

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

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THE REAL WAR FOR FREEDOM.

The War with the Central Empires is over, but the real war for freedom is only beginning.

The noisy crowds that rushed out to make holiday, cheering and flag-wagging when the news came that the armistice had been signed, failed to realise that this thing they were celebrating was no military victory, but the fruits of the Russian Revolution, which has evoked a workers' revolution also in Germany. The German Revolution is beginning; the moderate reformists are struggling now to protect the citadel of capitalism from utter destruction. That Prince Henry of Prussia, in escaping, sought to protect himself by hoisting a red flag to his motor, shows, more clearly than many a more important incident, the revolutionary temper of the German masses.

When the Kaiser abdicated and the Crown Prince renounced his right of succession, when Prince Max resigned the Chancellorship, and appointed to take his place one who was termed a Socialist, the old authorities still hoped to preserve the capitalist structure. The Decree of Abdication announced that, instead of a republic, a regency was to be set up, and it was rumoured that Prince Max of Baden was to be regent. Ebert, who became the new Chancellor (we refer to these things in the past tense because events are moving so rapidly that by to-morrow the situation may be absolutely changed), is described as a "Moderate Socialist." A "Moderate Socialist" is frequently not a Socialist at all. Ebert was not chosen as Chancellor by the German people at large, nor by the Socialist Party; he was appointed by Prince Max, no doubt because he was regarded as a fairly safe man and one of the lesser evils in these troublous times. In his first proclamation, Ebert announced his forthcoming Government, not as a Socialist Government, but a "People's Government" "formed in accord with the Parties." That obviously meant a Coalition Government of Socialists and non-Socialists. In a later proclamation he stated: "The Social Democratic Party has undertaken the Government and has invited the Independent Socialists to enter the Government with equal rights." That Ebert should find it necessary to issue a proclamation assuring the people that the independent Socialists, the Liebknecht Party, were to enter the Government with equal rights, is proof that the Independents possess the confidence of the masses. But though Ebert stated that the Social Democratic Party had undertaken the Government he was still evidently referring to a coalition, for a Reuter telegram sent on November 10th—the same day that the news of this proclamation was wired—stated that Erzberger of the Centre Party; Gothein, Progressive, and Baron von Richthofen are to enter the new Government as representatives of non-Socialist parties. The Independent Socialists were to have three seats in the Government—a minority representation which would have left them powerless.

Prince Max, in announcing the Kaiser's abdication, also promised the immediate grant of "general suffrage" and the erection of a Constituent Assembly, which would finally

settle the future form of German government. The German workers, having seen their Russian comrades dissolve a similar Assembly, are hardly likely to be satisfied with this. Ebert's proclamations were not inspiring. His main appeal to the people was: "Leave the streets, preserve calm and order." He promised peace, freedom, and autonomy, and referred to the changes as a "political revolution." Evidently the need for a social and economic revolution had no immediate appeal for him.

The programme which Prince Max and Ebert put forward was not accepted by the Independent Socialists, who insisted that Germany should become a Socialist Republic, that the Executive, Legislative and Jurisdictionary power should be in the hands of persons elected by the workers and soldiers, and that representatives of the capitalist classes should have no part in the government.

The one-time majority Socialists, Ebert, Scheideman and the rest, who supported the Government through four years of war, refused to accede to the demands of the Independents on the ground that they meant "the dictatorship of one class, which is in opposition to democratic principles." Under Socialism there will be, there can be, but one class; those who use this argument do not contemplate the actual establishment of Socialism.

The example of Russia had evidently failed to convince the "social patriots."

The Revolution is being effected in Germany, as in Russia, not by the compromising politicians who seek to control it, but by the masses, by the workers who have downed tools and in doing so have risked their liberty, even their very lives, and by the soldiers who have made common cause with them. When the German workers struck in support of their Russian comrades who were striving for peace at Brest-Litovsk, the Government threatened and punished them, the Majority Socialists urged them back to work, and the trade union leaders refused them strike pay. To-day matters are gone too far for that. The workers are well organised; therefore the politicians strive to humour them.

Workers' and Soldiers' Councils are arising throughout Germany and are taking over both the local and national Government, as they have done in Russia. It seems that in Berlin the workers and soldiers captured the majority of the public buildings with little difficulty, there being, indeed, no force to repel them. When they reached the Reichstag building they were met by Scheidemann, the Majority Socialist leader, who told them that the Kaiser had abdicated and that Ebert had been charged to form a new government. Scheidemann called this a "splendid victory for the German people." As usual, the "moderate" politicians had been busy making a compromise, and whilst the people outside had secured the power to dictate, Scheidemann and his colleagues had been bargaining away the victory of the workers and soldiers for a regency and a coalition! But the matter could not rest there: the workers refused to accept the compromise.

Finding the Independent Socialist, obdurate, the old Majority Party, which is really the Committee of the Social Democratic Party, agreed that a Socialist Cabinet should be formed, in which the capitalist parties should have no representation. It should consist of three Independent Socialists and three members of the Social Democratic Party, who, as the People's Commissaries, would have equal authority; each of these Ministers to have two assistants of equal standing, one drawn from the Independents, one from the S.D.P.; Ministers occupying technical posts to be mere technical assessors to the Government. The Government is to be responsible to the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils in which all political authority is to be vested. The Councils are to be summoned forthwith to a Plenary Assembly. A compromise has been arrived at on the question of a Constituent Assembly, which is to be left over for decision until the power of the revolution has been consolidated.

The Social Democratic Party has nominated Ebert, Scheidemann, and Landsberg to represent it. The Independents have chosen Barth, Dittmann, and Hasse.

Where is Liebknecht? His is the name for which all are looking. We think that he is not yet satisfied; that he regards the S.D.P. as representing capitalist interests still and refuses to enter a Coalition with it. We think that there is a party of German Socialists still more independent than the Independent Social Democrats.

THE ARMISTICE.

In spite of the fact that this has been advertised as a war of democracy against autocracy, the vast changes taking place in Germany do not appear to have modified the determination of the Allied Governments to punish and to chain up the Germans as though they were wild beasts preparing to spring. Mr. Lloyd George on Saturday, at the Guildhall declared "Germany, with the full assent of her people, committed this atrocious crime against humanity." That it is not so. He knows that the people of Germany were not consulted in the declaration of war. They were presented with an accomplished fact. Moreover, the Government of Germany, like the Governments of all the belligerents, by the censorship and by various War Acts, such as the Defence of the Realm Act, took pains to allow the peoples to be familiarised only with the official version of the War.

Sir Auckland Geddes, who followed, clearly showed that it is the German people who have given to the Allies this victory, which, but for the internal convulsion in Germany, would certainly have been delayed for many months. Sir Auckland Geddes said:—

"A very interesting thing happened not a fortnight ago. Those of us who were charged with the responsibility waited hourly for the possibility of a naval Armageddon. The whole stage was set for a great sea battle but something went wrong. The arm that was going to try a last desperate gambling stroke was paralysed. The German navy, I am as convinced as I know I am standing here this night, was ordered out and the men would not go. (Cheers.)

"About eight months ago a similar thing happened on a small scale. It was after the time of the actions of Ostend and Zeebrugge—I can tell now what I could not tell then—that the gradual ringing in of the German forces day and night the activity in the Bight resulted in a loss in the first six months of this year of over 100 surface craft. Then gradually the British navy drove its steel into the vitals of the German navy and the small craft minelayers, mine-sweepers, patrol boats and escort craft could not stand it and they mutinied. The first mutiny of the German fleet was put down. The present mutiny has not been put down. To-day half the German fleet is flying the Red Flag because it realises that it is not engaged in a good cause."

Mr. Churchill, in a speech to the Board of Management Representation Committee, at the Ministry of Munitions, on November 7th, placed an interpretation upon the armistice terms which cannot be ignored by Socialists and those who desire the freedom of peoples:—

"Although the conditions of the armistice will be such that Germany comes to the council table handcuffed incapable of resuming the struggle, yet we shall not be entitled to dismiss altogether from our minds the possibility of considerable disorders breaking out. At any rate it would be prejudicial to the chances of reaching a solid peace if it were thought we had so far dislocated our military machinery as ourselves not to be capable of resuming the struggle. We have to stand on guard until everything is finally settled.

"Consider the broad aspect of the world. It is very dangerous. We have overthrown these guilty nations and Empires, and they are collapsing into ruin which can hardly be measured—into a complete breakdown of the authority in whom the peoples have lost confidence, by whom the peoples have been led into this career of crime and to this disastrous result. A complete breakdown is threatened, or is operative, over the great military nations with whom we have been warring, of respect for the constituted authorities. That is formidable when you consider how many millions of the human race are involved. Russia, Persia,

the Balkans, Turkey, China, and Mexico are all in various stages of anarchy disorder and distress. Russia is the most melancholy spectacle of weltering chaos which a vast community has ever presented and I cannot feel that the victorious Powers can possibly divest themselves of great responsibilities in amending the state into which the world has fallen in the course of this quarrel. You win, but you win the right only to further great responsibilities, and I cannot suppose that even if a complete armistice is arrived at almost immediately, giving us in every respect what we require, the possibilities of the need of the use of war materials on a great scale, or the need for maintaining for a long period very considerable Armies by all the Allied and associated Governments will not be forced upon us. Therefore I say that there is thorough justification for not immediately throwing recklessly out of gear regardless of waste and convenience the whole of our war production.

The Manchester Guardian assumes this to mean that the Allies may maintain large armies after the War "for the purpose of keeping order in the beaten countries." We cannot doubt that this is the correct interpretation of the speech and the armistice terms seem to us to be framed with that view.

Major-General Sir F. Maurice, who approves the armistice, expresses in *The Daily News* the same opinion:—

"The terms of armistice are so clear as to require little explanation. They have obviously been based upon precedent, and in particular upon the precedent of 1871. They are severe and they fulfil the essential conditions of any satisfactory armistice, in that they make it impossible for the enemy to renew hostilities except by some such mad and desperate freak as a Communist rising.

"It is obvious that seeing what the internal conditions of Germany are to-day and what they may be in the near future, we can relax no precautions. The Allies have now at their disposal a weapon to enforce the fulfilment of the engagements which the enemy has been called upon to take such as no victor has ever before possessed. With our troops in occupation of the Rhineland, there will be no part of Germany which cannot be reached by our air craft and this should serve as an adequate warning should any German be mad enough to try to raise the country against the Allies.

"The occupation of the Rhineland and of Lorraine gives the Allies control of the most important industrial districts of Germany of her principal coal and iron mines and steel works, including the famous Krupp works at Essen."

Much has been said against the German treatment of the French after the War of 1870. And now we find people congratulating themselves on the application to Germany of measures which they declare to be based on that precedent; these measures to be employed not against the autocratic Germany of the past but against a Germany in the throes of a Workers' Revolution!

Though the Allied Governments have probably determined the matter to their own satisfaction, the peoples have not been informed as to whether the peace terms will make permanent what has been done by the armistice, whether they will give back to the Central Empires anything that the armistice has taken from them, or whether, on the contrary, the Peace Conference, will still further despoil them. It is interesting in this connection to note that the German armistice agrees in many respects with the Secret Treaties.

The secret agreement of February 1st, 1917, promises to France:—

"The restoration of Alsace Lorraine and the inclusion in French territory of the central iron district of Lorraine and of the entire coal district of the Saar Valley.

[The Saar Valley contains valuable coal-mines its population is predominantly German.]

The territories on the left bank of the Rhine which form part of the German Empire were to be "entirely separated from Germany and freed from all political and economic dependence on her." They were to become an autonomous and neutral State "and to be occupied by French troops until such time as the enemy States should completely satisfy all the conditions and guarantees indicated in the Treaty of Peace."

[History shows that small neutral States existing under such conditions are usually absorbed in time by the occupying Power.]

The armistice lays down that Germany shall evacuate Alsace-Lorraine; also the part of Germany to the left of the Rhine, and even some part of Germany on the right bank. Here is the actual order:—

"V. Evacuation by the German Armies of the countries on the left bank of the Rhine. These countries on the left bank of the Rhine shall be administered by the local authorities under the control of the Allied and United States Armies of occupation.

"The occupation of these territories will be carried out by Allied and United States garrisons holding the principal crossings of the Rhine (Mayence Coblenz Cologne) together with bridgeheads at these points of a 30 kilometre [about 19 miles] radius, on the right bank, and by garrisons similarly holding the strategic points of the regions.

"A neutral zone shall be set up on the right bank of the Rhine between the river and a line drawn 10 kilometres [6½ miles] distant, starting from the Dutch frontier to the Swiss frontier. In the case of inhabitants no person shall be prosecuted for having taken part in any military measures previous to the signing of the armistice."

The Secret Treaties indicated that Germany would lose her African Colonies. The Treaty of London, April 26th, 1915, between Britain, France, Russia, and Italy, Article 13, promises that if France and Britain take some of Germany's Colonies, Italy shall also get an extension of territory:—

"Should France and Great Britain extend their Colonial possessions in Africa at the expense of Germany they will admit in principle Italy's right to demand certain compensation by way of an extension of her possessions in Eritrea, Somaliland and Libya and the Colonial areas adjoining French and British Colonies."

The Allies have already conquered the German Colonies, but in East Africa, apparently, the seizure is still incomplete, for the armistice declares:—

"unconditional evacuation of all German forces operating in East Africa within one month."

The Treaty of April 26th, 1915, which contained the conditions on which Italy should enter the War, promised Italy territories forming part of the Austrian Empire, including: the Trentino, Gorizia, Trieste, the province of Dalmatia, and a number of rocks and islands. Comparing the passages in which these objects of conquest are set forth in the Secret Treaties, with the terms of the present armistice, we find that the very frontier line, with its towns, watersheds, and mountain peaks, promised to Italy by the Secret Treaties, is given as the line behind which the Armistice dictates that the Austrians shall withdraw! The armistice announces that these territories will be occupied by Allied Armies.

Lord Northcliffe's terms, which the Government declared to be unofficial, but which were circulated in a very official manner, confirm our view about the territories held under the armistice.

Northcliffe's terms are exceedingly far-reaching; they dismember Austria-Hungary and cut up the Empire into a number of separate States, leaving to Hungary only a small part of it, which (according to the authorities he favours) includes the ethnographic limits of the Magyar race.

The German people, striving to establish the Socialist Commonwealth, are grievously handicapped by war hardship and scarcity; the terms of the Armistice heap upon them further enormous burdens. A heavy toll is exacted in guns, aeroplanes, ships (including all their submarines), barges, cattle, food, coal, and other necessities, locomotives, wagons, and motors. If the German Sailors should mutiny and refuse to surrender their ships to the Allies, the Allies will occupy Heligoland as a base from which they will enforce the terms of the Armistice. The German people are to pay for the upkeep of the armies of occupation in the Rhineland (excluding Alsace-Lorraine). The blockade, which is starving the men, women, and

children of Germany, is to continue. We allude later to President Wilson's promise of sending food. The Allies will take possession of railways, waterways, and telegraphs, and will occupy the most important industrial districts of Germany.

"Industrial establishments shall not be impaired in any way and their personnel shall not be moved."

This would seem to indicate that the workers may not leave the factories where they have been employed. Is it intended to put industrial compulsion upon them, as it has been put upon prisoners of war during hostilities?

The Austrian armistice in all these points coincides with that imposed on Germany, but Germany is made to pay the heavier price.

The Bucharest and Brest-Litovsk Treaties are ended, but it is not stated that the territories occupied by Germany are to be returned to Russia, nor, it seems, even to Roumania. As the German, Austrian, and Turkish troops withdraw from the territories they have occupied, the Allied troops will apparently replace them. Turkey was told to remain in Russian Trans-Caucasia till the Allies [had considered the situation there. Germany is told to withdraw from Russian territory "as soon as the Allies shall think the moment suitable"! It is indicated by article 16 that the Allies are to have free access to these territories "for the purpose of maintaining order." The gold which Germany obtained from Russia and Roumania is not at once to be returned to those impoverished countries, but to be delivered to the Allies, who are to hold it until the signature of peace. Is there a Workers' Revolution also in Roumania?

The Russian warships seized by Germany are to be handed over, not to Russia, but to the Allies.

Undoubtedly the victory of the Allies is a threat to Russia, for the Allies are able now to invade Russia from the South. *The Manchester Guardian* of November 11th publishes a telegram from Rome to *The New York Herald* which says:—

"In Russian quarters here it has been learned that the Soviets are in terror over the imminent danger of the Allies disembarking on the shores of the Black Sea."

The Guardian of the same date also publishes the following statement, of which we have seen no confirmation:—

PARIS Saturday.

A telegram from Helsingfors to Zurich states that M. Trotsky has resigned and been replaced as War Commissary by M. Skliansky. A counter-revolutionary army 12,000 strong from the Pakoff region is marching on Petrograd.

And what has Wilson to say to all this? According to his press reputation he should be coming forward as the champion of the oppressed democracies, the champion of the people's right to self-determination, and of his own fourteen points!

"Wilson's Peace Program" is *The Star's* main headline. Eagerly scan it; what has he to say? "Armed Imperialism... at an end"; "Disinterested Justice"; "The victors... to satisfy and protect the weak." Words! words! but what is the programme?—

"The human temper and intention of the victorious Governments has already been manifested in a very practical way. Their representatives in the supreme War Council at Versailles have by unanimous resolution assured the peoples of the Central Empires that everything that is possible in the circumstances will be done to supply them with food and relieve the distressing want, that is in so many places threatening their very lives, and steps are to be taken immediately to organise these efforts at relief in the same systematic manner in which they were organised in the case of Belgium."

Here is the gist of it. With your armies and navies occupying the ports of a people struggling to establish a new civilisation, seize their ships, stop their commerce, take possession of their railways and factories—then send relief to feed them! There is the programme!

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.