movement, the celebration of May Day was becoming more and more widespread. Instead of embracing small circles and being held secretly, the celebrations were now assuming a mass and open character.

The year 1899 was the first year in which May Day demonstrations were held on a mass scale. They were organised in Warsaw, Dombrovo, Libau, and Vilna. May Day strikes took place in Mariupol and Briansk. The extensive May Day movement of that year brought forth increased repressive measures from the Government. Prior to and soon

after the First of May, close to 250 people were arrested in St. Petersburg. Numerous searches and arrests were perpetrated in Moscow and other towns. In Kiev, 176 people were arrested and about 500 house searches were made. In Gomel 15 people were arrested, and 3 house searches made. In Odessa, 200 people were detained. In Kiev, 8 people were arrested and a red banner at a meeting discovered was confiscated by the police. The workers were arrested on the eve of May Day in Ufa. Realising its importance in staving off the labour movement by means of arrests, the government attempted that year to organise the "Black Hundreds" as a means of struggle against the Revolution. In Nikolaev, a Jewish pogrom was organised on April 19, to prevent May Day celebrations.

In 1900, demonstrations were held in Kharkov, Warsaw, Dombrovo, Vilna, Kresslavka, and Minsk. Numerous May Day leaflets were circulated and in many towns meetings were organised, some of which as for instance in Tiflis and Lodz, were attended by great multitudes. The most conspicuous celebration was that of Kharkov. In the morning of May 1st, the railroad workers formulated their demands, raised the red banner, and embarked on a procession to meet the demonstration of the machine construction workers. The police endeavoured to stop them, but the demonstration took a different road and on its way it stopped from work the workers in the Bergenheim factory. The Cossacks appeared and about 400 people were arrested. Learning of the experiences of the railroad workers, the entire machine construction factory struck. The strike was joined by the workers working in the Belgian and Helfferich Park. Simultaneously the workers of the cable factory, the typographical workers, and the workers of the numerous small shops declared a strike. The railroad workers broke through the lines of the Cossacks and joined the workers of the machine factory and the others. In that demonstration, about 10,000 people participated. The workers marched to the jail and demanded the liberation of their comrades. The next day they refused to go to work, and they forced the governor to satisfy their demands and free the arrested comrades.

The May Day demonstrations and strikes were still more widespread in 1901. First of all, we should mention the demonstration of 3000 workers in Tiflis. It ended by a drawn sabres attack on the part of the Cossacks. Twenty-four people were wounded and 40 were arrested. In St. Petersburg 15% of the Obukhov factory, did not come to work — about 1500 people. When the director of the factory wanted to discharge the most undesirable ones for participating in that demonstration, all workers struck and formulated the demand for the eight-hour working day and the reinstatement of the discharged workers. The administration refused to meet the demands and the workers marched out en masse to Shlisberg, where they were met by armed squadrons of gendarmes, two squads of soldiers and a whole regiment of police. The workers barricaded the factory gates and defended themselves with bricks and stones. "The Obukhov defence" lasted 9 hours. The workers' wives and children participated in it. A few workers were killed, many wounded, and thousands arrested. Brought before the bar, 29 workers were sentenced to hard labour and exile. A great demonstration was also organised in Warsaw in which about 10—15 thousand workers participated, and in Lodz, a meeting of about 30,000 workers was held. The May Day celebrations of that year assumed such wide dimensions, that it is impossible to give an account of the events of that day.

In 1902, May Day celebrations assumed a still wider aspect. The most momentous events took place in Saratov, Sormov, Nizhni-Novgorod and Vilna. The demonstrations in Saratov ended by the beating up of the demonstrators by the Black Hundreds and the police forces dressed in civil attire. Many of the beaten up workers were arrested. Some of the arrested, such as for instance A. E. Rykov managed to escape, while the others were exiled. The Nizhni-Novgorod police acted in a similar manner and most brutal of all were the police in Vilna. When, in spite of the most energetic measures taken by the police and the gendarmeries, under the leadership of Governor von-Wal, a demonstration took place in Vilna. Some of the most active demonstrators were beaten up and one was killed. In the evening, proclamations were circulated in the town theatre. The next day, von Wal ordered the arrested to be punished by the rod. Everyone delivered 25 to 50 blows and small boards were put in the mouths of the victims so that they could not shout. A shoemaker, Hirsch Leckert, fired at von Wal in retaliation for these brutalities. Leckert was

hanged. Similar beatings were perpetrated that year in Minsk, Ekaterinoslav, and in the Botkin factories of Viatsk gubernia.

In 1903, the police in issuing warnings about the May Day demonstrations, threatened to organise Jewish pogroms. In view of this, the demonstrations were called off in many towns. But the Caucasian Social Democratic Union organised powerful demonstrations in Tiflis, Baku, Batum and Kutais. Demonstrations were also held in Warsaw and Tomsk. In a clash between a demonstration and armed forces, one was killed and several wounded in Balakhan. If the Government succeeded by means of threatening with pogroms to prevent demonstrations that year, strikes, secret meetings and the dissemination of circulars assumed such titanic proportions as Russia had never seen before.

In 1904, May Day demonstrations were organised in Warsaw, Riga, Mitava and Gomel. A new phenomenon this year was the fact that the demonstrations in Riga and Mitava had their special fighting detachments of workers armed with bayonets, knives, sticks and stones. Thus, in connection with the celebration of the First of May, the workers, for the first time organised their armed detachments. That year many May Day strikes and meetings were organised.

The third period in the history of May Day celebrations includes the years 1905 to 1917.

The principal task of the revolutionary workers in 1905, was the preparation of an armed rising. That year the May Day celebrations were very moderate, as the Russian proletariat, being tired of the mass strikes which followed the blood bath of the 9th of January of that year, was now only marshalling its forces for a general skirmish which was to follow in the months, October and December of that year. The "Central Committee of Bolsheviki", took that situation into consideration. The proclamation issued by the Bureau jointly with the Editorial Board of the Bolshevik paper, the "Vperyod" (Forward) said:

"Against armed force we can act only if we are armed; we must demonstrate shoulder to shoulder with rifles and bullets and bombs in our hands. But the First of May of course cannot be the day of a general armed rising... It would be madness to demonstrate on the streets on the First of May; we have been exposed enough to the weapons of the hangmen; but it is untimely as yet to come out with arms. But we have a method of celebrating the international holiday of the proletariat, which is a general strike."

It is impossible to give an account of the enormous amount of May Day literature that was issued that year by the revolutionary organisations in the centre and in the provinces. In connection with the situation in 1905, many strikes and May Day gatherings were organised; only in Warsaw there was a demonstration. In dispersing the demonstration, the Cossacks charged and 30 people were killed, and about 100 wounded.

During the year between May 1st 1905 and 1st of May 1906, Russia experienced gigantic revolutionary events. The May Day celebrations in 1906 were of a mass character, although exertion of forces during the general strike and the armed rising of that year, made itself felt. There was practically a general strike in the following towns of Central Russia and Caucasia, Kazan, Ekaterinoslav, Elizavetgrad, Rostov, Poltava, Penza, Sevastopol and partly in many other towns. Even the peasants took part in many localities in the celebrations of the proletariat. The peasants participated in Plotsk, Penza, Volkov and Orenburg.

On the First of May of 1907, the Government crushed a series of risings in various parts of Russia, but its triumph was not complete. The workers did not surrender and they still carried on a desperate struggle. In general, May Day celebrations in 1907 were much weaker than in the previous year.

In 1908 the reaction celebrated its victory over the first revolution. The working class quietened down. It had not recuperated from the blows suffered nor had it gathered its forces for another struggle. The proletarian holiday also quietened down and during the years 1908—1911, there were only small May Day strikes here and there.

But in 1912, the labour movement was again at its height. The years 1912—1914, were years of revolutionary revival in Russia, and they were characterised by an increased strike movement, intensified clandestine Party activity and the appearance of illegal labour papers. The May Day celebrations in this fifth period, were also reviving.

The "Pravda" (Truth) which had only appeared recently, could not, due to the censor, develop an extensive First of May campaign, but the illegal party was busily engaged in preparations for the First of May. The tsarist secret service was also getting ready. Numerous house searches and arrests were made on the night of April 28th. The offices of the "Pravda" and the Menshevik "Zhivoye Dyelo" (The Vital Cause), were smashed. About 100 to 170,000 people participated in the May Day strike of that year throughout Russia. Attempts were also made to organise demonstrations, but they were dispersed by the mounted police.

The police were particularly active before the First of May 1914. Daily reports were coming from various towns about house searches and arrests. But in spite of all the measures taken by the police, 280,000 people participated in the May Day strike in St. Petersburg, 86,000 in Transcaucasia, 44,600 in Riga, 40,250 in Moscow, 16,000 in Reval, 15,000 in Kharkov, 9200 in Nizhni-Novgorod and Sormovo, etc. — a total of 504,190 people throughout the country according to the reports of "Tut Pravdy" (The Way of Truth).

In the summer of 1914, the world war broke out. It resulted in the collapse of the opportunist Second International. The opportunists appealed to the workers by saying that: "In view

of the extraordinary conditions to refrain from May Day celebrations'. But the revolutionary Social Democrats, as represented by the Bolsheviks, proved that not all forgot their proletarian solidarity. During the war, the First of May slogan calling for the overthrow of the autocracy, was merged with the slogans of protest against the imperialist war. The First of May circular issued by the Central Committee in 1915, said that "on May 1st, every proletarian realises that the proletarian victory can be secured only through a firm international solidarity and adherence to the proletarian slogans". In Moscow, 100,000 more people participated in the May Day strike than in 1914, in Petrograd 35,000 struck and about 300 people were arrested.

In 1916, regardless of the mass arrests, effected by the police, the May Day strike in Moscow affected not only private factories and works, but also some of the ammunition factories.

The May Day celebrations in Russia were a school in which the revolutionary consciousness and the bellicose habits of the Russian proletariat were formed, which were later splendidly applied in the March and October Revolution of 1917, and later in the construction and defence of the Soviet Union.

Proclamation of the Russian Workers on 1. May).*

To the people on 1. May!

In vain the Russian government mocks the Russian people by imposing taxes and penalties, by crushing their human rights, by reducing their share of the soil, by maintaining caste differences, by encouraging the employers to reduce the wages of their workers, and by every means known to despotism. All this is done in order that our people shall not be able to go beyond the limits of their serfdom, to prevent their overstepping these limits, at least legally. But the day is coming when the Russian people awakens out of its century long sleep, seizes the Russian

rulers in its mighty hands, and drives away that band of robbers which the simple minded still call a government. This day is not far distant. In the course of the last few decades the consciousness of the Russian proletariat of the workers and peasants has developed so rapidly that we may hope for our own 1. May in a not too distant future. Only let us be sensible, let us wait until our organisation has sufficient members of its own to begin with serious action.

This is the first proclamation issued by the "first Russian anti-government Workers' League", written and printed under the most difficult conditions, in one night. At the present time the league has 800 members.

* Copy of the proclamation issued in 1890, found in the archives of the Petrograd police.

Brothers! Till our next meeting in the near future!
Workers.

Speeches Delivered by four Russian Workers at an illegal Meeting held on 1. May 1892.

We publish the following speeches, which give a clear idea of the conditions under which the struggle of the working class in Russia began. These speeches of four Russian workers were delivered 35 years ago. They characterise more clearly than anything else the path to victory trodden since that time by the Russian proletariat under the leadership of Lenin and his Party. Ed.

Speech delivered by the workman N. D. BOGDANOV*).

Comrades. Today must be an unforgettable day for us. Today we have been successful, for the first time, in gathering together from every part of Petersburg in this modest meeting, and for the first time we hear the enthusiastic words of our fellow workers, calling upon us to take up the fight against our mighty political and economic enemy. Comrades, this enemy is so powerful, we know so little where his power lies, and our own comrades are so few, that some of us have not been able to help despairing of our victory, and have left our ranks in fear and despair. But no, comrades, we must have faith in our

victory. We must arm ourselves with that most powerful of weapons, the weapon of knowledge of the historical laws of the development of the human race. Only when we are armed with this weapon can we defeat the enemy everywhere. No pressure which can be put upon us, no enforced loss of liberty, no prison, and not even banishment to Siberia, can deprive us of this weapon. Wherever we are we shall find opportunity of laying the foundations of our victory, and everywhere we shall spread abroad our knowledge: at home we can enlighten the peasantry, and in the prisons we can help our fellow prisoners to the knowledge that they too are human beings with human rights, and that they must pass on their recognition of these rights to their fellows, and organise them in groups.

Speech delivered by the workman W. PROSCHIN.

It is a great pity, comrades, that we must content ourselves with looking forward to a better future, that it is impossible for us to follow the example of the workers in the Western countries and to gather together on the 1. May for a common celebration, but can only meet on Sunday. It need not be said that we are all perfectly aware that we cannot make demonstrations of the kind possible to the workers of the West, I believe we all cannot but draw comparisons between our forces and those of our Western fellow workers, but I hope that there is not one amongst us who

* All these speeches, with the exception of the last, have been somewhat abbreviated

feels that our small number gives us any reason to despair, for we have among us such forces and energies that we have no cause to lose courage on account of this comparison, but must only remember that we are just beginning.

The workers of the West are suffering as we are under the yoke of the capitalist system, that is, the system under which all the products of labour produced by the workers are sold by the manufacturer for his own profit, whilst the workers are only paid so much for their work as will prevent them from starving. But the workers are not content with the injustice of such a state of society, in which they are deprived of the fruit of their labour; they have thought deeply on the position in which they find themselves, and have come to the conclusion that the sole means of escape from this position is the mental development of the people, for everything depends on this development.

Having once come to this conclusion, the workers of the West have not contented themselves with expressing it in mere words, but are endeavouring to develop themselves and others, and to form united organisations; they have common funds, enabling them to publish books and newspapers for the spread of their ideas; they support strikes, although they do not regard strikes as an effectual means of abolishing the injustices of society, seeing that even a successful strike can do no more than improve the position of the workers, without emancipating them from the yoke of capitalism. They have become stronger and stronger, thanks to their energetic activities, and from time to time they have seized opportunities of letting society and the government feel their power, and have brought forward their demands. And the government has already seen itself obliged to grant some of these demands. For instance, a constitution has been granted, under which the continuance of the struggle with the existing state of society is made considerably easier.

One of the means which the workers of the West employ to show their power, and to lend at the same time weight to one of their main demands, is the great demonstration on 1. May. They have used this demonstration for demanding the legalisation of the eight hour day. If we compare last year's demonstration with this year's, we see that the forces of the working class of the West have developed to such an extent that we may hope that a not too distant future will witness the building up, by the workers, of that better and juster state of society for which they are fighting.

If we turn to our own workers, we see that these too are suffering under the knout of exploitation with the difference that among us the exploitation system rages practically without hindrance, for our workers are kept in such a state of ignorance and restraint by the pressure of the government and the employers, that they are unable to offer any resistance to the robbery being committed by the capitalists, who are thus encouraged to oppress them with ever growing ruthlessness.

As you know only too well, the government punishes with banishment and imprisonment the very slightest utterance of discontent with the present unjust conditions, whether this utterance be made by workers, or by those intellectuals who are sincerely anxious — and to whom we are grateful for their help — to aid with their knowledge and power the struggle of the workers against the present predatory system. But I hope, comrades, that these measures of the government will not intimidate any of us, but will rather increase our hatred of the existing system under which such measures are possible, and will increase our desire to fight on towards a state of society in which there shall be neither rich nor poor, and where all enjoy equal happiness and content.

Comrades, we shall carry on the fight which we have begun against the present unjust state of society, and shall press forward, teaching and helping one another, towards the realisation of liberty, truth, and fraternity.

Speech delivered by the workman FEDOR AFANANASEV.

Comrades. When we examine our position, we find that all our sufferings arise out of the present economic system.

Therefore, if we are to improve our position, we must work for the overthrow of the present economic system, with its freely licensed exploitation, and must substitute for it the juster socialist system.

But the realisation of such a state of society means that we must first have those political rights of which we are deprived at present. We shall not attain these political rights until we are supported by a political organisation of such strength that the government cannot venture to reject its demands, and which then submits the following demands to the government:

Firstly, the granting of a constitution based on general and direct suffrage, that is, the whole of the laws of the country are not made according to the will of the Tsar, but are exclusively confirmed or abolished by the supreme legislative assembly, consisting of deputies elected by the people.

The elections to the legislative assembly must be carried out by the people, and every citizen, with the exception of those who have forfeited civil rights, must be able to vote for a deputy to the legislative assembly, or to be elected himself as deputy. The government is responsible for the maintenance of the deputies, and must pay them salaries. This is necessary, since the deputies must be able to devote themselves entirely to the cause of the people, without personal cares.

The second necessity is that the size of the army be determined by the assembly of deputies, and that the army thus determined can be dissolved at any time. In order to prevent the soldiers from forgetting that they too are the people, and that the interests of the people are their interests, the period of military service must be made as short as possible, and must be organised to the greatest possible extent in such a manner that every soldier can serve his term of service in his native place, and can maintain his relations with his family during this time. A soldier, having realised his solidarity with the people, will then never become an enemy of the people. This is of the utmost importance if the government is to be prevented from forcing the citizens, by means of the power lent it by the army, to accept laws which have either not been confirmed or have been cancelled by the assembly of deputies. In order that all the enactments of the legislative assembly be carried out, it is further necessary that all persons holding high positions of state be appointed and dismissed by the assembly of deputies.

The third necessity is the freedom of election agitation, freedom of speech and press, that is, the abolition of the censor, so that everyone may express his convictions in speech or writing, without fear of punishment, and the deposit of a sum as surety is not required for the publication of a book or newspaper, so that the workers may be enabled to bring out publications.

Fourthly: Right of combination and to hold meetings.

Fifthly: Freedom of religion.

Sixthly: free and liberal education for the people.

Seventhly: every offence to be tried before a jury.

Comrades, do not forget these demands, for they are the first and most important demands which we shall lay before the government on the first opportunity; and then we shall first have all that is contained in these demands.

Having gained these rights, we shall be able to elect to the legislative assembly such deputies as will pass and confirm only such laws as serve the interests of the majority of the people, and will repeal all laws derogatory to the interests of the people. In this way we shall attain the possibility of re-organising the present economic system into a better and more just state of a society.

Speech delivered by the workman IGOR AFANASEV.

Comrades, I should like to speak a few words on this occasion, so solemn to all of us, which we are celebrating after the example set us by our brothers, the West European workers.

Brothers, let us enjoy the first bright moments of joy dawning on the horizon of Russian life. Although our Western brothers have long been able to celebrate such festivals, whilst we are only just beginning, and even that illegally, still it is good that we are actually beginning. It is good that we are at last awakening from the long sleep which we have slept beneath the yoke of our rulers, of the priests, and of the Tsar. We are beginning to awaken, and to the Russian worker this

means that he is taking part in the general advance. For nothing happens all at once in this world, comrades, but everything develops according to certain natural laws. And human genius cannot grasp everything at once, cannot guess everything in advance, but recognises the sacred truth but gradually. The most laborious work must first be gone through, humanity must be aroused to full consciousness, and guided upon the path of real progress and happiness.

It need not be said, comrades, that this happiness is not easy of attainment; humanity has to pay dearly for it. We can see this even among our West European brothers. Though they have won a power and freedom which are in themselves a great part of happiness, they have paid for them dearly enough in blood. They have fought long for the small share of happiness which they enjoy. They have struggled for decades, with their weapons in their hands, for liberty, justice, equality, and fraternity. But we see, comrades, that now their demands are being legally recognised, their right to strike, their funds, co-operatives and unions, their libraries and other social institutions. We have none of these things, for we have not fought for them.

With us, as you well know, the slightest mention of the rights of the people is regarded as insurrection, punished by the knout, the bayonet, banishment, imprisonment, and penal servitude. In the West our fellow workers enjoy full political rights. But we are serfs, slaves. We must bow down before every police constable. In England, France, Germany, Belgium, and other European states, the workers are free citizens with equal rights. We may judge of the strength of the workers by last year's election to the German parliament; the workers cast about one and a half million votes for their leaders. The total number of voters is 7 millions; so that one fifth of the population is on the side of the workers, under their influence. This enables them to have 104 newspapers of their own, with 600,000 subscribers. Their common funds totalled 37,000 marks in 1880, 95,000 marks in 1883, 188,000 in 1887, and 390,000 marks last year.

You see, comrades, how the workers have developed the party which they have created, until it has become a power which neither the exploiters, nor the government itself and its armies, is able to subdue. See, comrades, how their strength has increased since 1848, since the day on which the cry of: "Workers of the world, unite!" was first sent forth into the world. Comrades, these mighty words were born of the human mind. The human mind is the sower of this sacred truth, and it has sown this seed over almost the whole world since the sixties and seventies. The seed has fallen even in our backward Russia, at first among the ranks of the young people who are joining forces with us — youth is our best friend — and through them the truth has come to us.

We see how the small seeds thus scattered have sprung up, how their fruit is maturing and finding its way into every part of Russia. The truth is spreading, but everywhere it finds enemies in its path: the great landowners, the priests, the rulers, and the Tsar, with their police and their soldiery. A mighty battle is being fought. Tens of thousands of our youth have already perished in the snows of Siberia, in the dungeons of the Peter Paul fortress and the Schlüsselberg. Let us begin to fight for our cause ourselves. The commencement will not be

easy. Every step we take, every small advance, is threatened with banishment and prison. But can we shrink back, comrades, when it is a question of life and death? Must we not admit that the condition into which our exploiters and the government have reduced us is merely a vegetating?

Comrades, you see for yourselves that the most frightful economic distress prevails all over Russia, both among the industrial and the agricultural workers. The whole country is filled with lamentation.

"This lamentation we call a song", says Vekrajov; and truly this seems to be so, for although poverty and misery have already spread far and wide, this has not satisfied our rulers; representatives of the nobility have been appointed as officials, that the workers may be more brutally treated, that starvation and misery, disease and death, may reap a greater harvest among our women and children. Like leeches they suck our blood; they transform us into a different race of human beings, pale, weak, and diseased. And to what end? That a small handful of factory owners, landowners, officials, and the Tsar, may live in luxury, drunkenness, and gluttony. For these brute beasts the hundreds of millions of the people are to languish in the fetters of serfdom. In these chains we cannot rise, cannot move, cannot breathe.

Comrades, brothers. Are we not human beings who are being thus humiliated? Is it not human dignity which is here crushed into ignominious slavery? And our oppressors pretend that this is as it should be. They tyrannise us our whole lives, they do not even permit us to observe clearly the injustice of our social position; they console us, who have suffered for centuries, with a repetition of a hope that we shall be happier in Heaven, for so long as we believe this they can live on in peace and continue to suck our blood. But no, we do not believe these fairy tales any longer. We know that we too are human beings. But we are still slaves of the Tsar, without rights, we still bear the stigma of serfdom. We shall wash away this stigma. We shall gain the rights due to us as human beings, that we may live in a manner worthy of human beings: think, speak, meet together, consult on our social questions, without being hindered by spies and treacherous police agents.

Comrades, at first we shall find it difficult indeed to take up this struggle against our enemies, and to fight for our economic and political rights. But remember that at the present moment there are thousands of intellectuals in Siberia, in prisons, in penal servitude, and that they are there for our sakes. Remember that it has not been easy for our brothers, the workers of Western Europe, to improve their position, and that it cannot be easy for us to improve ours under the rule of the despotic reaction which dogs our every footstep.

Comrades, the difficulties will be great. But science has freed the workers of the West; and it will also enlighten our minds, and fill our hearts with sacred truth and love for one another. Brothers, we shall fight for justice, without recoiling one step backwards. We shall fight to the death for truth, liberty, and fraternity. We shall teach ourselves and our comrades to unite; we shall join together in one mighty party. Brothers, we shall sow this wonderful seed from sunrise to sunset, in every part of our Russian earth.

Speech Delivered by Sun-Yat-Sen at a Meeting of Chinese Workers on 1. May 1924.

Comrades, we meet here to-day to celebrate the first of May as the workers in other countries celebrate it. Why do the workers of the whole world celebrate the 1. May? Because 39 years ago the American workers organised themselves, made a demonstration, and demanded the eight hour day from their employers: 8 hours work, 8 hours rest, and 8 hours for education. This led to the abolition of slave labour. Therefore the American workers celebrate this anniversary. As result of this the May day celebration spread to Europe, and the European workers began to make the same demands as the American workers. The European workers, like the American, have been

victorious in this struggle. the May day celebration has become customary among the European workers, and has spread all over the world. The May day celebration is a victory won by the working class over the capitalists, and therefore we must welcome it.

When the workers of China celebrate this anniversary, they must remember the position of the Chinese workers. If we are to understand the position of the Chinese workers, we must first understand the position of China at the present time. China is to-day the poorest and weakest of countries, and is under the yoke of the imperialist Powers. The position of

China is much worse than that of many colonial countries. Thus, for instance, Korea is a colony of Japan, Indochina a colony of France. Korea and Indochina play no rôle of importance among the peoples of the world. But since Korea and Indochina are each the enslaved countries of one power, then each is subject to the yoke of that one power only. China, on the other hand, has been made the slave of many countries by the unequal treaties concluded by the Manchu dynasty. These unequal treaties have robbed the Chinese people of many rights, and differ in nothing from treaties over the sale of slaves. Thirteen years ago we overthrew the Manchu dynasty, and freed ourselves in one respect, but we did not succeed in abolishing the unequal treaties, and therefore we have remained slaves as before. At one time we were under a double yoke; now it is a single yoke, but still we have many masters to serve, and therefore our position is much worse than that of Korea or Indochina. You must remember that it is more difficult to serve many masters than one. There is a Chinese proverb which says: If you satisfy your mother-in-law, still you have not yet satisfied your wife. China is in this position, and has much more to suffer than Korea or Indochina. As a result of this position of China other nations despise the Chinese people.

Comrades, if we are to celebrate the 1. May as it should be celebrated, we must be organised. The other civilised countries have their labour organisations. The Chinese workers have taken over the strike from other countries, and again we take this May Day celebration from the workers of other lands. What is the position of the workers in the different countries? In the civilised countries the workers have their organisations. What is the object of these labour organisations? The workers organise to fight against the capitalists because of the injustice suffered by the workers in this world. The capitalists of the civilised countries treat their workers with increasing cruelty, and therefore the workers of these countries are fighting against the capitalists, and to change these conditions. Such conditions obtain in all countries, and therefore the workers of all countries are uniting in a common fight against the capitalists.

The character of capitalism has been changed by the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution changed the methods of production, and developed industry from handicraft production. Factory production has accelerated the speed of production by the introduction of machinery, and the owners of the machinery have thus become capitalists. The capitalists utilise their wealth for the exploitation of the workers, and extend their power to other countries. The difference between the foreign and the Chinese workers consists of the fact that the workers of other countries are under the yoke of their own capitalists, and are in such special circumstances that their governments issue laws regulating the exploitation of labour. The workers of other countries, therefore, though exploited by their capitalists, enjoy a certain measure of protection from their governments. In China industry is not much developed. In China there are no great native capitalists as in other countries. Production by machinery is the foundation of the capitalist exploitation of the working masses. The Chinese workers are not subject to exploitation at the hands of Chinese capitalists, as there are no great capitalists in China. By whom is the Chinese worker then exploited, under what yoke is he crushed? In other countries the workers are exploited by their own capitalists, but the Chinese are exploited by foreign capitalists. That is the difference between the position of the Chinese workers and that of foreign workers.

How are the Chinese workers exploited by foreign capitalists? The Chinese worker has no clear conception of this exploitation, and therefore he cannot realise the difficulty of the position. What are the means employed by the foreign capitalists for the exploitation of the Chinese workers? They accomplish this by means of the import of foreign goods under the protection of the Chinese government. The aid given by the Chinese government to foreign capitalists is shown in the custom duties. The Chinese government grants many privileges to the foreign capitalists, and the unequal treaties of which we have spoken enable the Chinese tariff system, in the hands of foreign capitalists, to be an efficient means of exploitation. All the export and import duties are collected by foreigners, and what they collect they keep. The tariffs of other countries impose duties on imported goods, but not on exported goods. This enables the price of foreign goods to be raised, so that native goods

can be sold cheaper. This arrangement protects native goods against the competition of foreign goods. The immediate protection afforded to home products by a high protective tariff for foreign products signifies an indirect protection of the interests of the workers of the country concerned.

We have lost our protective tariffs, and with them the means of protecting our industry. The absence of protective duties enables foreign goods to penetrate into China. The population buys the foreign goods, for they are cheap, and do not buy Chinese goods. In this way the Chinese workers suffer indirectly. Before the Europeans forced their way in, the Chinese workers supported themselves by agriculture and handicrafts, but since China has been opened up to foreign countries, the competition of foreign goods has made it impossible for the Chinese masses to earn their living. In China there are foreign notes in circulation, and these reduce the value of the Chinese currency. Formally, China is an independent country, but in reality it is a colony, oppressed by economic dependence; therefore the Chinese workers are not able to gain the means of existence.

Trade consists of the exchange of goods required by the various countries. China imports industrial products and exports raw materials. Its trade balance is however adverse to the amount of 500 million dollars, which means that China loses to the extent of 500 million dollars yearly. Formerly the Chinese workers did not suffer from foreign oppression, but now the adverse trade balance presses like a heavy burden upon their wages. China's trade balance was not always so adverse. Ten years ago the deficit was 200 million dollars; now it is 500 million, and if it continues to increase at this rate, it will have reached a milliard ten years hence. A trade balance adverse to the amount of 500 millions is a heavy disadvantage to us; what will be our situation when the deficit is doubled? Our greatest difficulties lie still before us. How can we fight against them? The workers of other countries are oppressed by their capitalists, the Chinese workers by foreign capitalists. Remember the difference between the Chinese and the foreign workers. The foreign capitalists suppress the Chinese intellectuals, the peasantry, and the trades people.

Comrades, how can we combat this economic slavery, and attain a position equal to that of the foreign workers? Foreign workers find protection with the governments of their countries, and have therefore not so much to fear the prospect of an economic situation so difficult as ours. The foreign workers have made use of their liberties, and have organised labour unions. In Russia the organised workers have overthrown the autocracy and established the dictatorship of the proletariat, under which all power is in the hands of the workers. Just imagine the position of the Russian workers at the present time. In this manner the position of the workers in the different countries improves gradually, and they can better solve the difficult problems by which they are faced.

If the Chinese workers want to pursue the same course as the workers of other countries, to solve their difficult problems, and to prevent the rise of Chinese capitalism, that is not so difficult; but we must go still further, we must save the 500 million dollars lost by the adverse trade balance.

The Chinese capitalists are not strong enough to exploit the Chinese workers. The Chinese workers are exploited by foreign capitalists, and the workers here gathered together must seek for means of protection against foreign capitalist oppression. The Chinese workers fail to observe the yoke of foreign capital and which oppresses the Chinese capitalists also. The abolition of the Chinese capitalists is no solution of the problem. The Chinese workers must free themselves from all economic exploitation.

What prevents them from emancipating themselves immediately from economic exploitation? The fact that the exploitation is being exercised, not by Chinese, but by foreign imperialists. If the adverse trade balance is to be swept away, we must have the Chinese customs in our hands. The unequal treaties which have been made permit the customs revenues to be collected by foreign powers, and therefore we must endeavour to annul these treaties. Can the workers help in this matter? If we are to be victorious, the workers must organise. The workers and students are organised. The trades people are not organised to the same extent, and the peasantry are not organised at all. Hence it is the workers and students who must

fight for the annulment of the unjust treaties. Comrades, all of you present at this meeting are workers, and represent a part of the nation. A heavy responsibility rests with the Chinese workers, and if you prove worthy of this responsibility, China will become a great nation and her workers a mighty power. Therefore we must free ourselves from foreign oppression, and declare war against the foreign capitalists. The goal aimed at by the Chinese workers and the workers of other countries is the same, and Chinese and foreign workers must join their forces. To be victorious, we must have the same revolutionary courage as that shown by the revolutionists in 1911. With such a heroic courage we can free ourselves from foreign imperialism and from the unequal treaties. If we pursue this line of action, China will be raised to the same stage of development as other countries. The inequality of China's position has arisen owing to the rule of international capitalism in China. It is not difficult

for the workers to free themselves from such a yoke. The workers of Russia and of Great Britain set us a good example. If you take responsibility on yourselves as the Russian and British workers have done, you must follow my three principles and five rules.

Comrades, if you follow the three principles which I have laid down, you will attain the same position as that reached by the workers of Russia and England.

The economic struggle for shorter working hours and are other much more important political tasks. In the pursuance higher wages is not the only problem confronting you; there of your political aims you must follow my three principles, and support the revolution. If you come to the aid of the revolution, and follow my three principles, then the meeting of to-day will achieve good results.