

## The Constituent Assembly

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

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

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

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

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

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

By N. I. Hourwich

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## "The Blind Leading the Blind"

By Scott Nearing

OUR leaders have failed us. The educated, trained, responsible men and women whose duty it was to show the way to their fellows, lost the way themselves. They were blind guides. When the great test came they proved by their own actions that as shepherds of the flock they were unworthy of trust.

Our leaders did not tell us the truth. Their mouths were full of words and phrases, but the words and phrases were lies.

They told us that we should let well enough alone. Things were not so bad. A little patience and they would improve—and they were to do the improving by sharing profits, building shower baths in the basement; "regulating" railroad rates, contributing to the Children's Aid Society, and praying to God on Sunday. "We have things well in hand," they said. "Follow us. We know!"

They told us that the system of society under which we live could endure, with its monstrosities of poverty, prostitution, child labor, unemployment and monotonous, endless, grinding toil. It was possible, they said, to continue a scheme that enabled the few who were booted and spurred to ride the many, who were saddled and bridled—gouging us for our coal and wheat; robbing us for the rent and plundering us for the dividends on watered stocks. Such a society, they insisted, would hold together—even if the hand of every man was raised against his neighbor.

While we plundered and enslaved the weaker peoples, "backward" races; while we raided those too weak to resist our assaults; while we spread desola-

tion and terror over the face of the earth, in order to pay a profit of six per cent. or better on the investments of our ill-gotten gains—while we slapped Justice and Brotherhood in the face, they continually told us that God was on our side.

Can it be possible that they did not understand that civilization is built upon the united action of men? Did they deceive themselves so completely as to imagine that a system of society would last which "shelters the noble and crushes the poor"? Could they not see the whirlwind of human sighs and groans and the torrent of human tears that the ferocious system of exploitation and cut-throat living was gathering about them? No! Their education, their experience, their daily surroundings had blinded them to the realities of life. Living in a fool's paradise of imaginary safety they twittered their song of contentment—as ignorant as the blind earth-worm of the coming storm.

They even went so far as to tell us that we could keep peace among the nations of the world by building battleships—if we only built enough of them. "Preparedness," said they, "will prevent war." Every great nation of the West, acting upon this advice, bled itself, year after year, of its hundreds of millions of dollars to equip an army and construct a navy, to devise engines of death, and to mobilize its resources for conflict. Europe was for forty years, an armed camp, with the common people sweating blood to pay the bills, and then—then the storm broke.

This war was war. It was no child's play, no flash in the pan; no game among amateurs—but a struggle

among battle hosts that had been preparing for not a century. The preparedness of Europe brought on a war more fearful than any of which history bears record.

Then the shepherds betrayed their flocks.

All through the years—the bitter years of exploitation and outrage—they had preached brotherhood and talked democracy. God was the father of us all and we, as brethren, must dwell together in peace upon the earth. They told us to love one another and overcome evil with good. They commanded us to do to others as we would have others do to us.

The preachers, teachers, editors and lawyers do not know about economic determinism. They did not understand that when convictions are placed on one side of the balance, and income, social position, a reputation for "respectability" are placed on the other, the great majority of men and women will forgo conviction and stick to income. These many years they had taken their living from the hands of the plutocracy—the wealth power of the United States. When the great hour came, the plutocracy gave the well-known call and they responded.

They were blind—these leaders of ours. They did not understand life. They mixed up the true and false and were unable to tell them apart. They played a game for the plutocrats—leading us to a precipice and then standing aside to watch, with horror and anguish, while even their own children were carried over the brink. We trusted them to lead. They did not understand. They were blind, "and the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch"