

Arming the Proletariat in Germany

THE other day, the press published a statement that the diplomatic corps in Berlin had asked the German Government for "protection" against the "anarchistic propaganda" of the Spartacus Socialists and their campaign for the general arming of the proletariat.

It is not the business of the diplomatic corps to protest against this armament. But the diplomatic corps, necessarily representing the interests of international Capitalism, protests against a revolutionary measure—in the name of humanity!

This is natural. It is not natural, however, that men claiming to represent Socialism should equally oppose the arming of the proletariat, proposed as a necessary measure of the Revolution by the Spartacus Group. The discussion about arming the proletarian masses has come up more than once in the Berlin Soviets, and Ebert, Scheidemann & Co., together with hesitating, neither-fish-flesh-nor-yet-fowl Socialists, have declared against the proposed measure most bitterly. This is directly counter-revolutionary.

The great problem of a revolution is the problem of power—shall power reside in the masses, or shall it reside in the bourgeois "representatives" of the masses? This problem is an aspect of the problem of state organization—shall revolutionary reconstruction proceed on the basis of the parliamentary, bourgeois state, or on the measures to prevent these officers from entering the country as commanders of troops.

The old state is the state of a society based on class divisions, an expression of class rule, an instrument for the oppression of the masses and baffling the will and the action of the masses, centralizing power in a bureaucracy, police, army and judiciary. This state, in spite of republican, parliamentary forms, retains all the essential machinery of oppression of the monarchical state, since the monarchy and the parliamentary state are each the expression of class rule, each the form of authority of a ruling class over a subject class. It is necessary that the Revolution conquer this state, transform it into a new state of the masses necessary in the transition period from Capitalism to Socialism.

The revolutionary Socialists in Germany, accordingly, struggle to destroy the bourgeois state—and it makes not a particle of difference how "democratic" and "Socialistic" that state may be—by means of the new state of the revolutionary masses, the unified Soviets. This means annihilating the bureaucracy, annihilating the police, annihilating the army, and centralizing all necessary police and army functions in the armed people itself, until unnecessary.

The class consciousness of the masses must be transformed into action and class power; and the arming of the masses is the form of expression of this transformation, the instrument for conquering the bourgeoisie and crushing counter-revolutionary manoeuvres.

The German army is returning home, and must be demobilized. What shall be done with the arms? The demobilized soldier should retain his arms and become an armed civilian, a unit of the armed people. The workers who have not been at the front should equally secure arms,—and this is still more necessary and important. If this is not done, the state will possess an armed power since a part of the soldiers are not demobilized, and this "standing army" would become the instrument of counter-revolutionary action against the masses, who would be helpless, unarmed, dispersed by the armed power of the counter-revolutionary government.

Instead of an army, the armed people; instead of an army to "maintain order"—euphemism for counter-revolution—the armed masses themselves directly usurping the functions of the army and the police for purposes of revolutionary action and progress, maintaining the revolutionary order of the masses, not a counter-revolutionary "order" over the masses.

The proletariat alone is the revolutionary force, the proletariat alone may wage the uncompromising struggle for the overthrow of Capitalism, the proletariat alone is the maker and the preserver of the Revolution; and it is necessary that this proletariat shall be armed, that it shall itself directly, consciously, energetically and dynamically, constitute the state, the army, the police and the judiciary, shall itself usurp and discharge the functions of the "state." This alone is the straight and sure path to completing the proletarian revolution in Germany, as in Russia.

That the proletarian revolution in Germany is far from having conquered, is proven by one circumstance: the officers of the old regime are still at the head of the army, still issue orders and statements, precisely as those two political hacks of the old regime, Dr. Solf and Dr. Erzberger, issue orders and statements in the name of the "Socialistic, democratic" government of Ebert, Haase & Co. This fact indicates that the revolution is not yet complete, and indicates equally a threat for the future: the army, under counter-revolutionary control, may at any moment engage in counter-revolutionary action. Agitating among the soldiers and the masses, arousing their class consciousness by means of propaganda, is absolutely necessary; but it is absolutely necessary also, that this consciousness realize itself in po-

wer, and this power is comprised in the armament of the proletariat. The whole army will never be converted to the revolution; a standing army necessarily would be under the control of the counter-revolutionary government; and unless the masses arm, the danger of a counter-revolution becomes acute. Hence the demand of the revolutionary Socialists in Germany, as in Russia, for the armed revolutionary proletariat, for the workers' Red Guard.

That the army is already being used for counter-revolutionary purposes in Germany is indicated in the charge made by the Spartacus Socialists that the Junker stronghold at Thorn is concentrating royalist troops, who demanded free entrance into the fortress and the removal of red flags.

"The situation is extremely serious," declares the Spartacus proclamation. "Only ruthless energy and the firmest measures can save the situation. But the Government stands with folded arms, and even encourages these criminal rebels by circulating imaginary stories of Bolshevik conspiracies, at the same time lending its arm to the strangulation of the revolution by leaving the command of the troops to its enemies."

"The people themselves must rise and wrest power from unscrupulous officers. We demand that the Government at once arrest Hindenburg and all reactionary officers, at once remove headquarters from Cassel to Berlin, and at once take measures to prevent these officers from entering of the country as commanders of troops."

This is an acute danger to the revolution, a danger becoming all the more acute in the measure that the bourgeois-"Socialist" government and the criminal moderate Socialists palter with the issue. The necessity of arming the proletariat is not a problem of abstract theory, it is not a problem of annihilating the army because Socialism aspires after a society without an army,—it is a problem of the immediate, practical requirements of the Revolution, of completing the Revolution, of crushing the counter-revolution, and of developing the consciousness and might of the proletariat to seize all power—and without this seizure of power by the proletariat the German Revolution will, immediately at least, become a tragic expression of unrealized expectations.

"All power to the Soviets" is the necessary revolutionary program in Germany; this would constitute the organization of a new state, on the model of the Paris Commune and the Soviet Republic in Russia. The arming of the proletariat is an absolutely indispensable measure of such a State.

Counter-Revolutionary Socialism in Poland

THE newspapers recently reported that the new "revolutionary" government of Poland is headed by a veteran of the Polish Socialist movement in Galicia, the editor of the Crakow "Naishpoda"—Ignatz Dashinsky, while the commander-in-chief of the troops is General Joseph Pilsudsky. The same dispatches tell us that Polish troops crossed the Prussian border and occupied Poznan, capital of the former Great Duchy of Poznan. That the new Polish government will try to extend its influence over the three parts of Poland (Austrian, Russian and German) there can be little doubt. The success of such an attempt is very probable, and very likely, we are at the present moment witnessing the eve of the actual restoration of all parts of the former Kingdom of Poland.

The New York capitalist press, and following it the New York "Call," claim that the new Polish government is not only a revolutionary government, but also Socialist. Is it so?

Dashinsky and Pilsudsky are members of the extreme right wing of the Polish Socialist movement. Their movement corresponds to the Western European social-patriotism and petty bourgeois Socialism, and to the right wing in Russia as represented by Menshevism. This single circumstance ought to keep us from expressing too much enthusiasm concerning the "socialistic character" of the new government of Ignatz Dashinsky.

The Polish Socialist movement is divided into three parts. The fighting representative of the Polish proletariat is the Polish Bolshevik Social Democracy, under the leadership of Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Radek and Pysky. The Polish Social Democracy has all along conducted a struggle against romantic nationalism in the Polish Socialist movement and against the exponents of that nationalism who controlled the Galician Socialist party. It has always pointed out that Polish Socialist nationalism is not only an outgrowth of the epoch when the petty nobility reigned in Poland, but very often has become chauvinistic and anti-Semitic. It goes without saying, then, that Polish Bolshevism should not be represented in the Dashinsky's Cabinet.

Dashinsky and the Galician Social Democracy have always been the exponents of co-operation with the bourgeoisie. In the early days of the war, Dashinsky together with the "radical" bourgeoisie, organized Polish legions to "fight Czarism." The leader of these legions, under Austrian military command, was Joseph Pilsudsky. The Polish legions were the connecting link which united the Polish social-patriots with the imperialists of the Central Powers. Dashinsky's party dropped its anchor into the muddy pool of Scheidemann's social-patriotism and betrayal of Socialism. The Crakow "Naishpoda" differed very little from the Vienna "Arbeiter Zeitung" and the Berlin "Vorwaerts" in chauvinism and support of the imperialistic war, fought for "democracy" against "Russian barbarism." And in the early days it was natural that the movement led by Dashinsky during the war had nothing to do whatever with international Socialism.

It has been pointed out above that Polish Bolshevism has always conducted a theoretical struggle against the Polish social-patriotism. However,

not only the Bolsheviks were arrayed against the latter. The left wing of the Polish Socialist party (the left P. P. S.) also disagreed with Dashinsky and Pilsudsky. It also on several occasions reproved the party's romanticism and chauvinism. We, however, are not in a position at present to judge the present relations of the left wing towards the new Polish government.

The adherents of Dashinsky and Pilsudsky in America are being grouped around the Chicago "Dzenik Ludovi". These gentlemen do not even belong to the Socialist party. They have wholly imbibed the imperialist "philosophy" of Russell, Spargo & Co. The adherents of war against Czarism in the early days of the war, their organizations later developed into appendages of the Allies—how concepts of democracy alter!

Therefore, we take the liberty to warn over enthusiastic comrades inclined to believe the reports of the telegraph agencies about the "Socialistic spirit" of the government of the former Polish-German-Allied legionnaires. They are anti-Bolshevik. They are social-patriots and nationalists, necessarily petty bourgeois and counter-revolutionary. If they should unite with the bourgeoisie—and this is more than likely—then Poland would become the willing tool of international Imperialism.

P. S. The latest reports from Europe state that the personnel of the Polish government has changed. The premier is now Pilsudsky. There is mention of L. Vasilevsky. All this, however, does not change the substance of the general idea emphasized in this article. The Polish government continues to remain in the hands of the right wing of the Polish Socialist movement.