

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

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THE SOVIETS REACH BAVARIA

"We must not expect things to happen like that in this country. There is some biological difference between ourselves and the Slav peoples which causes them to develop on other lines."

So Socialists who still regard the idea of revolution as remote and startling, and have not yet realised the crux of the difference between Parliament and the Soviets, seek to pooh-pooh our belief that the British revolution is coming and that shortly the Soviets will be established here. From its first, emerging surely it was obvious that the Spartacist movement was the German counterpart of the Bolshevik movement in Russia, and that the Soviet Government of Germany must soon arise.

The German wiseacres doubtless said: "Our psychology is different, biologically we are unlike the Russians; our history has prepared us for an entirely other future." But fate and the progress of evolution has laughed at them; speedily bringing the Revolution they declared impossible. The Soviets are established in Bavaria, and presently will spread all over Germany. We British are of the same stock as the Germans; there can be no talk of peculiar biological differences between us.

The workers and soldiers of Bavaria are co-operating, and the Bavarian Soviets propose to ally themselves with the Soviets of Russia. That is outstanding, though the confused reports at present reaching us appear to show a conflict of opinion within the forces behind the Bavarian Soviets. The struggle in Germany is very bitter.

Bavaria will have much to contend with; but Bavaria will not long stand alone. The news that in Berlin the Government has found it necessary to disarm the Augusta Regiment and now other regiments, because they were implicated in an effort to set up the Soviets is exceedingly hopeful. Strikes, with which the Soviet idea is associated, continuing to arise in districts so widely spread as Stuttgart, Magdeburg, Westphalia and Rhenish Prussia, all close to the Allied armies, remain significant.

The Independent Socialist Party of Germany has now definitely of the proletarians. It has not yet declared against Parliamentary action, but it is evidently about to do so. Haase, hitherto foremost amongst the Independents, only succeeded in securing the passage by a small majority of a clause stating that the party would employ "all political and economic weapons including Parliament."

Haase was elected to the chairmanship of the party by 154 votes, as against 109 cast for Däumig, but refused to take office. He probably saw that his majority would swiftly be turned into a minority, particularly as the party in Berlin was supporting Däumig.

The programme adopted by the Conference declared that the Independents stand for the Council or Soviet System, supporting the Councils in their struggle for economic and political power, and aiming at the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary preliminary to the establishment of Socialism. To attain this end the Party will employ all political and economic means, including Parliament, but repudiates purposeless acts of violence. (A concession this to the anti-Spartacists.)

The Party demands the dissolution of the old

army and volunteer corps, disarmament of the bourgeoisie; the establishment of a national guard drawn from the ranks of class-conscious Labour with its own administration; and the election of representatives to a National Council for the transfer of large estates and forests to the community and in the towns; the municipalisation of private property; sufficient housing to be provided by the local authorities; the immediate setting up of a National Court to try those responsible for the world war; the establishment of a public legal monopoly in advertisements; and the acquisition of surplus house space for those requiring accommodation; the establishment of friendly relations with all countries, and the immediate resumption of diplomatic relations with the Russian Soviet Government, and Poland; the reconstitution of the Workers' International on the basis of a revolutionary Socialist policy in the spirit of the Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conference.

The programme is therefore a hotch-potch drawn from the Russian Bolsheviks, the Spartacists and Items, not yet scrapped, from the old programme of the Independents. That the Independents have at last virtually adopted the Spartacist standpoint, shows that Spartacism is on the eve of complete success.

Austria.

There can be no doubt that Austria will shortly establish the Soviets. At a meeting of the Sailors' Council on March 30th, attended by soldiers and by delegates from the Hungarian Soviets, it was announced that a dictatorship of the proletariat was imminent. Kovacs, a delegate from Budapest, declared that once the Soviet was proclaimed food would be sent to Vienna, even if Budapest should go on short commons in consequence. Resolutions declaring for the union of the Austrian and Hungarian Soviets were adopted with enthusiasm. The attempts by sections of workers to Socialise the industry in which they are employed, which have arisen in the Central Empires with growing frequency since the Russian Revolution, still continue.

It is remarkable to learn that the Vienna bank employees are demanding a share in the administration of the banks and control of the funds, and that the bankers are temporising with the demand.

Bulgaria.

Bulgaria, long the most politically advanced of the Balkan nations and strongly inclined towards Socialism from the time of the later Balkan wars, is showing signs of bursting into Bolshevism with so much vigour that the Allied armies may be powerless to check the invader's occupation. A telegram from Athens to the *Mail* says:—

"A Bolsheviki movement at Varna (the Bulgarian Black Sea port) having been attempted by Socialists and extremists from Sofia, the Allied authorities caused the town to be occupied by British troops, and martial law was proclaimed. All the ringleaders are to be hanged, and the court-martial and severely punished.—Exchange."

So the Allied military domination of Europe is holding back progress and denying freedom to the workers of all nations!

Serbia and Roumania.

Serbia also appears to be in a turbulent state. Reports of a military revolt against the dynasty have reached this country, and the Prime Minister is complaining that Serbia's territorial claims are betrayed by the secret treaties and that Italy is annexing territory occupied by the Serbs. Roumania is also causing so much anxiety to the Allies that General Mangin has been sent to deal with Bolshevism there.

Hungary.

The decision to send General Mangin to Hungary means to send General Mangin to Hungary, that is, reconsideration, which has resulted in a visit of General Smuts, means that the Big Four understand that Europe is like a vast powder magazine threatening to explode unless dealt with carefully. They are therefore trying to achieve their objects by subtler means. The proposals made by General Smuts are really

monstrous and territorially after the manner of the most favourable than those rejected by the Karolyi Government. A glance at the map will show that the line behind which Hungarian troops are expected to retire, is a line drawn through the centre of the Hungary which existed before the war, so that the Hungary under Hungarian control will be half its former size, if Allied demands are complied with. The dismembered portions of Hungary, which are not already occupied by Allied troops, are to be called a "neutral" zone, and to be occupied by British, French, Italian, and, if they agree, American troops. Karolyi declared that the Allied intention was to use Hungary as a base against Soviet Russia. His words will be remembered now. The Hungarian Soviets are expected to accept the armistice terms arranged between the late Government and the Allies, and Hungarian troops are to receive orders not to move beyond their present positions. If Hungary were to agree to these terms, she would deliver herself, bound hand and foot, to the Allies eagerly waiting to demolish her Soviets. Bela Kun, the Hungarian Commissary for Foreign Affairs, has replied suggesting a conference, at Prague or Vienna, between the Hungarian Soviet Republic, the German-Austrian Republic, the Jugo-Slav State, the Czechoslovak Republic, and the Kingdom of Roumania. By this conference, time, so important to the Soviets which work with educational propaganda, will be gained, and tremendous opportunities will be opened up for throwing upon the tangled situation the healing rays of truth.

Russia.

Undoubtedly the Soviets are making headway in Russia—such headway that there has been a press outcry that the Allied soldiers may be driven into the sea in Northern Russia and starved out at Odessa. Those who justify the Allied intervention in Russia base the major part of their argument on accounts of starvation in Bolshevik Russia. They disregard the fact that the Allies and the counter-revolution are causing that starvation by the blockade and the holding up of supplies in Russia itself. But here we have the Allies caught in the meshes of their own reasoning. Odessa, which was once the greatest of the world's grain exporting ports, is becoming incapable of supporting the Allies who are stationed there. Why? Mismangement and general war conditions are no doubt partly responsible, but the hostile attitude of the Ukrainian population towards the invaders, is no doubt the main cause of their lack of supplies. The population is rallying to the Soviets. The press will not say too openly how great is the success of the Communists in the Ukraine, but such phrases as the Wireless Press dispatch from *The Manchester Guardian* tell their own tale:—

"A despatch received at Berne from Warsaw announces that the conquest of the Ukraine by the Bolsheviks has given them about 200,000 tons of sugar, which were stocked in that country."

The Finns and Karelians who have been under the British General Maynard in the Murmansk region have shown so determined a desire to join the Bolsheviks that the press has been full of lamentations. In the effort to induce the British people to agree to extend the war against Russia to much more formidable dimensions, it is pretended that a large army must go to Russia, as a rescue party, to preserve the lives of the British soldiers, threatened by the treacherous Finns and the ferocious Russian Red Army, which will advance upon them in warships when the ice-bound rivers become navigable. Volunteers are appealed for. An Anti-Bolshevik white paper is brought out, and the cruel reactionary Kolchak is elevated to the position of a hero. The Northcliffe press published his 'On to Moscow' propaganda as though it were a case of a crusade. Commonsense dictates our oft-repeated question: *If it is possible to send reinforcements to fight side by side with the British soldiers in Russia, why is it not possible to bring them home!*

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The war against the Soviets of Russia and all the Soviets must be stopped; it is a disgrace to the Allied workers that they ever permitted it to be begun. The most effectual way to end it is to set up the Soviets in Britain.

The Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party, as we write, are holding a conference to discuss this question. Indeed, it is high time that they should act. Their policy towards Russia has been most reactionary; Henderson, who placed his faith in Kerensky and bitterly attacked the Bolsheviks and the Soviets, has been very much to blame. Now that the pressure of rank and file understanding is steadily forcing the reactionary officials to a change of front, it must be made plain to them that mere resolutions are not enough: that action alone counts. Already in Bristol dockers have taken action by refusing to load ships for Russia; in the Thames area, the press complains that men are delaying the export of munitions. In the Labour world is a smouldering fire of hostility to the anti-Russian adventure, which may break into flame at any time. Soldiers and sailors also, have manifested their determined disapproval.

Albert Thomas, an abler counterpart of Clynes or Henderson, has made some important admissions concerning Russian affairs, which have appeared in the *Populaire*. Writing to Capt. Jacques Sadoul, French Ambassador in Petrograd, whose indignant letter exposing Allied anti-Soviet plots created a sensation last year, and was seized by Scotland Yard when it appeared in this country, Thomas says:—

"I have always said, here in France, that Lenin, whose character I know, is above suspicion; I have always said concerning Trotsky, that I do not know him and can therefore say nothing, but that I have no reason to suspect him: but as for the others, I have a strong suspicion that they had German money for their propaganda."

"That said, all my reserves are made: it is necessary to negotiate and to enter into relations. And for my part, if I can be of use in this direction, I am ready to forget past injuries. [He remarked in an earlier part of the letter that, on his visit to Russia, he was attacked by the Bolshevik press as an agent of French and British capitalism and Russian reaction.]

"...The very conditions under which they have engaged in peace negotiations force the Russians to show themselves more insistent than ourselves to realise the democratic objects of war.

"I have been, for my part, much impressed by the resistance with which they opposed the Germans on the question of the right of peoples to dispose of themselves. What a pity that we could not support them directly in this effort.... Rest assured that you find an echo here, that if the Governments hesitate a little at holding a conversation with the Bolsheviks, they nevertheless feel the necessity for such a conversation. Particularly at the time of writing, I think that the futility of a policy of separation and of Russian divisions has been recognised, and what is occurring in the Ukraine ought specially to open the eyes of all those who hoped to organise an important military effort against the Germans and the Bolsheviks."

Thomas also asked Sadoul to assure the Russians that the Allied war aims are now purified!

To have written thus Albert Thomas must either be a fool or a deceitful hypocrite.

This letter of his should be studied in conjunction with the Berne Conference majority resolution, which condemned the Soviets and the Bolsheviks and which he supported.

What is Thomas doing in France to oppose the intervention?

Bolshevism and Belgium.

Bolshevism is likely soon to appear in Belgium, because the condition of the people is one of such acute hardship, and the neglect by the Allies is so great, that they will realise, in spite of Vandervelde and Huysmans, that the workers must take the power in their own hands, and this they can only do effectively by the establishment of Soviets.

In the neighbourhood of Antwerp all but eleven per cent of the workers are said to be unemployed. Vandervelde says that two and a quarter million out of a population of seven millions are living on State aid. Out of 20,000 dockers in Antwerp only 2,000 are working. In Brussels there are 92,000 unemployed. Britain has forced Belgium to cease exporting coal to Switzerland, as this "upset the British exchanges." Belgium has lost 213,000 tons of shipping out of a total 350,000. No compensation has been paid for this or other damage, and Belgium has had no definite guarantee as to her share of the sum to be exacted from Germany. Latterly the Allies have even questioned her right to priority of compensation.

Whilst the Peace Conference wrangles, the people of Belgium are workless and hungry. Many are homeless; their ruined houses are not rebuilt. Yet the Allied capitalist Governments, in a spirit of callous iniquity, are busy spreading reports of Bolshevik atrocities! Belgium may presently have the distinction of starting the Soviets in Western Europe. Thus will her people find what recompense is possible for the sufferings which capitalist rivalries have thrust upon them.

The workers of Europe are fighting a desperate battle with capitalism: a struggle the loss of which means actual death to large numbers, and the living death of subjection to the entire proletariat.

And here we have British trade union leaders unanimously adopting a report containing a jumble of out-of-date reforms, as a bait to enter into a partnership with the employers under the proposed Joint Industrial Councils, which are designed to stultify working-class action. The worthlessness of the partnership was clearly demonstrated, if any demonstration were needed, by the Chairman's reply to a delegate's request for an interpretation of the term "legitimate grievances." The Chairman's reply was:—

"That is a thing that all the world quarrels about, so I am sure we cannot get any answer."

Precisely: on every important question, employers and employed must fail to agree. What further condemnation of this pretence at unity is necessary! Arthur Henderson, in moving the resolution to accept the report, again showed himself totally unfit to hold an official position in the Workers' Movement. He said that the trade union representatives on the Committee were determined not to press the claims of the workers to extremes, and that the employers were of the same mind. He declared that Lloyd George had not been able "to conceal his delight" at the report. He said that this Joint Council would get for the workers those increases of justice to which they believed they were entitled. They could get them "and be an example to the whole world."

"An example to the whole world." Yes, we British workers are in danger of becoming an example, a warning, to the world of to-day and to posterity, in that we sat by, our officials smugly priding themselves on their cleverness in avoiding conflict, whilst the workers of all the world were enslaved by our masters!

Lloyd George's reply to the pettifoggish proposals of the Conference was not even a promise to legislate, but merely an expression of sympathy.

We are glad to learn that the conscientious objectors who have had the pluck to bear imprisonment for their convictions are to be released after two years in gaol. But we emphatically dissent from the thanks which *The Herald* has offered to Lloyd George. It says: "We are grateful to the Prime Minister and his colleagues that at last they have been able to defy the reactionary forces in our country and release these martyrs to conscience."

We give no thanks to the Government for this tardy relaxation of its cruel grip upon the men who have resisted conscription. We say to the workers: When are you going to join in getting them all released; when are you going to dismiss this Government and end the capitalist system?