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THE SPIRIT  
OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL  
AT BERNE.

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BY  
JOHN DE KAY.

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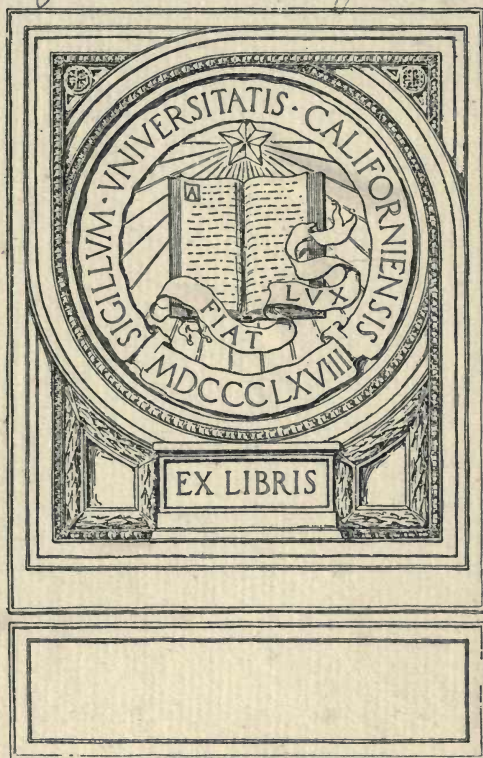
TOGETHER WITH  
THE GIST OF THE CHARACTERISTIC SPEECHES  
AND  
COPIES OF RESOLUTIONS.

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GIFT OF

*John de Kay*



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THE SPIRIT  
OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL  
AT BERNE.

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BY  
JOHN DE KAY.

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1919

With the original text  
of the Act of  
Schloss Steinhof  
Lucerne

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

LONGINGS . . . . .	1907
THE WEAVER . . . . .	1908
JUDAS (A DRAMA). . . . .	1910
THOUGHTS . . . . .	1911
BROWN LEAVES . . . . .	1911
THE PEOPLE'S MONEY . . . . .	1912
DICTATORS OF MEXICO . . . . .	1914
LOVE AND OTHER SONGS . . . . .	1916
IMMORTALITY . . . . .	1916
THE WORLD ALLIES . . . . .	1917
*WOMEN AND THE NEW SOCIAL STATE . . . . .	1918

THE WORLD  
ALLIES

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\* Now in the press.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE INTERNATIONAL AT BERNE.

When the historians of future generations undertake to give an impartial survey of the great moments in the life of humanity, and to depict the importance of these days which may see the collapse of the industrial and capitalist systems and when they trace the threads backward along the way in which this movement has irresistibly gone, they will pass through a dingy room of the Volkshaus in Berne.

We are too close to the tragedy in which we are actors to realize the full significance of the part now being played on the stage of the world by men who are struggling in an ever-rising tide which nothing can suppress. After more than four years of an unforgivable war, the signing of an armistice was the signal of a new hope for humanity.

The eyes of the world were turned to Paris.

The confidence of the world was reposed in Paris.

The hope of the world hung upon the decisions of Paris. One by one these hopes are falling before the small politics, short-sightedness and the greed of those who forgot humanity in war and who are disappointing it in their conference of so-called peace.

The extravagant promises made to the deluded masses in each country are one by one passing into default. Gradually the world is being disillusioned by the ones whose occupation it has been to create these illusions.

Throughout the world there is a growing distrust



of all that has taken place in the conference of politicians at Paris and with it there is a steady drift toward the lines where international violence is dissolved into civil strife.

Day by day the sinister designs of imperialists and plutocrats are being exposed to a deluded world and with every new exposition the masses are slowly beginning to understand the true issues which have brought so much misery and ruin to mankind.

As I write in my library in the lonely mountains at the end of February 1919 it is clear that there is a deep and general lack of confidence in the trading, scheming and compromise which goes on at Paris. There is an under-current of doubts, fear and misgiving which the press is careful not to reflect.

The masses are everywhere weary unto despair with all the old platitudes, evasions and lies.

After four months of so-called peace they are sick unto death with the universal Himalayas of passports, censorshipships and spies.

Even stupid people realize that there is no peace and wise people know that the hours now passing are only a disagreeable lull between the great storm which is passing and the greater one which is coming.

There is an indescribable "atmosphere" surrounding the vital hours in the life of men and nations and something in the air which forecasts events and gives colour to all deliberations and even to incidents which under less heroic circumstances would be unnoted. It is in that strange "atmosphere" one is to find the meaning of what is taking place—if it is to be found at all.

Beginning Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February when men like Naine and Graber were pleading for an alliance of the common people of Switzerland with their comrades



throughout the world and ending with the singing of the "International" at seven in the evening 10<sup>th</sup> February—when dear old Kautsky shouted: "Long live the International" and some one responded: "Long live Kautsky" there was a pervading sense of the impotence of men who are trying to stem the course of some great stream which is carrying everything before it. There was a general feeling that the Conference had done its best for humanity, coupled with a regretful conviction that what had been done was totally out of proportion to the greatness of the issues at stake, but also that it was in fact a beginning which must without delay be followed to greater and more definite ends if the interests of humanity in its most critical hour are to be effectively safeguarded.

The opinions I express are personal. I do not assume to reflect the views of any of the delegates from the various nations, whose close and sympathetic association in these historic days I shall always regard in its true importance. From early in the morning until late at night my apartment in the Bernerhof was the meeting place of the leading men of all delegations and I have reason to know that their voices were only raised for the common good. If I am in any sense competent to estimate human motives I will not be wrong in saying that from the first hour to the last, there was an utter absence of the slightest personal self-seeking on the part of any man who discussed with me the measures which might now be taken to render a true and lasting service to our fellow-men. The same spirit pervaded all the deliberations in the committees and it was also the dominant note in all the important speeches at the conference.

Whatever may be the impression which has been

given to the public by the press, the truth is that the men assembled in Berne are, in the largest sense, the most qualified to speak in the name of humanity and the best able to serve its highest good. They are the men to whom the masses must and will more and more look for guidance and protection in the new phases of the great struggles upon the issues of which depend the material and social well-being of the human race.

I have before me the texts of the principal speeches corrected and signed by their authors, also a stenographic report of the entire proceedings which I hope to publish as a complete and permanent record for the future use of the international labour and social movement and as a document of first importance for historians.

I have also before me the original telegrams and memorials from all parts of the world, together with the various documents which were presented to the conference in official and unofficial ways. After making all allowance for the notes of human selfishness which some of them display as to land and politics, there is reflected in them a significant world-confidence as to the motives and also as to the great potential power of the assembly to which they were addressed. As human documents and as indications of a growing despair arising from the Paris conference these appeals have a high psychological and historical value.

In response to my question as to how many people were represented at Berne, Camille Huysmans, secretary of the International since 1905, writes me as follows:

“It is quite impossible to give any exact figures  
“about the forces represented at Berne.

“Before the war, the International included  
“between ten and twelve million members affiliated

“through their national sections. It is now still possible  
“to make such a computation for some countries. The  
“British delegation represented four and a half million  
“members, both French delegations represented one  
“million members, the Canadian delegation represented  
“500,000 members.

“Owing to the special conditions of certain countries  
“arising through the war, the old basis of the calcu-  
“lation of numbers does not remain. This is illustrated  
“as follows:

“The German delegations came in the name of  
“all the social and labor voters of their country num-  
“bering about twelve million voters in the socialist  
“majority and about three millions of the independent  
“party. The Lettish, Esthonian and Georgian dele-  
“gations represented a great part of their people.  
“The Russian figures are completely unknown. They  
“may be one million or ten millions. The Ukrainians,  
“who arrived at the close of the conference and  
“endorsed officially the Branting resolution, repre-  
“sented a nation of forty millions of which they are  
“the majority.

“Instead then of speaking of twelve millions, we  
“may, without the least exaggeration, speak of more  
“than fifty million men and women, and if we were  
“to evaluate the sympathizers, we could easily multiply  
“these statistics.”

Concurrently with this conference there was an  
International Syndical Conference in the Union Saal of  
the Volkshaus. I was present at the opening and was  
profoundly impressed by the way in which the various  
delegates entered the room, greeted one another across  
four years of international hatred and murder—and



began their business in the unceremonious manner of toilers taking up their work.

The French and German delegates met, not as enemies and not as friends, but as fellow-men who were common sufferers from a common source and who recognised that this source was an international caste which throughout the world had maintained its *international* and identical interest, while it had found the realization of its *temporary* and *material* ends by exploiting the sentiments and *nationalism* of the masses who in all nations have a common interest and are *nationals* in nothing except tradition, name and prejudice.

Throughout the afternoon there was a tempered debate on the Labour Charter, and some day humanity will wonder that the demands now being made upon the employing classes were ever so moderate. There was something quite pathetic in the German proposal, which I have before me—that the working day should be a maximum of TEN hours except for certain machine work, which should be eight hours—and that toilers should have thirty-six free consecutive hours in a week! I wonder what the hardworking diplomats, lawyers, armament makers and pirates of high finance would do to a society which imposed upon them a similar regime and for similar pay!

I spent the evening with about sixty-five of the Syndical delegates and they were my guests at what I shall, out of generosity to the Volkshaus catering, call a dinner.

The importance to me, as one who looked upon the matter from the outside, was that these men, who yesterday were compelled to pretend hatred for one another and to kill one another, were in sentiment and interest



comrades and in suffering they were brothers. On my left was the Secretary of the Swiss Trade Union Federation and on my right the Secretary of a similar German organization. Exactly in front of us at our table were two Frenchmen holding similar positions in the French Seamen and Railway Unions. There was a total absence of any indication of real or imaginary differences among these men. Once more the lines of toilers' organizations are extending across the barricades erected by the imperialists. The common men must follow these lines to a solid and world union for the protection of their common interests and to promote the welfare and assert the dignity of their class.

If it is said that the purely trade union movement lacks the ethic of the social movement, it must also be said that it is an economic organization of men whom industrialism has reduced below the economic level of the machines and that it is an economic counterpoise to the organization of the machines. It may also be said that as it is easier effectively to unite men upon the basis of their interest, than it is to unite them upon any plane of convictions, the trade union movement may be the one through which the social movement is to receive the world forces enabling it to take universal political action toward the highest social ends. There are no indications that men united upon the basis of their economic interests are less able to act in unity than those who are united upon another basis. The experience of humanity rather confirms the contrary, since it is upon that basis that exploitation and imperialism thrive and that wars are made, in violation of all ethics and contrary to every social and human instinct.

*It seems evident that the path which is to lead to a true social commonwealth must pass through the stage of*

*economic independence for the manual and intellectual labourers throughout the world.*

The two great world-forces represented at Paris and at Berne now face one another, not across imaginary national boundaries, but within the limits of every nation—and it is this universal social problem, raised to an acute issue through a shameless war, which must now be dealt with.

In some countries it has almost passed beyond the bounds of peaceful settlement and in no great country is a peaceful settlement assured.

The whole aspect of the social problem throughout the world could be changed by the Conference in Paris. There are indications that certain delegates view with consternation the trend of affairs which they are unable to control and that there are certain elements at Paris which, if they were to be united with the great movement at Berne, might yet save the world from what threatens to be a calamity greater than the war.

It is the duty of those who have the interest of humanity at heart to do what lies in their power to bring about such a fusion of forces.

Everything which transpired in Berne demonstrated that those who truly speak in the name of Labour are united in the earnest hope that the present crisis may find a peaceful solution, but it must also be said that they are firmly and resolutely united in whatever form that solution may take.

I would briefly summarize precisely the demands of Berne. They are:

1. Complete and universal disarmament as the only basis upon which a League of Nations could be founded or the peace of the world assured.
2. That the League of Nations shall not be a compact

between diplomats and answerable to Foreign Offices, that it shall not be a mere alliance between Governments, but an effective *Federation of Free Peoples* directly controlled by the peoples and directly answerable to them.

3. That it shall not be a mere alliance among one group of belligerent states, but a universal compact among all peoples, as the essential step to a proper social order upon which may ultimately be founded a universal brotherhood of men.

4. That the fabulous debts created for the profit of exploiters shall not be paid by the sweated labour of generations of men, women and children, but shall be paid by the expropriation of every penny of profit which has been made through the war, and using it to discharge the debts created by war.

5. That the old policy of restrictions upon trade must be replaced by a new policy of universal free trade and that the international and colonial rivalry of imperialism and high finance shall be replaced by the ordered development of backward countries in the interests of the people and freed from the exploitation of labour and from parasitical finance, manipulated against the interests of creditor nations whose aid is sought.

6. That the right of self-determination for peoples, great and small, shall be general and impartially safeguarded. That it shall be a continuous right, and that under this principle no cast-iron boundaries will be set up in any part of the world and no restrictions will be attempted against any people freely following in their national evolution a course which at any time suits their national sentiments.

7. That the safeguarding of the rights of labour and the assurance of its minimum demands throughout the



world shall become one of the trusts which it shall be the solemn obligation of the League of Peoples faithfully to discharge. It is to be fervently hoped that no other kind of a League of Nations will attain the support of the labour and socialist classes, than one in which the protection of the most elemental and sacred human rights can be effectively and universally assured.

These great bodies should without delay create a world parliament, standing for the interests of the masses of labour in all lands and dedicated to a protection of the general social welfare without distinction as to race, nationality or religion. Such a world parliament should meet three or four times each year in the capitals of various nations. It should be provided from the general funds with its own parliament buildings and expenses, it should elect its executive board of action and confide to such a board or cabinet the powers to carry out decisions, summon the parliament in the event of a crisis and by the decisions of such a parliament the labour and socialism of the whole world should abide and upon its mandate they should act.

There is no time to be lost in the creation of this unique and only body through which exploitation and wars may be abolished.

This is not the time to bargain about land and make small trade as to the division and manipulation of colonies and points of strategy such as Constantinople, which the Allies have promised to one Nation after another until it will probably be handed over to England to administer for the League or—on account of trade and political rivalries—left to the Turks!

This is not the time to foster revengeful measures against one nation or another or to inflict arrogance upon vanquished men whose despair will lead to a form of social



upheaval which will cross all national boundaries. This is today only an eventuality but it may soon be a reality.

The present is a time when only reconciliation among men within all states and internationally by the ultimate suppression of social parasitism can save what deserves to be saved in our western civilization. Unless open dealing, justice, ethics and far-sighted social conceptions are followed without delay the discontent will become general and soon pass beyond all reasonable control.

As one who has associated with the plutocrats and who knows their arrogance and blindness and how reluctant they are to believe in anything except the omnipotence of their own powers, I feel that they will only act in any new or reasonable way under pressure of the most direct and irresistible sort. I warn them that if this pressure is not heeded before its great force is more openly set in motion, it will be too late to heed it.

Gradually the feeling is gaining ground that the policy of negotiation is failing and concurrently with this sentiment the ideas of constitutional action are passing from the minds of men. This is an ominous sign which he who runs may read. It bears a sinister inscription which must not be ignored.

The deep current which is underneath this movement and the vast horizon which is over it, were summarized by my friend Camille Huysmans in six words:

“NO MORE WAR,  
ALL IS POSSIBLE.”

Let there be no mistake as to what these words mean. If there is to be “*no more war*” it means complete disarmament for every nation. And if “*all is possible*” is not to be translated into universal violence, it means that those who now rule mankind through industrialism and govern-

ments, must by conciliation and negotiation enable the toilers throughout the world to realize without delay their natural and legitimate demands. These are set forth with great moderation in the resolutions and speeches here published.

It will be well for the ones in whose hands the fate of mankind *temporarily* rests in Paris, to take into full account the moderate demands of the patient men who were represented at Berne and who represent the class which is in the future to rule the world.

The project of a so-called League of Nations in the form it has been conceived in Paris, cannot stand. Practically all the conditions essential to founding a genuine League are lacking in the Paris scheme.

I commend these pages to the consideration of all who have any voice in the affairs of men, with the solemn warning that unless the message of the International at Berne is heeded without delay, there will be no escape from violence and dictatorships and contrary to official calculations, the violence will precede the dictatorships.

This calamity should and may still be averted on the lines I have indicated. If these are ignored, any physical force which can be employed will be no more potent than a man raising his hand to stay a hurricane, which unfortunately goes its way and carries everything before it.

JOHN DE KAY.

Steinhof Castle, Lucerne,  
22<sup>nd</sup> February 1919.

THE GIST  
OF SOME OF THE  
SPEECHES.

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## NOTE.

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*In each instance where there is a resume of the speeches delivered in French or German, I have used the epitome made by CHARLES RODEN BUXTON, whose fidelity and grasp of the spirit of the conference were of the highest importance.*

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## BRANTING'S OPENING ADDRESS

*Berne, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1919.*

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The war which has devastated the world was possible only in this capitalistic society of ours which the International, ever since its constitution, has tried to abolish.

Already since the Stuttgart Congress of 1907 the struggle against war and militarism has been our foremost concern. We all perceived, through our common intuition, the forces which must endanger the peace of the world in a society which not only gave free scope to the capitalistic policy of exploitation, but which, besides, maintained in the greater parts of the world a concentration of power in the hands of feudal castes, which was altogether out of touch with the real thought of the peoples and divested of responsibility. The International could still raise its voice at Basle in 1912 against the already threatening universal war. In 1914 however, when the contest had already become more openly acute and when, moreover, criminal hopes for a war which should speedily bring the domination of the world within the grasp of one strong nation, set at nought all attempts towards a peaceful compromise on the part of the western democracies, the International itself fell a first victim to the world-catastrophe.

The dominators in certain countries had succeeded in disguising the truth and inspiring the whole people with the belief that it was only a question of defence of country and life against an infamous assailment.

The strictures passed upon former comrades became more bitter in measure of the difficulty which was ex-

perienced at the other side of the iron curtain, to understand how impossible it was made for them to perceive the truth which from without was seen in a glaring light, namely that here the world was watching the spectacle of a crime of world-historical proportions.

I shall not in this place go more deeply into this theme; however, I could not pass it over at the start of this conference. We must at all events be convinced that the necessity of a clear understanding as to these matters will make itself imperiously felt during our debates. It is, furthermore, my immovable conviction that only through an open discussion concerning this subject an atmosphere can be created in which a new confidence may be established between those who all are striving after the same ideal.

Truth has a power which nothing else may claim. If it was our intention to build an artificial unity upon a hushing up policy of silence, the structure arising would of necessity be internally weak. To-day still, as it was in the case of our great ancestors in socialism, the motto of the first Internationale holds good for us, namely that we recognize truth, law and custom as the basis of the relations between peoples, as well as between individual citizens.

If, therefore, we do not intend to shirk any questions of responsibility we are, as a matter of course, also assembled here in order to weigh our duties in regard to the future.

We have not forgotten that the first International had, after the fall of the French emperor at Sedan, advocated a reasonable peace with the French Republic and how Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht had stood against the wildly excited nationalist mentality of their people, who demanded the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine against

the manifest will of the inhabitants. It may now be our own turn to oppose as rigorously annexionism, from whatever side it may originate and to claim in the name of the socialist democracy of Europe decent peace-conditions for the new republics which have sprung up from the ruins of old empires. Already at the London Conference of Entente-socialists in February 1915 it was insisted upon that the war was directed only against the German government and not against the German people. It would be unfair, indeed, if now the working classes, because of the crimes of their former rulers, should be bled to death and, in a manner unsustainable by any principle of civilization, be partially condemned to servitude.

In the capitalist circles of several countries, claims are being raised regarding damages and gains. Even the loftiest idealism of the few cannot blot out the general characteristics of capitalism. The struggle for private interests, for power and for economic privileges will have itself asserted. The prevalence, only, of the working classes, by which the spoliation involved in the bourgeois system of production will be abolished, will secure equal rights to all upon the firm ground of democracy.

Just as Paris has become the centre of the ruling classes, Berne can be the centre for the Labour World. In Berne must be instituted the control of the working classes. Berne must become the self-acting central organ of the workers to carry out the socialistic ideas.

Comrades! We are passing through an epoch of revolutions, such as has never before been experienced by man. The old world, which existed before the war, the world of capitalism engaged in a struggle against an advancing, but ever defeated socialism, is gone forever. The commotion which has shaken the world has made a return of the old order of things impossible. Socialism



is a power not to be passed over by any one, provided it knows its aim and the way leading towards it.

It is but recognizing a plain fact to own that disagreement within the working class itself has caused the present confusion and a certain dissolution. The main tenets of our opinion, such as the rights of democracy, liberty of thought and speech, the realization of socialism through the creation of a well ordered common production, have been obscured in the confusion within certain circles to the very point of denial, and attempts have been made to create a terrorist domination by minorities who are enemies not only of socialism but of democracy itself. We energetically reject all such attempts, which can merely compromise the socialist cause and the interests of the working class.

From this standpoint, then, our Berne Conference can only be intended as a *preparation*. Here, we shall take up again, after the world-catastrophe, the contact with one another, and proclaim loudly to all the world, the opinion of the working-classes on the momentous Peace problems and on the League of Nations, but if I am allowed to give my advice, I should propose the institution of a commission with instructions imparted from here, to start the re-organization of the International and to prepare a still larger congress in the near future.

It depends now upon the conference itself, on the spirit in which it will work, whether it may be looked up to as to a beacon-light on the Alps as a signal of the new times, in which the perfection of democracy and the reign of socialism shall be achieved. This high aim may guide our work and help us to overcome all the difficulties in our way.

WELCOME OF THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE CITY OF BERNE.

Berne, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1919.

*Mr. Hjalmar Branting, President  
of the International Socialist Conference at Berne.*

*Dear Comrades,*

The extraordinary assembly of the Swiss social-democratic party, which took place yesterday in the very room in which your conference opens to-day, has refused, by 238 against 147 votes, to take part in the conference which includes the Labour delegates of all the countries.

I consider this decision as a grave political mistake on the part of the Swiss party which, by this move, has compromised itself in the eyes of the whole world; I have drawn the consequences of the conflict thus provoked, between my personal opinion and the majority of my party: I have resigned my position as president of the party and my functions as a member of the managing committee.

Under these circumstances, therefore, I am not entitled to address you in the name of the party, but desire, nevertheless, to accomplish my duty of hospitality in officially presenting you a cordial welcome within the walls of our city and in giving expression to the hope that your work will meet with the desired success, such as it is expected by millions of men in all countries, viz: the resumption, through the socialistic International, of the relations interrupted by the war, the re-establishment of an international front for the struggle in favour of the proletarian interests and of the progress of humanity and its civilization.

It is in this sense that I wish the Conference, which is opening to-day, a complete success and beg you, dear comrades, to receive my cordial salutations,

G. Müller.

## RESPONSIBILITY.

**Kurt Eisner** (Bavaria). The deepest need at the first meeting of the International is that it should meet in the spirit of the new League of Nations—the spirit of clearness and truth. He was confident that the first expression of this spirit would not be without result. He agreed with **Albert Thomas** that the International would be ineffective if they did not have confidence on both sides. They must know the way they are going and what they wanted. They must have a freedom of thought and will and rise above lies and illusions. It was difficult for him to speak because he belongs to a beaten people. He was ready to make the sternest accusation against his government when it existed but it no longer existed. Germany had a heavy guilt which all in a manner had to bear, which they must expiate in order that they might go forward on the way of socialism. Foreign comrades did not understand the great transformation that had taken place in Germany, they thought it camouflage. It was not so. Nowhere was democracy stronger with more leading force. The revolution was a moral revolution. Dealing with the events leading up to the war he remarked that the German government cleverly exploited the fear of czarism. And it had even deceived him. He was disillusioned when he read the German white book. It was impossible, to build a policy on illusions and lies. The revolution did not come too soon but it was a question whether it did not come four and a half years too late. It was said the German people were unteachable, they must remove that impression. In the last year the war-aims memorandum of the interallied conferences reached Germany when he was in prison and was rejected by “Vorwärts”, as too fantastic, but he considered it offered a basis of discussion.



The methods of the German general staff were terrible, but the German people were not brutal. He had heard many soldiers in public meetings say they were forced into such conduct and declaring: "We have been made a sacrifice to the famous German power of organization." The German people had a moral right to appeal to the world, to have their place alongside the other peoples in building up their own future and not to be placed under the domination of others. Many young people had protested against the war and sentences of eight years hard labour were not uncommon. These people had a right to protest. He appealed to the International not to think of revenge and punishment which would affect them as much as the Germans. A new mode of thought was needed. The German nation was now the most radical state in the world based on socialist principles.

**Karl Kautsky** (Germany). Kautsky speaks not for the interest of persons but in that of the cause. We must discuss our mutual experiences made during the war and draw conclusions.

The majority thought they had to aid in the politics of the government. They threw this country into the abyss. As the war continued for such a long time there came a complete downfall. They ought to acknowledge that they have been cheated. The German people have thrown out their militarists; in future they will be a peaceful nation. The twelve million voices were not given for the politics of the war. They were the voices of unity of the German people. The time for the unity of the German proletariat has come. It depends only on some few persons. The spirit of the minority socialists will govern the united social democracy. Two dangers are in sight. Bolshevism, which was brought about by

hunger and misery, and that other, through the militaristic and nationalistic pests. To provide Germany with food-stuffs and raw materials is the only thing which will help against these two dangers. I hope that the Conference will aid us in getting what we need. We, the minority party, have a right to ask for a just and reasonable solution for the German people. If you will help us in this respect the International will become one in real fact. Our true task is to take care that the peace which is going to be concluded in Paris is really to be a durable peace.

Stuart Bunning (Great Britain). "We are of the opinion that this question of responsibilities will have to be discussed at some time, but we are also of the opinion that this is not the time. The discussion last night and to-day has shown differences between German and French comrades. We are not here to settle those differences. We are here to carry out the mandate of labour and socialism all over the world and we shall not be carrying it out if we waste time in useless and mischievous discussions. Thomas in his resolution, wants to punish the governments responsible for the war. But where are those governments? Those governments no longer exist. Has Thomas forgotten what has taken place in Germany and Austria? Does he forget the Kaiser is in exile in a strange country? And so when we are asked to discuss the responsibilities of certain governments, we find those governments no longer exist. We in the British delegation were profoundly impressed by the speech of Kurt Eisner. It is not possible to forget the horrors of the last 4½ years, but it may be possible to forget the feelings of hatred, revenge, and distrust which now exist between the various peoples, and the declaration of Eisner this

morning is the first step in this direction. If that declaration could be followed on the part of the German majority, a great deal would be done to clear away the feelings which are preventing us from getting on with our work.

“We are also greatly impressed by Kautsky. He followed very largely on the way of Eisner, but he gave us some other points and one especially: he told us there is in Germany a real desire to get away from militarism. If those two declarations can be taken as the feelings of our German comrades, then we have indeed done a great deal to heal the sores of the bleeding world. We of the British delegation want to appeal to Thomas not to turn this war of governments into a war of the peoples of the world, more horrible, more terrific than any war which has ever taken place, even than this last war.

“And now we turn towards the real work of this Conference. Let me point out that our real work here is to influence the Conference in Paris, and that no matter how long or how much we may talk about responsibilities, we shall not be influencing this Conference in Paris in the direction of democracy and the peace of the world. Our object is, to turn all eyes, all hearts, all souls and all forces to Paris, to Paris every day, to Paris every hour, to Paris every minute of this week.

“The League of Nations even now is trembling in the balance, because of difficulties arising in Paris. We here can do much, I believe can do everything, to put the League of Nations in its proper shape and its proper aspect of authority. If the League of Nations goes, with it goes the Labour Charter and all hope for peace and democracy in the world.

“We therefore make a final appeal, not only to Thomas,



but to our German comrades of the majority, and to the Conference, to let these differences be deferred, in order to let us get on with our real work of securing for labour and socialism all over the world the lasting peace that will give democracy to the world."

Jean Longuet (France) said his friends were not responsible for the resolution before the Conference, but as it had been raised some answer was necessary to the points raised by Renaudel and Thomas. He agreed that national defence was necessary but in Germany more than in any other country it had degenerated into governmentalism and ministerialism. This did not alter the fact that faults had been committed by others as well as the Germans. Responsibility rested upon others besides the German socialist majority. There was the responsibility of the former French majority who had opposed the Stockholm proposal. The Stockholm Conference might have given a socialist impulse to the cause of peace. Nationalism and Chauvinism which had been beaten in Berlin and Vienna were raising their heads in Paris, Rome and London. If the resolution meant the exclusion of the German majority he pointed out that there would also have to be other exclusions. The socialist International must make its own unity there on the lines of the speeches of Eisner and Kautsky. He agreed with Troelstra in protesting against the condemnation of Bolshevism in the resolution, more especially because the condemnation came from the parties of the extreme right. The revolution must be judged as a whole, as they judged their own revolution in France and must not be regarded as a singular event. He concluded with a declaration of agreement with the plea of Stuart Bunning that the Conference should get on with its real

work of bringing the influence of the International to bear upon the Conference in Paris.

We have to turn ourselves against the hate and the altercations of the people and we have to re-erect the international brotherhood. We have to do what William Liebknecht demanded at a conference in 1891 and we have to reach for one another's hands over the stream of blood which has not been shed for the proletariat but for the bourgeoisie and capitalism.

**Fritz Adler** (Austria) said there were two sections in the Conference, the small minority that always could meet, and the great majority that never did meet. As for responsibilities, he said they in Austria, from the very beginning never doubted that Austria had responsibility for the war. They however, did not represent the government of their countries, but the people. Austria prepared the war long before the Serajevo murder. He said he was no Bolshevik, and he thought that much of what had happened in Russia was wrong, but he would not condemn those people in their absence.

## QUESTION OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

**J. H. Thomas, M. P.** (Great Britain). Mr. President and Friends: I think it necessary to indicate on behalf of the British delegation that the real purpose and intention of this Conference has been lost during the proceedings of the past two days. There are no delegates in this Conference who are more entitled to deal with the question of responsibilities and who could do so with greater justification. But the British delegates believe

that the responsibility for the events of the past four years may well be left to the historian of the future.

We are satisfied that it will be found that, so far as the working-classes of all countries are concerned, very little responsibility rests upon their shoulders. But while talking about responsibility for the past, I submit to you that responsibility for the future is far more important. Is this Conference to break up with our saying that, so far as we are concerned, they may do as they like, we must continue wrangling amongst ourselves. If that is the position of any delegate here, let me remind him, that it is not the position of the great working-class and socialist movement in every part of the world. Those whom we claim to represent, demand that we must subordinate our personal opinions to the common good of humanity as a whole.

It is in that spirit, that the British delegation believes the most important principle that ought to receive our attention is that dealing with the League of Nations. A League of Nations not of a few kings or emperors, not a League of a few diplomats, or statesmen, but a League of common people bound together with the sole idea of making war impossible in the future.

We believe that it is the duty of our statesmen at Paris, not only to make the League of Nations a part of the peace-settlement, but the foundation upon which the peace-settlement itself is built. The war has proved many truths. It has proved that whoever else benefits from war, the working-classes in all countries alway pay the highest toll and make the greatest sacrifices.

The war has also proved that unless a solution is found for this method of dealing with international disputes, civilization is doomed. It is because we believe this, that we



say with no uncertain voice to the people assembled at Paris, we want a peace, not framed in the spirit of the conqueror, in the spirit of those responsible for the peace of 1871,—which left the germ for future wars—not in a spirit of hatred, bitterness and revenge that has actuated many people during the present war.

Unless such a League of Nations is the foundation of all the peace negotiations, you will have territorial, geographical and strategic arguments introduced. You will have quarrelling for position, and the result will be that the imperialists and capitalists will once again take advantage of the position.

But there is something even more important than that. The British Delegation do not believe in a League of a few Nations. They want a League of all Nations otherwise it will be impossible to have any guarantee for the future.

Secondly, we do not believe in a mere paper scheme. We do not want a League guided and controlled by a few bureaucrats. It must be controlled and influenced by the overwhelming mass of the common people in all countries.

Let me put a question to the German representatives. I feel bound to say that you would have rendered both your own and our position much easier if yesterday you had said: "No, we will repudiate the past. We disagree with the past—we are going to change our policy in the future." I put this question because I want you to realize that if the League of Nations is going to be effective if it is going to achieve its objects, then the first necessity is the abolition of conscription the world over. We in our country have militarism; we are opposed to militarism; we never knew what conscription was until this war, and we are determined that as a result of the destruction of one

militarism we are not going to substitute it by another militarism in our own country.

It is the duty of the Socialists of the Central Powers to give an answer—to say that this is the spirit that animates them—that the spirit of militarism that brought their downfall is no longer to prevail in their countries. A very clear and definite answer is wanted on this point.

We want you also to deal with the question of armaments. No longer are we going to allow a vested interest in the destruction of human life. No longer are we going to allow private profit to be made from the blood and treasure of our people. It must be the duty of the League of Nations not only to deal with conscription and armaments, but to be clear and emphatic in its determination to put an end to secret treaties. We must also insist that the League deals with the human side of life. We believe that instead of allowing employers in one country to exploit their workers and then for employers in another country to use that action as a lever to exploit their workers, an international code of labour-conditions, for which the League of Nations should be responsible, must be instituted.

These are the main issues of our case as a British delegation. Paris will be influenced if you are united, if you are bold and determined. There are two dangers facing us today. On the one hand, the reactionaries and the militarists; and on the other, Bolshevism, which will ruin and destroy the fabric of society. We who believe in human progress, who believe in the solidarity of the workers, who believe that there is a greater ideal than production for profits, should take advantage of the remaining few days and see that there goes forward a message, not on behalf of one section or one nation, but in the name of the workers of the world, saying to those assembled in Paris: We look to you to do the right thing, to do justice, to rise above

mere jealousies or personal revenge, to set an example to the world and rebuild on the ruins of the nations a world where women will be honoured, where children will be cared for, and where every human being will have an equal opportunity.

This is the duty of the League of Nations. This is our conception of the League of Nations. Let our Berne Conference give it its first start in this noble direction.

**Ramsay MacDonald** (Great Britain): — It is with feelings of profound pleasure that I speak once more at an international Congress. Such a moment, when not only majorities and minorities in the various countries sit side by side to try to solve the tremendous problems that the working classes of Europe have now to face, but also the representatives of nations that have been at war with each other up to within a few weeks ago; such a moment is one that we have hoped for, prayed for, worked for during these last four years. Profoundly significant and appropriate is it that the first serious discussion of the Conference is upon the League of Nations. I shall confine my speech to one or two practical points that ought to be remembered and emphasized.

It should be remembered that there was no greater danger to any cause than that everyone should profess to believe in it. Everyone believes in the League of Nations now. There was therefore all the more reason why the International should consider what it means by a League of Nations and how it desires to see the League built up. One of the most essential duties of the League of Nations is to create a commission that will control the distribution of raw-material and will preserve in the economic constitution of the world those organizations created during the war which have regulated shipping, transport, and essential



materials, in the interests of the people and not in the interests of a class. Yet all the governments rendering life service to the League of Nations, in their own countries, before going to Paris, or while they are in Paris, have done everything they could to pass back their shipping to the ship-owners, and pass back all those economic elements necessary to the welfare of all the peoples to those who have exploited them, and will exploit them in the future—all the more successfully owing to the enormous wealth the war has put into their pockets.

The success of the League of Nations, its very existence depends upon the character of the peace.

Give Europe a peace today similar to the peace imposed by Germany upon France in 1871 and they could talk "League of Nations" night and day, month by month; they could create Government Committees and call them a League of Nations, but from the Socialist point of view there would be no League of Nations at all. By making such a peace the governments would make it impossible to secure good-will amongst the Nations. The essential foundations of the League would be missing.

The League of Nations must not be associated with the spoils of war: it must not be an instrument of victory. It must be a territorial court of justice, not a police force to enforce injustice. It must enter into an inheritance of fair-play, just dealing, and democratic territorial division. If it enters into any other inheritance then every police-man it commands, every soldier it can order, will be used not for the liberty of the people, but for the purpose of keeping the people unhappy, enchained, revolutionary, and altogether in the warlike frame of mind, which in 1914 enabled the Governments to plunge their peoples into the abyss of destruction.

The League of Nations must not be an exclusive League

—it must not be an alliance of certain Powers possessed of the late war emotions. The League must be an union of all the nations whose political and social development entitles them to enter it. The League must not be a mere footnote to the last four years of European history. It must be an entirely new volume. The old series must be finished, bound up, and placed away upon our shelves.

We must start a new volume, with a totally new spirit, with new ideas, with a new set of writers drawn from the democratic of the free nations of the world.

I welcome the declaration of the German Majority Socialists about disarmament, but I was disappointed with the proposal for a citizen army. A citizen army is conscription. We in Great Britain will have nothing to do with either military or industrial conscription. Whatever the consequences may be, we would oppose such a manifestation of militarism. We would never countenance the imposition upon our children of that pernicious resource of militarism either in the form of a citizen army or in any other form. How could we create a League of Nations upon the basis of a citizen army? The formation of citizen armies upon the basis of population, strike at the very root principle of the League. I appeal to the German Party to knock the citizen army proposal out of their party program and to declare that the only safe basis for a League of Nations from a military point of view is disarmament. You have to begin right. If you begin wrong, every year that passes will find you farther and farther from the truth. The beginning of all evil is insignificant—the end of all evil is colossal. Why not disarm? Are the democracies going to have confidence in each other or not? Is the new German power to be entitled to the inspiring description given to it by Eisner, which I have applauded?

The German Democracy, if allowed to settle down will

be the freest Democracy in Europe. The first thing to make it so, is for it to declare unequivocally in favour of disarmament. The League of Nations can only have one authority—a moral authority. The League is going to fail unless in the minds of the nations it establishes itself in the sacred position of a Court of Justice. It must fail unless the nations affected by its decisions accept those decisions as any law-abiding person would accept the decision of a court of law in their own country. Until the nations have confidence in each other there would be no real freedom, and until that confidence is secured, they could limit armaments, but they could never have peace. The most insoluble problem in the world is the limitation of armaments—no man ever made could solve that problem. There is no half-way. Representing no old order, custodians of no old traditions, animated by no ancient grudge, we freely have come to shake hands with each other, and forget our differences, in order that the stones upon which a secure Europe can be erected in the future may be laid not by one hand, but by the united efforts of the peoples. We have to warn the governments in Paris of what they are doing and warm the hearts of all the democracies in Europe at the same time. In that spirit our pronouncement on disarmament should be made.

The resolution put forward by the commission is a little weak in one particular. I do not think the powers of Parliament have been sufficiently emphasised, and I suggest that the following should be inserted after the words “any further conflict” in the third paragraph:—

“Representation in the central organ of the League shall be, not by delegates of the Executive branches of the Governments of the constituted States, but by delegates from the Parliaments representing all Parties



therein, ensuring thus, not an alliance of cabinets or governments, but an union of peoples."

I desire to emphasize this point as I want the people to be the soul of the League—not the red tape of foreign offices. The contact which the League was to establish ought not to be one of the administrative tops of States but of the masses and the public opinion of the States.

I would want the League to be inspired by the strong vigorous air of democracy. It must not be a breathless thing, dominating a bloodless body which dominates a lifeless Foreign office. I don't want such a League. It is doomed to failure, because it would deprive itself of the democratic driving force which should be its true vitality.

The League to which I object is the sort of League which the governments at Paris apparently want to impose upon the people. All that had so far been announced is that the Prime Ministers of the various States should meet once a year. Such a proposal is an insult to the peoples of Europe and no compliment to the intelligence of any of them. Such a League would be no better than the Holy Alliance of a hundred years ago.

As to the attitude of the governments to Russia at the moment, it is like the attitude of the Italian Alliance to the liberal movement in Spain in 1820—1822. Russia has been singled out for disapprobation not for her crimes, but because of her new political policy. Her new conception of government and international relationships, whether it is good or bad is not of concern at the moment. There are atrocities and tyranny elsewhere and they were not challenged elsewhere. So it was because of the new political and social conceptions animating Russia that she was treated as an enemy.

A League of Nations formed on such a basis would be merely a League of Governments not to secure liberty, not

to safeguard or advance it, not to say to any agitating public: "Bring your case before us so that we can hear it and judge it". Such a League would be a menace to and not a protector of liberty. The League we desire to see is a court to which all oppressed nations could come, bring their complaints, make their charges and ask for judgment, and where they will be assured of receiving justice, fair play and an honourable judgment. Then it must not be a League of Governments.

The League must have legislative functions. It should determine peace or war, make economic arrangements, decide whether a nation is to be punished or not and settle whether soldiers have to march across frontiers. Are we going to place in the hands of a League of Governments, a League of Cabinets,—the power to make peace or war? I am not going to do this. At this moment, owing to our war experiences, movements are beginning to limit and control executive power in democratic Governments, but if these national executives are united in a League, acting internationally, they will have greater authority even than they had in the old days in their own national governments. A League of Nations must not be an expedient for restoring to weakened national Executives the powers taken from them by the national Parliaments. Our League of Nations must be published to the world as a League of Parliaments—a League of Peoples not of Peers. It must not be an International Executive. Unless that is made clear at any negotiations that may take place, the people would find something very much akin to the Holy Alliance which would be imposed upon them, dressed up in a democratic garb and appealing for confidence in democratic language. So it comes to this, that we must make it plain that we are in favour of but such a League of Nations as will secure eternal peace without

oppressing liberty. Such a League can be established only under the circumstances defined in the resolution—a just peace being essential now. Above all the League must be the expression of International Democracy.

When the Democracies unite—when this Conference, representing 26 countries, becomes a mirror of the nations, the old historical differences, the suspicions, the enmities, the hatreds will disappear, sink out of sight forever. Then we and they and all of them and particularly this Conference at Berne will be memorable forever in history for having taken the first substantial step towards the union of the whole human race.

**Troelstra** (Holland)—This was a great historic moment when the International was called upon to put in concrete form its views upon the League of Nations. This is the first real fruit of the war and its horrors. What before the war was purely an ideal has now become the most practical question of all.

As a Socialist, Troelstra is interested in three points. Firstly, with the organization which is proposed for dealing with world production and distribution, so as to bring it to the highest point of efficiency. He considers that the latent cause of war was the imperialist method of anarchy in international trade, the competition between the bourgeoisie of the different countries for world power. There had been no means for the peoples of the world to take council together and regulate expansion on normal and peaceful lines. More and more in the economic sphere must progress be made under socialist forms, or it will not make for international peace. The control of exports will be among the first organizing work of the League of Nations.

Secondly, Troelstra views with some suspicion the proposal for an international military force. He is glad to



find that it is not made obligatory. It is merely assumed as a possibility, and in such a case it is laid down that only the League of Nations can dispose of the armed force. He hopes that the working people all over the world will prevent the return of militarism even in an international form.

Thirdly, labour is the real foundation of the League of Nations. No government must be able to act contrary to the will of the people themselves.

Resolutions are not the only things which will decide whether we shall obtain an effective League of Nations. We do not know under what conditions it will be set up. All will depend on our action for realizing our resolutions.

The first condition is an honourable and just peace. We are compelled, he said, to view what is going at Paris with some suspicion. Only one side is represented. It is in Berne rather than in Paris that the principal conditions must be laid down. When Troelstra thinks that these statesmen who talk about a lasting peace are keeping millions of German prisoners, not allowing them to return to their own country, and tormenting them deliberately and unnecessarily; when he thinks that acts of violence are being carried on as in the occupation of Hungary, of Dantzic by the Poles, and in similar districts; when we reflect on these things, Troelstra feels that we cannot rely on a sound peace being made at Paris. It is therefore all the more necessary that the true voice of peace corresponding to the League of Nations should be heard at Berne.

**Locker** (Palestine) speaking for the Jewish organization, said that the only hope of the Jewish nation against the terrible sufferings it has had and is enduring now, is

in the Socialist International. In 1915 the Jewish people formed a united organization in all countries to support the International and a memorandum dealing with their problems was sent to the Bureau. They now addressed their demands to the League of Nations in the name, not of the Jews only, but of all oppressed peoples. Their main point was that in every country, whatever re-arrangements of territory might be made, there would still be minorities of the Jewish people. Indeed the Jewish people might be described as the national minority *par excellence*. In East Galicia, for instance, besides Poles and Ukrainians there were a million Jews, of whom no one spoke or cared about. Whoever wins, the Jews will have suffered. It is important for the working class movement as a whole that this development of a national minority like the Jews should be regulated by International stipulations. It was not enough to secure their rights of development in the cultural sphere, but they must also be secured in the economic sphere. There had been a terrible boycott in Jewish Poland. Anti-Jewish candidates had been run at the recent elections.

The Jews had been in a tragic position during the war because they had been compelled to fight each other in the various armies. Both the Polish and Galician Jews had also suffered from progroms during and since the war. The treatment of the Jews in Roumania was a classical example of a paper agreement to give them their rights, which had never been acted upon. Unless there was a complete revolution leading to a democratic regime there would be no hope for the Jews in Roumania. Territory had been handed over to Roumania which contained many Jews, who had thus been handed over to their enemies. It was because of this obvious injustice that the Jews took no part in the Buckovina Conference. It was clear that the League of Nations must take the Jewish people under its protection. Zionism

was not enough—the Jews must have full civic, cultural and economic rights. They claimed that as a homeless people they had a right to a country of their own—a claim that he felt sure the delegates would agree with.

Mrs. Philip Snowden (Great Britain). This is my first International and I take the opportunity of expressing my sense of the honour and pleasure it is to address such a notable assembly on so great a theme. In rising to support a League of Nations I shall not require to keep you from the next speaker very long, for my purpose is to support what has already been said by the two previous speakers and in particular what was spoken by my friend Mr. Ramsay MacDonald.

Over a large part of earth a democratic franchise has been achieved for men; but in many countries, women are still denied, either altogether or in part, that power to take part in their own government, the absence of which will deny them the right to exercise the influence they are entitled to in the formation and conduct of the League of Nations.

I wish to congratulate our German and Austrian friends on having extended to women the full political rights they themselves enjoy. This freedom must be given to all the world's women. Similarly, in every Parliament, every section of the people should be represented, and something of the nature of proportional representation be established for this purpose. But my chief purpose is this, again to emphasize the point already made, that the League of Nations must have its base in democracy if it is to be satisfying to the International and safe for the world. We were warned by a previous speaker not to lay ourselves open to the reproach of



utopianism. But why should we be so concerned to save ourselves from such a charge? When we regard the ruin to which the world has been brought by the practical people to whom its affairs have hitherto been entrusted, is there not reason for trusting those who are named idealists, but whose policy of complete disarmament is the truly practical policy for mankind.

On the question of disarmament I should like to add a word in its favour. So long as nations have the means of waging war, so long will war be waged. A boy with a knife wants to whittle something; and a nation with an army or a navy wants to test its value. Men who devote their whole lives to the art of fighting cannot be blamed for desiring to test their skill and strength and so prove that their years of manhood have not been wasted. The only remedy is the abolition of the means of war.

This is a question supremely for women, not only because women and children suffer greatly from war, but because they are the innocent excuse for it. It is always in defence of the weak or of women and children that masses of men are persuaded to take up arms. They are too good to wage war for a lesser motive: to defend the lives of children and the honour of women.

But the lives of children cannot be safeguarded so long as war and the preparation for war continues and the honour of women cannot be touched by anything outside themselves. Like that of nations, it is theirs to cherish or to sacrifice and nobody can rob them. They must refuse to be saved at so great a price as the life-blood of their sons.

Justo (Argentine) says that we have one specially important task before us in connection with the League of

Nations, and that is to insist on the question of Free Exchange. He says he knows this was a bourgeois point of view during the last century, but it has become a proletarian problem now.

By free trade, people get to know and love each other. He cites as examples the Postal Union and the monetarian unity between France, Belgium, Switzerland and Italy. The system of arbitration prevailing in America and the Union of the working class are other examples.

Protection is the worst example of nationalism. It creates solidarity between employers and employees in a certain industry and therefore fights not only against the corresponding industry in the other countries, but against the consumers of its own country.

In the Council of Versailles, they base themselves in the last resort upon military force and really make a French-English-American peace. We want another peace, a sane and durable one. The development of international commerce is a most valuable means of achieving such a peace.

He foresees a unification of weights and measures and adds he is greatly puzzled by weights and measures used in England. He also foresees an international currency, and free exchange of raw materials and food.

He finally reads a resolution from the working class of Brazil against the old policy.

**Müller** (Germany). In the recent elections in Germany, the German socialist majority party took up a strong position in this question of armaments, describing it as one of the deepest causes of the outbreak of war. Some were of the opinion that the first cause of it laid

in rivalry between German and English bourgeoisies. Tirpitz has become one of the most hated men in Germany, because of his fleet policy against England.

With regard to German militarism, he says, there is very little left of it in Germany. It is obvious that German Socialism will never take a step in setting it up again. He recognizes that there is a German National party in Germany who will try to raise it up again and that they will have a hard fight. During the next 20 or 30 years, war will be absolutely impossible especially in Germany, but he hopes that even after that period when the memories of this war have passed away, Socialism will be so far advanced all over the world that war will be impossible.

In the name of the German Delegation he thanks J. H. Thomas for the words of conciliation and reconciliation he has spoken.

**Renaudel** (France) said that although some of the French delegation had attended the Conference with the fixed determination not to allow the question of responsibility for the war to be avoided, they came with positive purposes also. They were all the more anxious to make this clear because of the strong opinion they had expressed in bringing forward their accusations regarding responsibility. He was strongly in favour of a League of Nations in which all nations should be included, being formed at once. The governments were trying to establish a League by the affirmation of a general declaration which was as general as the Declaration of the Rights of Man. They must accelerate the work of the Paris Conference and influence it in the Socialist direction. He did not wish for the destruction of Germany, nor



for its economic weakening. He and others had asserted that view again and again. He knew that Germany was bound in justice to make reparation but beyond that he stood for the full equality of nations being re-established within the bosom of the League of Nations. Germany had certainly ground to be afraid of the political and economic imperialism of her enemies. They were all aware that economic problems were really the cause of the war, but there was no hope for the future unless harmony was again re-established. They must have provisions in the League for the distribution of raw materials, labour legislation, free circulation and free use of all the means of production, in order to secure a happier future for all the peoples. All great problems were international problems and international principles must be dominant in the world in the future. He wanted not only that Germany, but that Russia also should enter the League. The welfare of humanity was not a cake to be cut up but a block of stone which is to be sculptured into a noble statue, expressive of the highest ideals they could conceive. Concluding, he assured the Conference and the German delegates in particular that he and his friends had not brought their accusations in any spirit of hate, but in order that confidence could be re-established in the International in accordance with law and political and democratic rights.

Bienstok (Russia) said the question of the League of Nations is not merely a question of the spiritual unity of the people. The Labour International is absolutely indispensable for the effective establishment of the League and the Conference had discussed the question of the responsibility of the socialist parties during the war; but the important thing was that there should be the inter-

national spirit in all the socialist parties. Otherwise no League of Nations would be possible. It meant the rejection of the old diplomatic conception of non-interference in the affairs of other countries. The policy of non-intervention in the war failed because the socialist parties outside did not help.

Milhaud (France) said that to-day one hesitates between two kinds of peace which seem alike and yet which are very different. First, an organized peace, a complete peace, and secondly a regime which although it upholds all pacific institutions and all possibility of large disarmaments, yet admits that under certain circumstances a settlement by force of arms may finally take place.

Should the second kind of peace triumph, there will be no real security for the world.

The Commission aims to abolish altogether and under all circumstances the right of any nation to take up arms even in self defence. The Commission says no exception is to be made, not even for honour or vital interest. Process of law is not to be replaced by force under any circumstances. Substitution of Right for Force as regular procedure, this is the method by which armaments will totally disappear.

He hesitated to put his signature to such a Statement, but nevertheless he believes that this is the true solution for Socialism to adopt. The Commission says that the League of Nations must even go to the point of rectifying frontiers in the future when necessity arises and taking upon itself the responsibilities in seeing that no peoples take the right of coming to arms or of making revolutions. Nothing of the kind is justified, because new methods

are substituted for it. They will be based upon the consolidation of peoples.

Cachin (France) wished to add two things. The constant attitude of the Socialists before the war was this: that so long as capitalism continues to dominate peoples, war will always be possible. Two fundamental causes of war are the great capitalist classes and the oppression of nationalities. Even now at Paris the greed of capitalism has been unchained again. Reports from there are not such as to permit us to look with confidence on the probable territorial divisions which will be carried out. We must raise our voices here and say: without certain guarantees, certain precisions, the League of Nations will only bring new disillusionment to the peoples of the world.

MacDonald says that if the League of Nations represents governments alone, we cannot give it our confidence.

Cachin agreed. Its constitution must provide for direct representation of the people.

The Secret Treaties have created new germs of conflict and if the treaties made over the heads of the people are not repudiated entirely there will be future wars. Every parliament must send its quota to the supreme parliament of the League. All parties must be represented. If the peoples themselves are called upon to judge in all conflicts which may arise there, we can at least diminish the possibilities of war. Milhaud accepts the resolution as a whole.

Cachin is glad to contemplate that all peoples without exception should be admitted to the League (Milhaud: "We all agree"). This is an absolute necessity in view of



the reserves which are made in this point in another place. It is important for us to insert it here. From this assembly the words of fraternal reconciliation among the peoples must go forth. Once the Germans have repaired the damage done to Belgium, to Northern France, to all the peoples injured by the war, we must put a term once for all to the hatreds generated by the war. The League of Nations would be a fraud if it were not supported, not by one people but by all the people.

However we may doubt the sincerity of the attempt now being made in Paris to create a League of Nations, we must look upon it in this light, that capitalism is now so afraid of the revolutionary results of war that it is in a mood to grant concessions. We must accept these concessions for what they are worth, understanding that there are reserves behind them, nevertheless using them to the best possible purpose.

**Thomas (France).** Comrades of the German majority, I must tell you openly: My confidence in you is not yet complete. More than any other here, I have the right to tell you how very bitterly I felt about your policy during the war. I knew you better than any other French socialists, as more than any other I lived in your organization. It was I who went to Berlin at a time when we tried to exchange resolutions in order to avoid war. And to-day I must openly say to you: My confidence in you is not complete yet. We have not yet received sufficient guarantees from you to enable us to cause France to understand, where the press considers your revolution as camouflage, that your democratic progress can be given full confidence. I declare that it is difficult for me, not to vote against the Resolution, but I think of

the masses of people that stand behind you in Germany. I will trust these people and trust the German Revolution.

He goes on to say: I know that all the Socialist parties that are here had to make heavy sacrifices on the battlefield, that everyone of those parties claims thousands and thousands of dead, but in that moment he cannot help thinking of all those French socialist soldiers, who in the Summer of 1914 went forward not only with the assurance that they defended their own country, but with the assurance to fight for Right and Justice. And Thomas knows they were not mistaken. They did fight for that, says Thomas, and it is to fulfill their last wish that I have just risen; in order to repeat what was their deepest wish and thought:—viz. to establish a durable peace after this war, that will make another such war impossible. For that reason I will not oppose this order of the day.

Kurt Eisner (Bavaria) said that yesterday the League of Nations was spoken of as something very weak, not yet living. Perhaps it is right that the League of Nations should be born in a time of doubt, in a time of storm, in a time of trial, in a manger and under the Star of Bethlehem.

But we must not wait until better conditions prevail, until a normal International is created, we must instantly begin and make it a living thing.

It is not right that Peace should be made to prepare for the League of Nations, but the League of Nations should first be created, and this will lead to Peace.

When we all go home, we must carry with us a powerful work against the policy that is hindering the League of Nations.

He then goes on, to speak of public opinion. He

particularly regrets that in the resolution nothing is said about it, and especially about the question of the press. He turns to the pressmen assembled here and he says: "Pressmen, please pardon me, I don't mean you personally." He says that he began his revolutionary government with an effort to counteract the influence of the press. We must have organs which do not poison the minds of the public. He appeals to the pressmen here to be conscientious towards their great responsibility and to refrain from being the instruments of turning one nation against the other, one man against the other.

If we wish to be a constitutional League of Nations, to be a constitutional principle, then this principle must be inserted in the constitutions of all the States, and the present moment is indeed the right one for the principle to be put into constitution. Further if we wish to abolish militarism, it will be necessary to insert in our Constitution a clause stating that should war be caused by any country and if the country did not first try to arbitrate, then nobody would be compelled to join the forces, and the politicians who had declared war without having first tried to arbitrate, would be guilty of a crime against the whole world.

He then makes an appeal to youth. If militarism is to be abolished, we must begin with youth. He says that before the war already a new spirit was growing which however was choked by the militarist spirit. It is up to us to establish the atmosphere in which this new spirit can freely grow. He refers to MacDonald's speech concerning the armies and says that the experiences of the war have made Germany anti-militarist, especially the South of Germany. He says that not even a citizen army is wanted in Germany. Germany is for the abolition



of all military service. He declares that total abolition is the only good solution.

The new spirit will spring up all over the world, it will have to fight against terrible censorship and dictatorship. He says that in Germany they have in spirit at least, if not in fact, already established the League of Nations, but all this movement was abused in the German press.

He ends in saying that whatever is going on in Paris, we have got to form the League of Nations on our own lines.

Arthur Henderson (Great Britain) was not sure that they were doing all they could to speak effectively to the Paris Conference or that they were bringing to bear the fullest measure of their influence for practical purposes. The British delegates were very anxious that the Berne Conference should be of real practical use. He believed it would be no exaggeration to say that those who were attending officially in Paris were looking to Berne and unless Berne spoke with emphasis and with unanimity they would not only be disappointed but their own efforts would lack that strength which they would otherwise possess. If such were the case, what then should be the strong note of emphasis they should present throughout the whole of their Conference discussions? He thought they ought to make it unmistakably clear that in their opinion the peoples whom they represented were absolutely tired of all wars, not only militarist but also economic. They ought to say to the governments, that all their balances of power, however scientifically arranged, have failed. Their standing armies have not served to save our children from slaughter. Their secret diplomacy has resulted in disaster and was totally in-

consistent with the spirit of democracy. They should say to Paris: "All this must be revolutionized immediately: We desire a real League of Nations *now*."

They could not watch proceedings in Paris, as reported in the Press, without feelings of unrest if not of positive alarm. Were they going to get a real League of Nations in the sense that it will be all-inclusive? Were they going to get a League that will be based upon and retain the spirit of democracy? They should say to Paris that they wanted such a League to be made at once the foundation of a peace of justice. They want a League that will join all the free peoples of the world in a genuine expression of the universal will to permanent peace. They want a League to symbolize in its machinery and in all its operations, a peace of justice, to be a living expression of the peaceful relations between all the members of the great family of nations. In a word they want the League to be the beginning of a real world Brotherhood inspired with a great ideal—the force of an ideal, not the ideal of force. It was for this reason that the British delegation attached so much importance to the declaration of the German majority Socialists: in particular when they said they were prepared to consider the question of complete disarmament. Why should they in a Conference like this talk about any form of militarism whatever? Their ideal should be complete disarmament and the universal abolition of all enforced military service. They should say that the Peace Treaty the Paris Conference were now formulating must provide that there should be no political or economic restrictions for the benefit of one nation at the expense of another; nor should it seek to bolster up tariffs of one country in order to cripple and embarrass the industry of another. They should also say to Paris that there should be no punitive indemnities or reprisals based upon vindic-

tive purposes or any deliberate desire to injure, but only such measures as are calculated to right manifest wrongs. The Paris Peace Treaty must secure the complete recognition of the rights of small nations and even of those people within the British Empire itself—a recognition of the principle that no people must be forced under a sovereignty under which it does not wish to live. They must in Berne declare that there must be no territorial changes or adjustment of power except for the furtherance of the welfare of the people affected and in furtherance of world peace. “When are we going to begin to think internationally?” When he remembered some of the difficulties that had been encountered in the commission on Territorial Questions, he was inclined to think that there are many delegates who have not yet begun to think internationally and were more concerned whether persons should live on one side or another of the frontiers. It would only be when they re-adjusted their values on territorial questions that they would be able to give to any League of Nations however formed its proper chance of carrying out its work with the success they all desired.

## TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS.

**Mistral** (France) in presenting the report of the Commission on territorial questions, said that the day would come when territorial questions would be of less importance than they are to-day. That time would come when Socialism was established and when it would be unnecessary for peoples to rise up against their rulers, to secure their rights. It would only be so far as the peace was dominated by socialist principles that the peoples would be protected and the rights of nationalities respected. What



was it, he asked, which above all created the gulf between Germany and France? Not the indemnity inflicted in 1871. Not the armistice conditions, but the tearing away of Alsace-Lorraine against the will of her people. If the same fault is committed under the pretence of securing strategical guaranties or on any similar ground, one day Europe will be again plunged into blood. Those who want to annex peoples against their will are short-sighted statesmen. He instanced the last Balkan war, where the Alliance of yesterday flew at each others throats for the sake of territory. Again the Treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucarest, the changes and the reconstitution of Poland, the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary, the declaration of the independence of Ireland, all showed that the previous groupings had been unsatisfactory. They could not hold and had to be broken up and the only way to break them up was by violence. The principle animating the Commission was the right of self-determination—a principle that had been placed in the forefront of the resolution of the Inter-allied conference held in London in February 1915, and also affirmed at the conference of neutrals in Copenhagen in the same year, and the conference of the parties of the Central Powers in Vienna. It was also put forward in the program of the Russian revolution. It was in this spirit that the Commission had done its work. It demanded respect for minorities within States. In cases of conflict they pointed to the League of Nations as the supreme authority. They had kept to general principles and had left the conference to determine whether the various and numerous concrete problems should be referred either to the present or some other commission. Finally the Berne Conference should say to all the governments that the peoples who always suffered—who were always the victims of every war—

would not allow them to violate the principles that the governments had told the peoples they were fighting for.

**Huysmans** announced that a telegram had been received from the Social Democratic Party of Ukrainia, which gives details as to its developments, pointing out the large number of national institutions, the newspapers carried on by the party, also the prominent part which they took in the late Ukrainian "Rada" and constituent assembly. They had there 142 members. The party is also very largely represented in the organ of local governments. The standpoint of the party at the present moment is based on the principle of the right of self-determination of nations and it believes that this struggle can only be realized by means of Socialism and complete national freedom. It declares itself for full independence of the Ukrainian nation in the form of a democratic people's republic.

**Kautsky** (Germany) asked what was the position in France regarding the plebiscite? What was the desire of the population? The Pan-Germans refused the plebiscite in 1871 and it was not right for those who defended the plebiscite then, to refuse it now. He had no doubt the majority would vote for unity with France, and he hoped the French would not refuse on that ground to take the plebiscite. Otherwise there would certainly be serious consequences. The German Nationalists would say in future years that the French had not dared to take the vote. It was for that reason that he held the plebiscite was so necessary. The French must not look at this problem from their own point of view only—they must have regard to the effect of their decisions in Germany. In East Prussia and Silesia the Nationalists would say

persistently that Alsace was taken by the French by right of conquest, and the French must give proof that such was not the case. The plebiscite would not be a concession to German nationalism. On the contrary it would be the means of robbing German nationalism of a weapon it would otherwise have. From every democratic point of view the plebiscite was the only satisfactory solution. According to capitalist ideas it is not the population, but the possession of land which was the important point. Capitalism viewed matters as a kind of lawsuit concerning a landed estate, and if they admitted the principle of the plebiscite those who took that view felt that they were giving up their legal right in the law-suit. That was not the Socialist point of view. He assured the Conference that German Nationalism was scotched but not killed and it must not have any opportunity for revival in the future.

Continuing, Kautsky repudiated rights being recognized on either historical traditions or language. Historic rights had been condemned already as a ground for settlement. They could not let the past be their masters. The language test was no better. If adopted it would give Alsace-Lorraine to Germany; and the greater part of Switzerland would also go to Germany. Were they to appeal to the language of to-day?—The Czechs appealed to the language differences of a past age. What age were they to go back to? The 18<sup>th</sup>, the 17<sup>th</sup> century, or the Middle Ages!

He had spoken on these matters not as a German patriot but impartially. He appealed to them, however, to look to the future and not to the past. The time was coming when their Czech comrades would have to fight for and win their freedom from the capitalists in Bohemia, and they could only succeed so far as they made common



cause internationally with their Socialist comrades in neighbouring states.

**Renaudel** (France). He agreed in principle with Kautsky that the men on the spot have the right to say on what side of the frontier they will live. This does not absolve us from the necessity of examining the question; another idea is involved than the people concerned—there is the idea of national unity. Jaurès had said the International must not be confused with the idea of the humiliation of all nations. On the question of Alsace-Lorraine men like Kautsky, Bernstein and Eisner did not wait for the pressure of the International before taking up a position. The question, being one of right, is one well fitted for the International to take up, because the International is based on right. He agreed there was a substratum of economic considerations in this question, but the main question is the general conception of political right. After 1871 at the Assembly of Bordeaux, qualified representatives of Alsace-Lorraine protested against the annexation as Bebel and Liebknecht had also protested. He did not want to break the fraternal bonds between the French and German Socialists but must insist it was a question of right. Passing to the question of the Sarre basin and the Left Bank of the Rhine, upon which the German Socialist Majority had asked for explanations, Renaudel said there was no divergence of view in the French Party: they have opposed every agitation for political or economic annexation. After Cachin returned from Russia in the summer of 1917 the secret treaty made between France and Tsarist Russia regarding the left bank of the Rhine was denounced through pressure of the Socialist party, to the general effect that they protested against any such secret treaties which they

denounced as inconsistent with any idea of the League of Nations.

**Longuet** (France) There is no ethnic group capable of applying the theory of Kant, or better, that of Christ, namely: "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you." They all claim justice for themselves and refuse it to others.

Comrades, in face of this overflow of chauvinist passions and hatred and capitalist appetites, let us proclaim that the International, whose basis is humanity and not such or such a nationality, must appear as the great judge that will justly limit all claims in the common interest. If to-morrow, in spite of the efforts of international proletarianism we are endowed with treaties of peace that will bring new oppression, new iniquities, then we shall say what Friedrich Engels said in 1870 at the time when that crime was being committed against the will of Alsacians and against the heroic protestations of Liebknecht and Bebel: "If a peace of pan-germanism and a peace of our reactionaries is made, Proletarianism shall not consider such a peace and shall submit to revision all the iniquities committed by the bourgeois governments."

**Ramsay Mac Donald** (Great Britain):—I intervene for the purpose of bringing formally before the Conference the position of the British Empire as affected by this resolution we have been discussing. The British Empire is affected by the question of nationalities as in the case of Ireland, and there are certain broader problems like those of India and Egypt; there is also the question of the colonies in which the populations are not yet fit for self-

government; and finally there is the question of certain strategical points occupied by the empire on the assumption that it might at any moment have to defend its existence. We were informed by the commission that there was some misunderstanding as to the attitude of British Labour on these questions, and I propose to make it quite definite. First on the question of nationalities: the British Labour party for many years has definitely taken the position that it was in favour of Home Rule for Ireland. At conference after conference we have passed resolutions declaring that fact. Never has one of our candidates fought an election without making it perfectly clear that if returned to the House of Commons his voice and vote would be always in favour of Home Rule. The Irish people have always regarded British Labour as a reliable and stalwart supporter of theirs in the House of Commons. You will find that in the new parliament the Labour party will uphold the old policy of British Labour in favour of the Irish demand.

Turning to the question of India, the Labour party has done a very great deal to encourage the movement in India towards Home Rule. At our party conference in Nottingham a few mouths ago in January 1918, we passed a resolution endorsing the policy of Home Rule for India, "believing that the time has arrived when our brothers in India are capable of managing their own affairs equally with our brothers in South Africa, Australia and other dominions." That was a perfectly definite declaration in support of Home Rule for India. The tendency of British rule in India for some years past has been in the same direction. The general tendency of what were called the Morley reforms was to encourage self-government in India. They did not satisfy us. But



they did look in that direction. At the present time discussion centres round the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, which has got the final sanction of the government and is to be made the basis of legislative proposals. When these proposals come before the House of Commons, the Labour party will criticise them and try to improve them in the direction of the Resolution I have read. With regard to Egypt, I am perfectly certain that although the Egyptian question has not hitherto figured largely in British politics we will be prepared to apply the same principles to Egypt as to India.

Coming to the question of places of strategic importance, I take Cyprus as a typical case. We took Cyprus for strategical purposes because it was considered necessary to have a station in the Eastern Mediterranean to enable us to maintain our trade routes to the far east if the empire had to fight for its existence. It has never been much use to us, and when the League of Nations is established its value will go altogether. The principles laid down in the main resolution before the Conference will be applied as far as the British Labour party is concerned to the people of Cyprus. With regard to the colonies, the Labour war aims memorandum adopted by the Inter-allied conference, in which British Labour took the initiative, said:—"The Conference is of the opinion that the return of the colonies to those who possessed them before the war, or the exchanges or compensations which might be effected, ought not to be made an obstacle to peace. Those colonies that have been taken by conquest from any belligerent must be made the subject of special consideration at the Peace Conference, in which the Communities in their neighbourhood will be entitled to take part. But the treaty on this point must secure economic equality in such territories for the peoples of all nations

and there-by guarantee that none is shut out from legitimate access to raw materials, prevented from disposing of its own products, or deprived of its proper share of economic developement." Anticipating the conclusion of the main resolution before you, the Inter-allied Conference declared in favour of a system of control for the colonies established by international guarantee under the League of Nations. On this and the other points I hope I have expressed clearly and definitely how the British Labour party stands with regard to this resolution. We shall vote for this resolution, not for the purpose of applying it to other peoples and empires, but honestly to apply them to the British Empire and trying to make the empire a lever for the liberation of all the peoples that come under its sway.

Sakasoff (Bulgaria) pleads for a recognition of the unfortunate state of the proletarian Turks who were drawn into the struggle by their government.

Huysmans (Belgium) does not bring the question of Belgium into the discussion as it is already certain that that country will be fully recompensed for the losses it sustained through the German invasion. The pretended conflict which has been mentioned between Belgium and Holland does not exist—certainly not between the Socialists of the two countries. That which Belgium more particularly demands is river access to the sea, and this is an international question—one for the League of Nations.

Concerning the question of Luxemburg he says that if the people wish to return to Belgium they will be welcome, but if they wish rather to remain independent it is for them

to say. He states that the war, moreover, did not create a break between the Flemish and Wallon peoples. The Flemish are persuaded that their revindication (i. e. full equality in the body of the Belgian state) will be absolutely accomplished under the protection of the League of Nations.

## DISCUSSION OF THE LABOUR CHARTER.

Henderson expressed the hope that the same interest would be shown in the consideration of the report of the Commission on International Labour legislation as had been displayed in the discussion of what might be called political subjects. There was a vast amount of unrest amongst the producing classes at this moment. It arose from the great expectations that had been formed during the war amongst the unthinking classes, that immediately the war ended a determined effort would be made to produce an entirely different state of affairs from that which prevailed before the war. If the great mass of the people they represented were to be delivered from the intolerable conditions under which they lived it seemed to him that one of the most important means to achieve this was to secure greater uniformity in industrial conditions throughout the world. In commercial and industrial life the employing classes had no better weapon against the workers than the competition between the different countries. Every trade union official present knew that when representatives of capital found themselves confronted with the demands of the workers, they said:—Yes, we agree that your demands are reasonable and conditions ought to be radically changed, but we have to remind you of the competition we have to meet from this country or that; if the power of your organization



tried to reduce the hours of labour or raise the rate of wages in such or such an industry in those countries competing with us nearer to the level of hours worked here, nearer to the rate of wages we pay, we would not be indisposed to try to bring the same to a higher standard in this industry of ours. That is the position, and he believed they had an important and unique opportunity of altering this state of affairs. The commission had endeavoured to put into the document the proposals of a real Labour Charter, among them many questions upon which the Labour movement in some countries had been in agreement for years past—against the employment of children under 15, the securing of better conditions for women and young persons in industry, the prohibition of women's employment in unhealthy and dangerous occupations, and other provisions to place women and children in a position of better advantage. When they tried to do this they found there was no power to secure enforcement of provisions made.

They also wished to secure as speedily as possible a maximum working day, which in no commercial or industrial employment should exceed eight hours per day, together with a minimum or living wage for all workers.

Finally, he hopes the Report of the Commission would be carefully considered and that unanimous agreement could be secured. The document together with the other resolutions of the Conference should then be taken to the Peace Conference at Paris, so that the machinery necessary to give effect to its provision, will be set up. The Conference there-by would have assisted most materially to secure a vast improvement in the economic and social conditions of the workers in all countries.

**Shirkie (Great Britain).** It was no secret that several

members of the British delegation had met representatives of the British government in Paris during two or three days in the previous week for the purpose of discussing the machinery necessary to operate the Labour Charter. The League of Nations had been agreed upon at the Conference irrespective of the position of the governments at Paris, as a means of keeping the workers of the world from fighting; and the Labour Charter had been brought forward as a means of preventing industrial strife in an international sense. After all it was well to remember that in all ages industrial conditions had had a good deal to do in leading up to war, and he felt sure that if they could achieve better industrial conditions throughout the world, it would be possible for the League of Nations to work very much more smoothly. During the war some countries had experienced great prosperity in the industrial sense and many workers earned very good wages, but they had no reason to believe that this prosperity would last and it would not retain its proper level when communication was again resumed with other nations of the world unless preserved through a Labour Charter.

**De Tomasso** (Argentine) said that the delegation from the Argentine Republic adopted the Labour Charter as elaborated by the special commission of the Conference, but would propose an amendment of the highest importance and of a value permanent and universal: viz. "Payment of salaries in gold or in paper money exchangeable at par." For where paper money has lost in value the workers' wages have consequently reaped the disaster of this depreciation. If we wish to establish in regard to insurances against accidents, to the duration of the work day, etc., equal conditions for all countries—especially to prevent the cost of production from being higher in one country than in another—it

is necessary to have a standard monetary type of a nature which would escape depreciation in each country. He begs his comrades to consider the great and urgent importance of this claim.

**Janson** (Germany) refers to the history of international labour legislation, and points out how the first international conferences on labour legislation were organized by bureaucratic governments, but that the workers were also working towards international labour legislation.

The war however has entirely altered the situation.

One of the most important and urgent points, is the workers' right of combination because only through that can we get the necessary driving force to promote a proper standard system of legislation. In that right of combination it is important to include the right of workers of all nationalities to take part in the work of Trades Unions in the country where they happen to live.

Measures for the protection of women and children and young persons are also important,—and there should be special protection of mothers. Another, and perhaps the most important measure, is that the eight-hour day must be made universal.

Janson explains instead of attempting the impossible task of fixing a minimum wage for countries with different costs of living and standards of life, the Commission thought that with the right of combination it would be possible to fix a fair standard of wage. For unorganized and sweated trades, it is declared that boards shall be set up by the state for the purpose of fixing minimum rates of wages.

With regard to the last part of the resolutions, we had enough, he says, of the bureaucratic method of checking the progress of the labour movement towards a proper system or standard of labour legislation. He recognizes that



some government officials have done excellent work and mentions in particular some English factory inspectors, but on the whole, the bureaucratic spirit has invaded this province far too much.

It is suggested in the resolutions that there should be a permanent commission and an annual conference for the purpose of developing a code of international labour legislation. The workers must be properly and fully represented on both these bodies with the International Association for Labour Legislation.

Janson, in conclusion, begs the Conference in the name of the Commission and in accordance with the Trades Union Conference decisions, to adopt these resolutions unanimously, so that the joint decision of these Conferences may go forth to the world and have all the influence they deserve.

**Mae Gurk** (Great Britain). Several years ago the Federation had decided that youths over 18 years of age should not be employed underground unless they had worked in the mines before that age. The Report ran counter to that policy. It was assumed in the Report that this provision was made in the interests of safety only. He would submit that if mining were dangerous for youths it was dangerous for adults too.

Referring to the proposed prohibition of women's work in connection with mines, he said that in Great Britain they had had no women working underground for about fifty years, but that they had accepted women workers on the surface as members of their organization for some time. They held that this class of work was both healthy and congenial—much more so than many classes of indoor factory employment.

The British delegation were of the opinion that if a

permanent Commission were to be set up to administer the charter it should not be left to the International Trade Union Federation to nominate representatives, but to the various national organizations in the different countries.

Finally he hoped that instead of accepting the idea that they might be able to achieve this charter within 20 years, as he had heard some remark, they would all go to their different countries and work hard for its earliest possible realization.

Kunfi (Hungary) says that the suffering which the proletarians have endured in this war in all countries gives them the right to demand not only certain measures and labour regulations such as are contained in the Labour Charter laid before us, but also that the whole capitalist system should be abolished.

The Labour Charter is extremely important in itself in so far as it raises the moral condition of the workers, but it should be capable also of making workers strong enough to destroy capitalism. The labour legislation question is far more important now than before the war, but it is clear that labour legislation is only valuable in so far as it has a strong labour force behind it. The Labour Charter will be only a scrap of paper if there is not behind it a strongly organized working class to see it carried out. The question of labour legislation cannot therefore be settled exclusively by regulations such as are contained in the Labour Charter.

He thinks this question is extremely important in Hungary. Hungarians are looking to Paris with great anxiety, because, owing to the military occupation of certain parts of Hungary, very serious conditions are prevailing, and if the imperialistic spirit which seems

to be prevailing in the Paris Conference leads to an imperialist peace, this will have disastrous consequences in Hungary. It will incite the laborious and poor working population of Hungary to troubles and wars. The conditions at the base of the Labour claims should be syndicalist claims and be controlled by state organizations.

He makes an appeal to the International and especially to the French and English comrades to come to the help of the Hungarian workers.

**Milhaud.** As the League of Nations is organizing Peace, so it must organize Labour Protection. The basis of the League of Nations is the establishment of peace. Its summit should be: Protection of human labour. The labour forces which have been sacrificed will again revive and develop. Socialism will progress everywhere. Milhaud makes this appeal to the Conference:—prepare the conditions whereby the working class can make up for its loss through the war and acquire freedom, and whereby it can so organize itself that it will regulate and control production.

## PROPOSAL FOR A PERMANENT COMMISSION OF THE CONFERENCE.

**Huysmans** (International secretary): proposes the appointment of a Commission to continue the work of the Congress. This is an extremely important question. In discussing the question of responsibility for instance, delegates had the impression that a greater international congress must soon meet. It may be held in June, in July or August—at any rate, some time soon. It is important to have the work carried on in the meantime, and the delegates will understand that what is now being pro-



posed has a temporary aim. Huysmans says that in the meantime there is much work to be done. He regrets the absence of Belgian delegates, but we must not allow their absence to interfere with our work. There is much to do in seeing that the principles we advocate are carried out. The effects of the war itself are only transitory, and he believes that we shall very soon find the whole working-class again united.

Meantime, he says, we must have a Central Commission to watch affairs, to meet when necessary and to summon delegations from all the different countries. That is why, when telegraphing to the Argentine Party, he asked them to send a permanent delegation. They have now in South America important labour and socialist organizations, and he is very glad that the Argentine comrades are with us.

He also thanks the British delegation for their initiative in bringing about the meeting of this Conference. England is represented here by the Trades Union Congress representing four and a half million workers and the Labour Party representing three millions. For having advocated the cause of the International, Henderson left the British Government and British Parliament. He specially took the initiative in getting this Conference to meet.

The British delegation has now made a suggestion, and once the British get an idea into their heads it is very difficult to get it out again. They are very anxious that the International should be re-organized on a sound basis. The old International Socialist Bureau had not the necessary resources to exercise the influence it should have had. It had an income of 20,000 francs a year. To carry out the work of the International Socialist organizations properly, a yearly credit of at least one million francs is necessary.

He proposes the following resolution:—

“This Conference decides that its work must be continued in such a way as will permit us the greatest influence on the Paris Conference on behalf of the Labour and Socialist movements of the countries represented. It also recognises that the war has resulted in misunderstandings and strong differences of attitude, but the Conference expresses the hope that the working classes of all the countries may soon be united on the principles of the International.

A Commission of two representatives appointed by affiliated organizations, with an executive composed of Branting, Henderson and Huysmans, will supervise the execution of the resolutions of this Conference, convoke the Conference whenever the decisions of the Paris Conference render it necessary, prepare the agenda for such Conference, and take such steps as may be considered necessary for an early re-organization of the International.”

Although the Executive body is small, it may convoke the larger Commission whenever necessary. With this organization it will be necessary to organize a great International Socialist Congress sometime in the summer, and at that Congress the whole International can be re-established on a sound basis.

Verfeuil (France) says that we should be unanimous in giving the International all possible power and vitality to fight its mortal enemy which is Capitalism. But the International must have both a material and a moral basis. The material basis is dealt with in the resolution laid before us. The Conference at present is not entirely represented. Various sections are missing. The most important part of the Russian Socialist party is not represented here. He deplores also the absence of the Swiss and Italians.

But the International must not be exclusively based on a material organization, it must also have a living soul.

The International failed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1914.— not only because we were not strong enough materially but also because we did not have our duty clearly outlined. Some sections placed country above International, they should have placed International above country. The International must confirm the principles set down and unanimously adopted in Amsterdam.

The International must not work so much with the bourgeois governments. The object of socialism is to command the means of production and exchange, it is to realize collectivism in all countries.

He says that all these principles will have to be confirmed at the next Conference.

**Stuart Bunning.** The British delegation agreed that it was important that the International should be revived, and that it ought to be given material and other powers such as it has never possessed up to the present. They were exceedingly anxious that the Conference should deal with first things first, and the first thing in their estimation was the work going on in Paris, and upon which they wanted to exercise the influence of their own Conference.

The British idea was that all the delegations should appoint a Commission, composed of two of their number in each case, which together with Branting, Henderson and Huysmans, should remain in close touch to carry on the work, keep in close contact with Paris, deal with any emergency that might arise, and at the same time go into the other matters referred to, the revival of the International, etc.

**De Tomasso** (Argentine) wanted the representatives of the Argentine organization to have an opportunity of assist-



ing in the creation of the International. They had an important and a growing Socialist and Labour organization in South America and had recently held a united conference of all sections. He supported Stuart Bunning's proposal, that Argentine should be represented on the proposed commission to organize the next Conference. Many questions would arise in connection with the Paris Conference which would vitally affect Argentine, such as trade relations with Europe, questions of emigration, and similar problems and it was desirable that members of the Argentine delegation should be available for consultation. Their movement was developing in all directions and it would soon become one of the strongest supports of the International.

## PRISONERS OF WAR.

Wels (Germany) said the question of prisoners of war in the hands of enemies had moved the German people deeply, but he wished to plead for prisoners of war throughout the world, as their position was the hardest and bitterest of all. They were innocent sufferers, who in many cases had been imprisoned for years, separated from their families and denied the joy of returning home even now the war was over. There were 800,000 German prisoners, 250,000 of whom were in France, and it had been announced that it was the intention of some of the Allied governments to retain some of these men for a considerable time in order that they might be placed on work of reconstruction. The Conference had a duty in this matter to their working-class supporters, because it was certain it could only have the effect of decreasing wages generally. It would be a terrible irony if in the year the League of Nations was formed

they had to witness a return to something approaching chattel slavery.

**Eisner** (Bavaria) draws attention to the fact that the resolution now before the Conference bears the name of a Frenchman and a German. This is a good omen for the beginning of the new time. There was a stirring movement of protest in favour of the prisoners in Germany. He says that he renounces the right to protest. They have no such right whatever—they, the German people who had sent thousands of people to compulsory labour in their own country, who carried out methods of barbarism, they who destroyed the industrial production of the countries which they had invaded. For this very reason he renounces the right to protest, but he has confidence that it is the first duty of the new age to relieve the lot of the captive.

He does not propose to deal with the competition of prison and free labour. If labour power is wanted in France and Belgium, it is the duty of Germans to assist in offering that labour power. Eisner says they ought in honour to assist in it voluntarily. When war began, there were volunteers, now, "Go and build up these devastated districts voluntarily." To the young Germans who are students he says:—"Help in building up the new age in the student sense of the word. Build it up, build it up, with your own hands. Artists, architects, mechanics, go there on the very spot and lay the foundation stone of the new age." He is ready, if French comrades agree, to sign such an appeal.

In a final appeal, Eisner says that we who believe in the humanity of the new age can ask that humanity be shown to the prisoners.

**Huysmans** appealed to the delegates to be men, not of

passion, but of political sagacity. Their task was to abolish militarism—a positive task. The proposition before them was a simple one. On one side the prisoners had been sent home. On the other side they had not. As a man of human feeling he demanded that they should all go.

## THE PROBLEM OF RUSSIA.

**Ramsay MacDonald** (Great Britain) said this resolution was in many respects the most important considered by the Conference, and it was very unfortunate that it had to be discussed so late in the proceedings. It was essential that a pronouncement should be made on this subject for three reasons:

1. The Socialist movement must guard itself;
2. The Governments of Europe must be warned of what is going on inside Europe and that warning could best be given by men attending the Conference, many of whom had become personally responsible for new governments, and all of whom were in contact with the great working-class movements that make and unmake States;
3. It was necessary to make a pronouncement in order that those who look forward to some new rapid way of establishing Socialism in the world might be challenged, not in a hostile but in a friendly way, to reconsider their theories and their tactics.

They were living in absolutely abnormal times. There was a reaction towards Conservatism on the one side and to Revolution on the other. Reaction comes when the fabric of Society has been so shattered by some great social crisis such as the recent war, and when principles that we usually use for the purpose of criticising the old and established order become suddenly released from responsibility and threaten themselves to become new sources of disorder



and anarchy. It is the duty of the Socialist Movement to keep a calm mind, a same judgment, a steady lead, and to tell the people how they are to act, what goals they are to aim at, and what paths they are to pursue. War compels them to revise some of their theories. Before the war they all asumed that democratic expression, on its governmental side, could only be expressed through Parliament. The war has shown that this conception of democratic liberty may now be supplemented. What is Democracy? How can it express itself? What is the responsibility of aggressive minorities in the State? They used to use an old-fashioned Socialist saying "the tyranny of the minority in some circumstances might be justified." Under what circumstance can it be justified? Can anything like continual government be established on such a principle? It was the duty of Socialists to say "no!" Such might be a temporary and limited phase of the Revolution, but the moment that the conception of the tyranny of the minority becomes the basis of a continued policy, then that policy and theory must be condemned by every Socialist who believes in the liberty of the individual and those who desire to exercise their liberty within the states to which they belong.

They welcomed all the revolutions that had been achieved in Europe, but those revolutions must not create conditions which might be accurately described as a transition from one form of tyranny to another. Liberty, democracy, freedom must be their steady and unchangeable goal. A revolution that did not establish liberty was not a revolution towards Socialism, and was not a revolution for which Socialists ought to make themselves responsible or allow the outside bourgeois reaction to impose the responsibility for it upon them. Unrest was to be seen on every hand. It might be welcomed as an indication that the society

affected required change, but unrest must always be constructive and not destructive, and inspired by a definite conception of social re-organization. It must be architectural in the positive sense and not merely concern itself with destroying that to which it was opposed. The moment the vision of an unsettled democracy was limited by negations then working-class leadership ceased to be safe, and began to be unsafe. The characteristic of Socialism was its constructive side, not its destructive side. They as Socialists were anti-capitalists, but that attitude did not comprise all of Socialism. There were many other theories and movements which were constructive social conceptions. Socialism is an ideal of society and the International must always keep this before it as the special characteristic of the working class movement which it voices and solidifies. It and they must always keep before them that constructive view of Society which alone entitled an organization or an individual to be called Socialist.

There was one thing which he thought the Conference was especially entitled to declare. The Allied governments were meeting in Paris. The war was over—nay, it was won! Some of them, while the war was going on continued to preach to very deaf ears that the war was not only going to shatter armies, but could shatter Society. They appealed to their people to consider the social after-effects while the fighting was proceeding, because those after-effects would probably have more to do with the future of Europe than the fighting. They had been right in that appeal and history had justified and would justify them. Some of the Allied governments, and some of his own colleagues took the view that those responsible for the war must continue to receive punishment for their action. If that punishment was of a nature to bring anarchy to Central Europe that

punishment would be very unwise and, indeed, criminal. In the old wars the disbanded soldiers marched up and down the high-roads of Europe, thieving, pillaging, begging and helping themselves by their own force and the subjection of the people they came across. The results were written in large type in terms of social anarchy across the pages of European history. At the same time the destroyed people were visited by physical plagues. Was the same story to be written after this war? Were there to be disbanded armies going back to their homes spreading a psychological plague of wrong ideas, making stability impossible, destroying the future in the passion of the present? If they, in their responsible positions in their various countries, allowed that to take place, they would be betraying their trust and would not be doing their duty to the workers in all nations. Once such a movement starts in one nation, it spreads from nation to nation. He was prepared to accept his own responsibility in this matter and because of that he was entitled to appeal to Paris to help them in their work of organization and settlement. When they had hungry, starving men, and families punished in their cupboards for their national sins, when workmen were driven from employment and compelled to walk the streets after they had been innured to army habits by four years war, they had a fruitful source of Bolshevism. These were the causes of unsettlement and no government could stand against them. Given the strongest government today and given an experience during the next six months of starvation and unemployment in its capital, and in that time it would be tottering to its fall and from being a settled, it would become an anarchistic state. Let them all together—whatever section they belonged to—right, centre or left—as a Conference, appeal to the governments represented at Paris to shoulder their responsibilities for the spirit of Bolshevism in Europe at the present



time. Let them address Paris in the plainest possible language. They had created a plague spot in Central Europe, which would extend until those in the victorious countries would be submerged in the wave of Bolshevism. Face Paris with that—let Paris answer in its own way, but let Berne put the responsibility upon the proper shoulders.

Some like himself thought the pronouncement at the present moment was premature. Bolshevism in theory was still working itself out. Who among them could define Bolshevism? Would they define it in accordance with Lloyd George's speeches, or from the columns of the capitalist press? Or would they define it from the pamphlets that have been allowed to go into the Entente countries during the war? Speaking for Great Britain, wherever Bolshevik pamphlets were to be found, they were seized by the police. He would like the case of Bolshevism to be discussed in a fuller conference than they had in Berne. The Swiss, Italian and other parties were not represented; and he felt that before they ventured to define Bolshevism they should hear the Bolshevik side stated, so that they could act as judges with something like complete evidence. The International, after all, is greater than any mistake that might be made on this resolution. The International has been born again after the war. They allowed allegiance to the great masses of the Socialists of the world. They were proud to look around the benches in the Conference, proud to listen to their business, hampered though they might be by the diversity of tongues. There were men belonging to nations which had been enemies for four years, sitting side by side, bringing their common experience so that truth and wisdom might prevail. They were proud of that and their pride would remain with them. Let them go forth on their international and national work after having made a firm declaration not against this section or that movement, but defi-

nately upon the principles upon which Socialism must stand. Let them go forth showing that they were calm, faithful and steady, that they knew the way they were going, that as Socialists they were conscious of their purpose and their methods. He appealed to those who did not altogether agree with the resolution, to register their protests, but to do nothing that would split the International. In a month or two, when things might be clearer, he wanted another Conference with their Swiss, Italian and other comrades present when this subject could be discussed at greater length and with more consideration. At the moment, all that they should do, whatever the terms of their declaration, was to hold up the flag of Socialism, on the same flagstaff, planted on the same place as before. From that standpoint they could go forward into the new future, united nationally and internationally—they could go forward to make that great conquest for the democracy that always had been and always must remain the great goal of the creed they all professed.

In his closing speech Pres. Branting called attention to the fact that those who had hoped that the Conference at Berne would end in a disintegration of the International will be disappointed. The Conference at Berne has succeeded in laying a new foundation for the International of the future in clearing the question of responsibility and in being determined to reunite the labouring classes of all nations on the principle of justice. The Conference as well has found a way for adjustment of the existing territorial differences whose final solution must be sought in a League of Nations. The Berne Conference is the first step in the reunion of all the laboring classes of the world, and it is to be hoped that after this first step will follow others which will arrive at definite results in the development of humanity.

## THE RESOLUTIONS.\*)

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\*) Official copy supplied by the secretary of the conference.





I.

**RESOLUTION  
ON THE QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITY.**

1.

The comrades of the German majority made the following declaration as a better explanation of their standpoint:

"The German proletariat has, through the revolution, abolished and destroyed the old system which was responsible for the war.

The German Social Democracy, however one may appreciate the detail of its policy during the war, has now proved through action its determined will to devote all its forces for the reconstruction of the world ruined through war and to fight in the spirit and service of the International together with the socialists of all countries for the realization of Socialism in the League of Nations."

2.

The commission unanimously proposes the following resolutions for acceptance:

"The Conference at Berne acknowledges, that the question of the immediate responsibility of the war has been made clear through the discussion and through the declaration of the German majority, stating the revolutionary spirit of new Germany and its entire separation from the old system which was responsible for the war. In welcoming the German revolution and the development of democratic and socialist institutions which

it involves, the Conference sees the way clear for the common work of the International.

The further explanations, the German delegates have presented during the debates dealing with the League of Nations, convince the Conference that from this time on the united working classes of the whole world will guarantee and prove the greatest power for suppression of all militarism and of every attempt to abolish international democracy.

The Conference considers that their debates have done useful work in clearing the ground and leaves to a future international Congress, which can be held under normal circumstances, the task of passing the judgment of the International on the world-historic question of the responsibility of the War."

## II.

### **RESOLUTION ON THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.**

The Union of the peoples of the World in an intimate association has always been one of the fundamental objects of the Socialist International.

This ideal arises from the solidarity of the working-classes of all the countries and from the socialist goal which cannot be realized nationally but only internationally. Owing to the world war the realization of the socialist ideal of the League of Nations has today become an urgent task even for non-socialists. It has become clear that with the great development of military machinery and the means of transport, every war has a tendency to turn the whole world into two hostile camps which will fight each other with the most odious engines of destruction to complete exhaustion. The war just terminated



has brought civilization to the edge of the abyss. The next war would destroy it completely and even the preparation for the next war threaten it with destruction. This disaster can only be prevented by the creation of a League of Nations.

This League of Nations must be based on a real peace of justice, which will not give rise to any conflict. The League should be formed by the Parliaments of the different countries and representation in the central organ of the league shall be, not by delegates of the executive branches of the governments of the constituent States, but by delegations from the parliaments representing all parties therein, assuring thus not an alliance of Cabinets or Governments but a union of peoples. All the nations organized on the basis of national self-determination should be included in the League of Nations. All members of this League should have equal rights and equal duties to assure the proper working of the League. Such peoples as have not yet obtained self-determination shall, under the protection of the League, be encouraged and assisted to fit themselves for membership in the League of free Nations.

The first task of the League of Nations shall be the prohibition of new war and armaments. The League of Nations must abolish all standing armies and bring about complete disarmament. If any armed force should be required, it shall be under the control of the League.

The League must create an International Court which, by means of mediation and arbitration, shall settle such disputes as have arisen or obviate such as may arise, including such as are considered vitally to affect the existence and honour of the states. This international court must have the power, after consultation with the

people concerned, to rectify frontiers when the necessity arises.

It will also control the application of the fundamental rights which are to be secured to all nationalities, minorities as well as majorities.

The League shall possess means of exerting economic pressure to induce and enforce its decisions when necessary.

The League of Nations must further prevent all economic war by the establishment of free trade, free access to all countries, the open door to colonies and the international control of world thoroughfares. Wherever national tariffs exist, they shall apply equally to all countries. The League must be given the power to develop into an authority controlling the world's production and world distribution of food-stuffs and the raw materials with the view of bringing the production of the world to the highest grade of efficiency.

The functions of the League shall include the establishment, development and enforcements of an international Labour Charter.

The League of Nations is being created under the pressure of conditions produced by the war. It is to be feared that as these efforts lose their force, the capitalist conflict between States will again arise. The League will therefore be capable of powerful development and of growing equal to its great task only if the working-class movement in all countries supports the League with all its strength.

In proportion as the working-class movement in every country grows in force, as the workers become conscious of their international tasks and become more determined in their opposition to any policy of might on the part of their own governments, in proportion in fact

as socialism is realised and the new socialist international grows in power, will the League be able to achieve more powerful and beneficent results.

### III.

## GENERAL RESOLUTION ON THE TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS.

Since Socialism sees the liberation of the individual within society in the creation of a new system of production suppressing bourgeois exploitation, it is convinced that national oppression and exploitation will not really be abolished except by the total disappearance of the class system among mankind. The true liberation of the nations will be their liberation from the yoke of capitalism.

But since true political democracy destroys the authoritarian state and breaks down the barriers between the people and the State it pre-supposes as regards international relations, the destruction of the barriers existing between the nations. This victory of democracy in all countries will be a tremendous step towards international understanding. The fate of the nations is placed in their own hands.

The Conference considers that a democratic solution of the various nationality questions is the only guarantee of a righteous and lasting peace. The arbitrary and enforced union of people of different nationality in a single State has been and will always be a cause for international disputes and therefore a danger to peace. The nationality question is therefore of international importance and a solution can only be found within the League of Nations. In opposition to the present tendency to determine frontiers according to the military conditions created by the war,



the International Conference lays down the following principles:

1. The right of all nations to determine their own fate and to decide to which State they will belong within the League of Nations.

2. In disputed territories, the question to be submitted to a plebiscite under the control of the League of Nations, whose decision is final.

3. The protection of nationalities forming a minority or majority in a country to be secured by a minimum of national rights, determined and guaranteed in its application by the League of Nations.

4. Where new States are formed or territories made part of already existing States, the League of Nations must assure the nations concerned of their vital economic interests by means of treaties of commerce and free communication.

5. The right of the League of Nations, after consultation by plebiscite, to satisfy any new claims of nationalities or parts of nationalities which desire to modify their frontiers.

6. Protection of the populations of dependencies, protectorates and colonies to be assured by the League of Nations, which must take steps to prepare the native populations for the exercise of the rights of free self-determination, through the founding of schools, grants of local autonomy, by the exercise of the freedom of the press, meetings, associations and other political rights.

The Conference therefore protests against any attempts to falsify the application of the principles hereby proclaimed and, in consequence, rejects:

1. The rights of the victors to the spoils of war, and all the agreements by which States have been drawn

into the war with the object of increasing their territory at the expense of other nations.

2. The fixing of frontiers according to military or strategical interests.

3. Forced or veiled annexations claimed on the ground of so-called historic rights and so-called economic necessity.

4. The creation of "faits accomplis" by the military occupation of disputed territories.

5. The establishment of any economic or political sphere of influence.

The Conference appeals to the working-classes of every country to exert themselves to the utmost to compel their governments to respect these principles in the interests of the conclusion of a lasting peace.

#### IV.

### DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP.

#### A. RESOLUTION OF THE COMMISSION.

The Conference hails with joy the tremendous political revolutions which in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany have shattered the old imperialist and militarist regimes and have overthrown their governments. The Conference launches an urgent appeal to the Socialists and workers of these countries to build up democratic and republican institutions on the basis of which the great work of Socialist reconstruction may be accomplished. In these decisive times, when the problem of the socialist reconstruction of the world becomes even more pressing and urgent, the working masses must unanimously decide upon a clear plan of action which will lead to their emancipation.

In full agreement with all previous congresses of

the International, the Berne Conference takes a decided stand upon the principles of democracy. The re-organization of society, as it becomes more and more permeated with socialism, cannot be realised, much less established unless it rests upon the triumph of democracy and is firmly rooted in the principles of liberty.

The institutions which form the basis of all democracy: liberty of speech and the press, the right of assembly, universal suffrage, the parliamentary system with governmental responsibilities, the right of coalition &c. provide the working masses with the instruments necessary for carrying on their struggles.

As the result of recent events, the Conference desires to make the constructive character of the Socialist programme absolutely clear to all. Socialisation consists in the methodical development of different branches of economic activity under the control of democracy. The arbitrary taking over of a few undertakings by small groups of men is not Socialism, it is nothing less than capitalism with a large number of shareholders.

Since in the opinion of the Conference the effective development of Socialism is only possible under democratic law, it follows that it is essential to eliminate from the outset all methods of socialization which would have no chance of gaining the adhesion of the majority of the people.

Such dictatorship would be all the more dangerous if it rested upon the support of only one section of the proletariat. The inevitable consequence of such a regime could only be to paralyse the forces of the proletariat by fratricidal war. The result would be the dictatorship of reaction.

The Russian delegates have proposed that a Commission representing all socialist tendencies should be



appointed by the Conference and sent to Russia to report impartially on the economic and political situation there. The Conference realises the difficulties involved nevertheless, since it is of great importance that the Socialist proletariat of all countries should be fully acquainted with all the facts relating to the popular upheavals in question, the Conference authorises the permanent Commission to send a mission with this object to Russia. The Conference decides to put the question of Bolshevism on the agenda of the next conference and authorizes the permanent Commission to carry out the necessary preparatory work. In the meantime the Conference desires to draw attention to this fact: the famine and the misery which the war has brought upon the entire world especially the conquered countries, is bound to engender social anarchy. Instead of using Bolshevism as a terrifying phantom and denouncing under this term all uprisings of the despairing proletariats, the capitalist governments should face their own responsibility. The counter-revolutionary forces are already everywhere at work, and the Conference warns those who have at present the fate of the world in their hands, against the dangers arising from a policy of imperialism and of military and economic subjection of peoples.

The Conference urges the Socialists of the whole world to close their ranks and not to deliver the revolutionary peoples into the hands of international reaction and calls upon them to do their utmost to ensure the triumph of Socialism and Democracy.

#### **B. RESOLUTION OF ADLER AND LONGUET.**

The main idea of the policy which we have indefatigably and energetically pursued during the whole course of the war has been the restoration of the inter-

national front of the class-conscious revolutionary proletariat. This basic principle also determined our attitude as regards the Berne Conference.

We maintain that the Berne Conference provokes criticism, not on account of the *contents* of its resolutions, but because their contentions were not expressed *during* the war, that they came too late, after the war was over.

An exception must be made as regards the Resolution on "Democracy or Dictatorship." The same elements that have for 4½ years passively and actively obstructed all international action and have thought good to refrain from any sort of International Conference, are now in great haste to induce the Conference to take action in a manner which would of necessity greatly increase the difficulties of the International. We repudiate any such condemnation of the events in the Russian Soviet Republic since the evidence at our disposal is absolutely insufficient, and the only fact that we know with certainty is that the disgraceful campaign of lies in which the telegraph agencies of the Central Powers and the Entente vied with one another during the war, is being carried on without slackening against the Russian Soviet Republic. We do not desire to be the victims of official calumny in judging political movements.

Unfortunately moreover, we cannot rely on the uncorroborated records of the Russian comrades present at the Conference who represent only a minority of the Russian proletariat. Without casting any doubt on their good faith, we must demand that both sides should be heard, before a decision is taken. — The Berne Conference is a first, and still very feeble attempt at international collaboration. Whole parties, such as the Italian, the Servian, the Roumanian and the Swiss have abstained. Others have decided on participation with heavy hearts.

We have warned against any resolution which would render difficult the future union of the working-classes in every land. We desired to keep the door open for the class-conscious Revolutionary Socialists of every Land. No attention is being paid to our warnings. We do not wish to participate in the guilt of any action against the International, and we vote against the Resolution since certain paragraphs are capable of being exploited by the bourgeoisie against the Russian Revolution.

V.

**LABOUR CHARTER.**

Under the wage system, the capitalist class endeavour to increase their profits by exploiting the workers as much as possible. Such methods, if they are unchecked undermine the physical, moral, and intellectual powers of the workers and their children. They prevent the development and even endanger the existence of Society. The capitalist attempt to degrade the workers, can only be entirely removed by the abolition of the capitalist system. But the evil can be strongly mitigated both by the resistance of the organized workers and by the intervention of the State. By this means, the health of the workers may be protected and their family life maintained, and they can secure the opportunity of attaining the education needed to enable them to fulfil their duties as citizens in the modern democracy.

The limits, which capitalism has reached, are very different in the various countries. One of the dangers here involved is that industry and labour of the more progressive countries are injured by a system of sweated labour in the more backward countries. The need to establish an international standard of labour legislation



has been rendered doubly urgent by the terrible upheaval and fearful devastation of the life-forces of the people brought about by the war. The foundations of a League of Nations however, will make it possible to satisfy this need.

The Berne Conference having taken into consideration the resolutions adopted by the International Trade Union Conferences of Leeds and Berne, and without prejudice to any more far-reaching resolutions which may be adopted by trade unions, demands that the following minimum requirements, which are already carried out in part in some countries, shall be converted into a code of international law by the League of Nations on the conclusion of peace.

1. Primary education should be compulsory in all countries and a system of technical education established. Higher education should be established in all countries and should be free and accessible to all. Capacity and aspirations should not be thwarted by the material conditions in which a young person lives. Children under 15 years of age shall not be employed in industrial occupations.

2. Young persons between 15 and 18 years of age shall not be employed more than 6 hours a day with a break of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours after a maximum spell of four hours work. At least two hours of instruction in technical and continuation classes shall be given to the young persons of both sexes, daily, between the hours of 8 a. m. and 6 p. m. The young persons must be allowed time off to attend the classes. The employment of young persons shall be prohibited (a) between the hours of 8 p. m. and 6 a. m., (b) on Sundays and holidays, (c) in especially unhealthy trades, (d) in mines below ground.

3. The hours of work of women workers shall not

exceed four on Saturdays. They shall not be employed after midday on Saturdays. Where exceptions are necessary in certain occupations, the women workers concerned shall be allowed an equivalent half-holiday on another day of the week. Women shall not be employed at night. The employer shall not give women work to do at home after their regular day work. Women shall not be employed in especially dangerous trades which it is impossible to make healthy, nor in mines, either above or below ground. Women shall not be allowed to work for ten weeks altogether before and after child-birth, six weeks of which shall be taken after the confinement. In every country a system of maternity insurance shall be introduced, providing compensation at least equal to the sickness insurance benefit payable in the country concerned. Women shall receive the same pay as men for the same job.

4. Hours of work shall not exceed eight a day or 48 a week. Night work between the hours of 8 p. m. and 6 a. m. shall be prohibited by law except in so far as may be unavoidable for technical reasons or from the nature of the occupation. Where night work is allowed it shall be paid for at a higher rate than day work. The Saturday half-holiday shall be introduced in all countries.

5. Workers shall be allowed a continuous weekly rest of at least 36 hours taken from Saturday to Monday morning. Where the work is such that an exception to the prohibition of Sunday work must be allowed, the weekly rest of 36 hours shall be granted during the week. In continuous industries the shifts must be so arranged that the workers have at least every other Sunday free. But these provisions should be adapted to the cases of countries and groups for which another day of rest is

customary. Where night work and Sunday work are allowed, they must be paid for at a higher rate.

6. With a view to the protection of health and prevention of accidents, the daily hours of work shall be reduced below eight hours in dangerous trades. The use of poisonous material shall be prohibited in all cases where it is possible to procure substitutes for them. An international schedule of industrial poisons, which are to be prohibited, shall be kept. The use of white phosphor in the manufacture of matches and of white lead in painting and decorating work (both indoor and outdoor) shall be prohibited immediately. The railway wagons of all countries must, within five years, be fitted with automatic couplers adaptable to all wagons.

7. All laws and orders dealing with the protection of workers shall apply in principle to home industries.

Social insurance laws shall be extended to home industries.

Home work shall be prohibited: (a) In the case of work liable to give rise to serious injury to health or poisoning; (b) in food industries, including the making of bags and cardboard boxes packing articles of food.

In home industries it should be compulsory to give notice of all infectious diseases. Work in dwelling places where there is infectious disease should be prohibited, suitable compensation being paid. It should be agreed that compulsory lists of all workers and middle-men in home industries shall be kept and inspected and that all the workers should have wages books.

The medical inspection of young persons employed in home industries should be arranged, and also the inspection of dwelling-houses. In all districts where there is home work, wages boards, representatives of employers and workers shall be instituted, with the duty of fixing



legal rates of wages. The rates of wages shall be posted up in the work-places.

8. The workers shall have the right of free combination and association in all countries. Laws and decrees (domestic service laws, prohibition of coalition, etc.) which place certain classes of workers in an exceptional position in relation to other workers, or which deprive them of the right of combination and association and of the representation of their economic interests, shall be repealed. Emigrant workers shall enjoy the same rights as the workers of the country into which they immigrate, as regards joining and taking part in the work of trade unions, including the right to strike.

Any interference with the exercise of the right of combination and association should be punished.

Every foreign worker shall have a right to the wages and conditions of work agreed to between the trade unions and the employers of his trade. Where no such agreements exist, foreign workers shall have a right to the wages customary in the locality for their trade.

9. Emigration shall not be prohibited.

Immigration shall not be prohibited in a general way  
This rule shall not affect:

- (a) The right of any State to restrict immigration temporarily in a period of economic depression in order to protect the workers of that country as well as the foreign immigrant workers.
- (b) The right of any State to control immigration in order to protect the public health and to prohibit immigration for the time being.
- (c) The right of any State to require that the immigrant shall come up to a certain minimum standard in

reading and writing his native language, so as to maintain the standard of popular education of the State in question to enable labour regulations to be effectively applied in the branches of industry in which immigrants are employed.

These exceptions can however only be admitted in agreement with the Commission provided for in Art. 15.

The contracting States undertake to adopt without delay laws prohibiting the engagement of workers by contract to work abroad, putting a stop to the activities of private employment agents in this matter, and prohibiting the admission of workers engaged by contract.

The contracting States undertake to compile statistics of the state of the labour market based upon the returns of public labour exchanges, and to exchange such statistics at as short periods as possible through an international centre, so that the workers may avoid going to countries offering few opportunities for work. These reports should in particular be communicated to the worker's trade unions.

No worker shall be expelled from a country on account of trade union action. Appeals against such a deportation shall be dealt with by the ordinary courts.

10. In cases where the average earnings of the workers (whether men or women) are insufficient to provide a proper standard of living, and it proves impossible to bring about collective agreements between the workers trade unions and the employers, the Government shall set up wages boards, on which employers and workers shall be equally represented, with the object of fixing legal minimum rates of wages.

Moreover, the contracting States shall convoke as speedily as possible an International Conference charged to take effective measures against the reduction of value of

wages and assure their payment in money which has not depreciated in value.

11. In order to reduce unemployment, existing labour exchanges in every country shall be linked up in such a manner that they can provide as far as possible prompt and complete information as regards the demand for and supply of labour. A system of unemployment insurance shall be set up in every country.

12. All workers shall be insured by the State against industrial accidents. The claims of workers and their dependents shall be determined in accordance with the law of the country where the undertaking employing the injured worker is domiciled. Laws for the insurance of widows and orphans, and old age and disablement insurance laws, shall be introduced and shall apply equally to persons native to the country and to foreigners. A foreign worker, leaving the country in which he was employed, may be given a sum down instead of annual compensation, if an agreement on this subject has been come to between the State where he was employed and his home country.

13. A special international code of law for the protection of sea-men shall be established. This code shall be drawn up with the collaboration of the sea-men's unions.

14. The enforcement of these provisions shall, in the first place, rest with the Labour Departments of each State and their industrial inspectors. The inspectors shall be appointed from the ranks of technical, hygienic and economic experts, and also shall include workers and employees (both men and women). The trade unions shall assist in the effective enforcement of the labour laws. Employers who employ at least five workers of foreign tongues shall be required by law to post up in the mother tongue of such workers all labour regulations



and other important notices and also to arrange at their own expense for such workers to be given instruction in the language of the country.

15. With a view to the carrying out of this treaty and the further promotion of international labour regulations, the contracting States shall appoint a permanent Commission consisting in equal parts of representatives of the States which are members of the League of Nations and of the International Trade Union Federation. The Commission shall prepare the ground for, and convoke Conferences of representatives of the contracting States, which shall be held every year to promote international labour legislation. One-half of the voting members of the Conference must consist of representatives of the organised workers of every country. The Conferences shall have power to adopt binding resolutions within the scope of the powers conferred upon them.

The Permanent Commission shall co-operate with the International Labour Office in Basel and the International Trade Union Federation.

## VI.

### RESOLUTION

#### ON THE RETURN OF PRISONERS OF WAR.

The International Conference appeals to the humanitarian spirit of the Allied Governments:

1. That sick and wounded prisoners be repatriated immediatly.
2. That measures should be considered with the object of proceeding with speedy repatriation as

soon as the preliminaries of peace have been commenced.

3. That the camps of prisoners of war be visited by special commissions which shall be authorised to deal with the organization of repatriation.

## VII.

### RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE CONTINUATION OF THE CONFERENCE WORK.

This Conference decides that its work be continued in such a way as will permit us the greatest influence upon the Paris Conference on behalf of the Labour and Socialist Movements of the Countries represented. It also recognizes that the war has resulted in misunderstandings and strong differences of attitude, but the Conference expresses the hope that the working classes of all the countries may soon be united on the principles of the International.

A Commission of two representatives for each affiliated organisation, with an Executive acting in all cases and composed of Branting, Henderson and Huysmans, will supervise the execution of the resolutions of this conference, again convoke the conference whenever the decisions of the Paris Conference render it necessary, prepare the Agenda of such a Conference and take such steps as may be considered necessary for an early reorganization of the International.







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