

The Constituent Assembly

By N. I. Hourwich

THE slogan of a Constituent Assembly has become an "international" slogan of all those forces who are united by a common hatred towards the proletarian revolutionary conquests, towards the coming final victory of the working class, its final emancipation from the yoke of capitalism.

Reactionaries and obscurants in all countries are striving to cover up their counter-revolutionary aims and "innermost hopes" with this so "democratically" sounding slogan; the slogan of a Constituent Assembly has been advanced by international capitalism protecting its "rights and sanctities" from proletarian aggressions; under the cover of this slogan, finally, have taken refuge all "had-beens" from the camp of the social-traitors and social-patriots, who have gone over to serve capitalism. . . .

The slogan: "Constituent Assembly" has, indeed, become the battle cry of the aggressive international capitalism, of the world's reaction.

And this is very significant, since it symbolizes a new epoch in world's history which humanity entered upon—an era of proletarian "self-definition" and era of Socialist revolution, or to be more correct, of *one great world Socialist revolution*, in contradistinction to the bourgeois revolution of the past, whose chief task was the destruction of feudalism,—as it were, a "paving the way" for an unobstructed march of "triumphant capitalism."

This entering the new era of the revolutionary war of the *proletariat against the bourgeoisie* is characterized first of all by a complete *breaking away* of the working class from all bourgeois classes and their hirelings. The slogan of the past revolutions—"Constituent Assembly," which is intended to unite the bourgeoisie and the working class, is set against another slogan—*dictatorship of the proletariat*—all power to the Soviets of workmen's deputies—a slogan which draws a sharp demarkation line between these classes, in fact, creating between them an impassable gulf.

The struggle between these two slogans and the social forces rallying around each of them, represented in fact, the substance of all that colossal, in truth, *historical*, struggle which was going on in Russia during a period of eight months, from the moment of the March revolution up to the victorious proletarian revolution of November, 1917, which put an end to all

sorts of sentimental dreams about "co-operation between the classes." . . .

The same struggle is developing before our eyes now in Germany.

The German Junkers the yesterday's spokesmen and preachers of the "divine right" of kings' absolutism; the German bourgeoisie only the other day, reluctant to concede a trifle of their class privileges, and who furiously fought against equal franchise reform, all of them, suddenly conceived a great faith in the "people," demonstrating unusual sympathies for the Constituent Assembly! They, as was also the case in Russia, have been joined, of course by the Kaiser's lackeys and bourgeois hirelings, social-patriots, Scheidemanns. In them, in those "his majesty's Socialists" the German junkers and the bourgeoisie, who had finally and forever discredited themselves in the eyes of the people's masses, have found "deserved" and "in honor" faithful fighters for their "ideals" and aspirations.

At the other side of the pole around the slogan of "all power to the Soviets" have united the revolutionary-Socialist elements of Germany, the Bolshevik group "Spartacus," headed by Karl Liebknecht.

Thus, as in Russia, this struggle *between the bourgeoisie and proletariat* has assumed in Germany the *ostentatious aspect of a struggle between "two factions of the Socialist Party"—between social-patriots and revolutionary Socialists (Bolsheviks)*.

And, as in Russia, this struggle between two factions at first brings "victory" to the social-patriots, opportunist elements in the labor movement. Judging from the newspaper reports, the predominant majority in the All-German Congress of Soviets of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, having its sessions in Berlin at present appeared to be on the side of the Liebert-Scheidemann party. Liebknecht has not succeeded in attending the congress. The congress rejected a resolution recommending to "bar the bourgeoisie from participation in the political life," i.e., plainly speaking, *deprive the bourgeoisie of its political rights*. The preponderate majority has expressed itself for the calling of the Constituent Assembly.

Socialist-opportunists during decades, were in Germany the official leaders of the labor movement, the "intellectual masters" of the proletarian masses. Their

shameless behavior during the war at one time drew the masses away from them. But, being shrewd politicians, they succeeded in the period immediately following the revolution, by a few adroit manoeuvres, to strengthen their position already shattered by the people's mistrust. "Frightening" the masses of the people by telling them that "excessive revolutionism" might result in Allied intervention and famine, they managed to keep themselves in power—and now at the congress they have the majority on their side.

But it is not difficult to foretell that this is merely a temporary victory, that the same causes which destroyed the illusions of the Russian workers and forced the latter finally to go over to the Bolsheviks and to support them—will play an analogous role in Germany, too. Already Germany has her own Kornilovs, in the persons of Hindenburgs, Mackenses and other generals, former associates of the Kaiser. Already the German bourgeoisie in their desire to crush the "revolutionary hydra," calls for help her yesterday's "foreign foe"—the Allied troops.

And the Allies, on their part, very hastily removed their "democratic" armor and spoke to the German people in a language far from being democratic. All this cannot but influence the working masses in the sense of sobering them to a large extent.

And the indications of such a change are already on the surface.

Rather significant is the report of the Berlin correspondent of the Times, whose sympathies are, of course, wholly on the side of Scheidemann, telling about the success of the latter within the halls of the congress sessions. This correspondent adds melancholically: "Liebknecht commands the streets and has his agents in the congress who may easily break it up." And further: "The minority Socialists have given fresh evidence that they are not as powerless as 'Vorwaerts' would have us believe." However even this "organ of the majority begins to doubt the success of elections to the National Assembly."

The same pessimistic tone can also be detected in the speech of one of the "industrial kings" of Germany, the head of the General Electric Company—Rathenau.

All evidence goes to show that the "victory" of the social patriotic "majority" is not more than a "Pyrrh victory."