

# The Revolutionary Age

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## The New Stage Opens

**T**HE oncoming proletarian revolution in Germany is acquiring a larger consciousness and power. Every day, every hour, increases the energy of the revolutionary masses, their understanding of the problems of the Revolution and the necessary tactics of class action. Every victory of the counter-revolution and of the petty bourgeois democrats of majority Socialism is a Pyrrhic victory, out of which emerges, gigantic and implacable, the developing power of revolutionary Socialism. The problems are enormous, the opposition powerful; but the struggle proceeds. The proletariat is snapping asunder the fetters of petty bourgeois democracy and petty bourgeois Socialism; it is, out of life itself, acquiring the energy and the means for the revolutionary struggle against Capitalism and the petty bourgeois democracy,—a struggle that uncompromisingly directs itself to the definite conquest of power,—the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

The National Congress of Councils accepted reaction; it rejected the struggle for power, for the dictatorship of the proletariat; it abandoned the proletarian class struggle in favor of petty bourgeois illusions, conciliation with Capitalism, and the parliamentary struggle for reforms! All this is implicit in the refusal of the Congress to decree all power to the Soviets and its abject acceptance of the Constituent Assembly. If the revolutionary masses had acquiesced in this decision, the German Revolution, which may let loose the impulse for the international proletarian revolution, would have degenerated into a bourgeois revolution, with "Socialist" trimmings, would have yielded power to "liberal" Capitalism, would have thrust upon the proletariat and Socialism the beggar's task of "parliamentary opposition." Acceptance of the decision of the Congress would have meant the abandonment of Socialism, the abandonment of the proletarian revolution in Germany, the betrayal of the proletarian revolution in Russia and of the revolutionary struggle in all nations.

But the miserable decision of the congress was not accepted by the revolutionary masses. Simultaneously with the congress deciding to become the apologist and protector of the petty bourgeois "Socialist" counter-revolution (behind which skulks Imperialism), the revolutionary masses opened a new stage of the Revolution—the stage in which the issue is definite and inescapable: Socialism or Capitalism—the stage in which compromise, equally with Capitalism and petty bourgeois Socialism, must, will be, and is being, savagely rejected.

The new stage of the Revolution opens with forces and tendencies clearly and sharply defined:

1.—Events have demonstrated, what was apparent in analysis, that the policy of the Ebert-Haase Government was determined by the "majority" Socialists, and not by the Independents; that the Independents were simply screens against the action of the masses. This is now clear in the virtually forced withdrawal of the Independents from the Government.

2.—The Government of Ebert, Scheidemann & Co. must resort to the use of the most sinister elements and most reactionary means to preserve itself and prevent the conquest of power by the revolutionary proletariat.

3.—The Executive Committee (Central Council) of the Councils of Workmen and Soldiers is solidly united with the Government, with the "Socialist" counter-revolution, providing Ebert, Scheidemann &

Co. with the authority to use any and all means against the proletarian revolution.

4.—But this Central Council is not representative of the revolutionary masses; it was not at the time of its election, it is still less to-day. The action of local Councils and the masses in city after city are an implied, if not direct repudiation, of the policy of the Central Council—local councils are usurping government functions, regulating industry, developing out of life itself activity and measures that the dictatorship of the proletariat would organize, unify, and "legalize."

5.—The Ebert-Scheidemann Government is now openly allied with the bourgeoisie, and tacitly allied with the Imperialism of the Allies it depends upon the counter-revolutionary generals, whom it retains in power, upon the old diplomats whom it refuses to dismiss, upon the Allies to whom it pleads: depends upon any and all things except Socialism and the revolutionary proletarian struggle. But the Government is shaking.

6.—The withdrawal of the Independents from the Government is not a victory for the Independents; while it is a victory for the "majority" Socialists, it is equally a victory for the Spartacans, since, the conscious and vital elements among the Independents must accept now the Spartacus policy. It is, moreover, a victory for the Spartacans in another sense, that it impresses upon the masses the futility of the policy of hesitation and compromise, that they must march straight to the revolutionary conquest of power.

7.—The international aspects of the Revolution are being more clearly recognized by the German proletariat as *one National phase* of the Social Revolution. An alliance with proletarian Russia is becoming a fact—Haase's miserable juggling with the Bolsheviki issue has discredited Haase, and not the Bolsheviki. The Spartacus Group has organized nationally as the Communist Labor Party, in conformity with the (Bolsheviki) Communist Party of Russia.

8.—All problems of the Revolution are becoming aspects of one problem—the necessity for the conquest of power, of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the dynamic means equally for the struggle against the counter-revolution and Imperialism in Germany, against international Imperialism, for the realization of a Socialist peace, and for the coming of Socialism. . . .

The reactionary forces in Germany, imagining that "representatives" decide events in revolutions, misjudged the importance of the National Congress of Councils, as did the bourgeois—"Socialist" Government. But the reactionary decisions of the Congress did not halt the elemental action of the masses: they accelerated this action. A few days after the Congress adjourned, Dr. Solf issued a desperate appeal to the Allies:

"The Allies must forget that Germany is their enemy. We must unite in the one great purpose of saving the world from the dreadful consequences of Bolshevism. . . . The north German revolution is adopting the methods and shows the influence of the Russian Bolsheviki. The scenes we see every day in Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden and the industrial centers of Westphalia and the Rhineland find their analogy in Moscow and Petrograd. Personally I believe Bolshevism is not only the greatest menace now confronting Germany and Russia, but it is equally menacing to all adjacent countries. And once Bolshevism has developed power in Germany, it will spread all over the

world, like the most contagious of diseases. It must be the aim and duty of all the Powers to fight this universal enemy. . . . I am sure that Bolshevism has prepared its groundwork in France and Italy, the same as it has in Finland and Lithuania."

Having secured a mandate from the reactionary Congress of Councils, the Ebert Government prepared to disarm the Revolution. Its policy is to retain in the service "loyal" and reactionary troops, while disarming those who favor new and definitely proletarian action. The events that opened the new stage of the Revolution developed out of the decision of the Military Commander of Berlin, Otto Wels, to disband the majority of the 2,000 revolutionary sailors in Berlin,—men who initiated the revolution at Kiel and who are active in the new revolutionary movement. The sailors refused to disarm and leave Berlin. A controversy started. On Monday, December 23, a delegation of sailors marched to the headquarters of Wels, in Unter den Linden, to protest against his counter-revolutionary order. Wels thereupon, as if prepared, summoned the "Republican Guard," which opened fire upon the sailors with machine guns. The sailors, incensed at this method of answering their protest, immediately met the attack by an attack of their own upon the headquarters and made Wels a prisoner. Another detachment of sailors thereupon marched to the Chancellor's Palace, to interpellate the Cabinet of Six. Premier Ebert ordered the counter-revolutionary Potsdam Guard to march against the sailors. In the meantime, a large number of armed civilians joined the sailors, who had seized and barricaded the Royal Castle and the adjoining stables, prepared to resist; while other groups occupied the Konningstrasse. These events developed into a demonstration against the Ebert-Haase Government, with a demand that a new government should be organized by Karl Liebknecht and George Ledebour—Ledebour having definitely aligned himself with Liebknecht. Another group of Spartacans invaded the offices of the majority Socialist organ, *Vorwaerts*, and issued a *Red Vorwaerts* stigmatizing the majority organ as "a lying dog" and "a reptile whose poisonous teeth are now about to be pulled," and demanding the retirement of Ebert, Scheidemann & Co.

Street fighting on a large scale developed on Tuesday, armed civilians uniting with the sailors. Ebert, Scheidemann and Landsberg subsequently admitted that they ordered the summoning of troops, under General Lequis, to march against the sailors, who were attacked with machine guns and artillery. The "Republican Guard" several times attacked the Castle and stables, but were repulsed by the sailors. The Alexander and Franzer regiments joined the sailors, and the whole Berlin garrison was sympathetic. The Government, however, called in other troops and managed to secure control. General Lequis declared that the Government had given him orders to fire upon the sailors, and he acted accordingly. The troops under Gen. Lequis had been sent to Berlin from the Western Front by Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, in response to an appeal from the Government,—of the Socialist Republic! Socialism and Hindenburg!

The events of the first part of last week precipitated a ministerial crisis. The Independents in the Government, Haase, Dittmann and Barth, refused to accept responsibility for Ebert's order to fire upon the sailors. Ebert & Co. thereupon decided to appeal to the recently elected Executive Committee (Central Council) of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Coun-

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