

The New Stage Opens

Continued from page 1

cils. Ebert and Scheidemann assumed full responsibility for the orders to fire upon the sailors, and insisted that "the strongest and most uncompromising measures must be taken to prevent riots and further lawbreaking by civilians as well as the military." Unless the Government was given this power, Ebert & Co. threatened to resign. Scheidemann, Ebert and Landsberg made one of the conditions of their remaining in the Government the organization of "a popular army of reliable troops." They issued this appeal through the *Vorwaerts*:

"Comrades, you will have to decide, because our title of People's Commissaires rests on your confidence. If you should absolve us, you must do something more. You must create power for us. There is no Government without power. We cannot act as your executive without power. Without power we become the prey of anyone sufficiently unscrupulous to use his comrades and their arms for vainglorious purposes and his own profit. Do you really desire a German Social Democratic Republic? Do you desire a Government by men who are your partisans? Do you want us to make peace as soon as possible and secure food for the starving? If so, then help the Government create a people's army that they may protect its dignity and freedom of decision and action against base attacks and coups."

The Central Council favored Ebert and Scheidemann quite naturally. The Independent ministers presented eight questions to the Committee, formulated by Dittmann, the answer to which was to decide their further action:

"First—Does the Central Council approve the action of Ebert, Scheidemann and Landsberg, who, on the night of December 23-24, gave unlimited power to the War Minister to use military force against the sailors in the Castle and royal stables?"

"Second—Does the Central Council approve the ultimatum of ten minutes fixed for the surrender of the Castle stables by General Lequis."

"Third—Will the Council see to the immediate executions of the resolution passed by the Congress of Soldiers' and Workmen's Councils, abolishing all distinctions of military rank and prohibiting officers in home garrisons from wearing arms?"

"Fourth—Does the Council approve the intimation at Hindenburg's headquarters in a confidential message to the Eastern Headquarters that this resolution would not be recognized?"

"Fifth—Does the Council approve the removal of the Government from Berlin to Weimar or any other place in Central Germany?"

"Sixth—Does the Council approve the program that instead of total demobilization, only a reduction of the standing army is planned?"

"Seventh—Is the Council of the same view with us that the Socialist Republic must not rest on the support of generals and the rest of the standing army, but on Citizens' Guards to be formed on democratic principles?"

"Eight—Does the Council approve that the socializing of industries as far as practicable should begin at once?"

These are surely moderate demands, characteristic of a "centre" policy, and actually in accord with the avowed policy—in words—of the bourgeois—"Socialist" Government. The Central Council decisively approved the action of Ebert and Scheidemann in using force against the sailors, and answered the first question affirmatively. The second and fourth they answered negatively, and dodged the others on the plea that further reports were required. The Central Council then asked the Commissaires two questions of its own:

"First—Are the People's Commissaires prepared to protect public order and security and especially private and public property against violent aggression?"

"Second—Are the People's Commissaires in a position to defend with what forces they command the public offices against any violence, no matter from

what side, so as to secure their own administration and the effective service of subordinate organs?"

Haase, Dittman and Barth thereupon declared that they would resign voluntarily, since they could not approve of the use of force, because bloodshed might have been avoided if Ebert, Scheidemann and Landsberg had adopted other measures, and because they disapproved of entrusting to General Lequis, a representative of the old regime, the power of life and death. The Council's answers to the other questions, moreover, were considered unsatisfactory by the Independents. They declared there was no necessity of answering the Council's two questions, since they were resigning.

The Ebert Government is drawing further away from the revolutionary masses—while Herr Scheidemann fulminates against Liebknecht, declaring that the arrest of Liebknecht and twenty others would dispose of the "rebels"; but they dare not make arrests. The withdrawal of the Independents has strengthened and weakened the Government—strengthened it immediately, in that it may now smoothly work with the counter-revolution and use dramatic measures; weakened it ultimately, in that the policy of repression and force will awaken the anger of the masses and new revolutionary action. Events are clearing the air. Once the revolutionary masses recognize the accomplished fact of the Ebert Government being an instrument of Capitalism, with all that that implies,—then the masses will act, swiftly, aggressively.

The withdrawal of the Independents, characteristically on minor issues and not on the fundamental prob-

What is a Strike?

(Continued from page 8)

Electric has four or more plants in various cities. If one plant is struck the management can simply transfer its orders to another. So the workers learned that to be successful they must strike not only the whole plant, but all the plants of the company. When the Lynn workers were making demands, the Schenectady workers came forward and threatened to strike to support them. When the Schenectady workers had demands they were supported by Pittsfield. As I write, a general strike in all the plants seems likely.

The workers throughout America must learn to organize so as to be able to strike not one by one, each for the good of himself, but all at once for the good of everybody.

Does this mean that the workers must abandon their craft unions and form a new general organization. Some will tell you so. I do not think so. I think there will always be a need for organization along craft lines. But what is immediately necessary is that the craft unions act together. Let the local officers of the unions in each plant work as one central committee. Let them agree to act only when all act together. Then let them send delegates to a general national committee representing all the plants in that industry. And let these delegates agree to act only when all act together.

When your delegates do this, then your employers will rage and call you Bolsheviks. And by this you will know that you have the kind of industrial weapon that they fear and that you need.

When all the workers in the plant strike together, then, and only then, will the workers in the industry get their demands.

To take this type of industrial action you need not change the form of your organizations. You need only adopt a different way of using them. What is needed for successful action by the workers in the next few years is two things:

- A clear understanding by all the workers that a strike is only a strike when all strike for the good of all; and
- A determination to make their elected officials and delegates carry out the orders of the membership.

The form of organization will then take care of itself.

lems of the Revolution, will not increase their prestige, is again an expression of their hesitant policy. They should never have become members of the Government, disgraced themselves by association with Ebert, Scheidemann, Solf, and the other lackeys of the old regime. They might have "redeemed" themselves by withdrawing when the Congress of Councils approved of Ebert and Scheidemann and declared for an early convocation of the Constituent Assembly: but they stayed, and that is their stigma. The decisions of the Congress of Councils and the wavering attitude of the majority Independents caused a split within the party. Ledebour and other Independents of the left openly accepting the Spartacus program and working with Liebknecht. The withdrawal of Haase, Dittmann and Ebert from the Government will enormously strengthen the Independents of the left, and thereby strengthen the Spartacans. In demonstrations after December 23-24, large numbers of Independents marched with the Spartacans; Independents are now calling for "All power to the Soviets!"

The power of revolutionary Socialism is being augmented by great industrial strikes, among the miners in Silesia and Westphalia, and by the pressing problems of reconstruction. Under the pressure of life itself, local Councils are usurping government functions, establishing control over industry, adopting measures that, precisely as in Russia, prepares the way for realizing all power to the Councils, to the federated Soviets. What forms the struggle may adopt until the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, is uncertain; the struggle against the Constituent Assembly continues; but should the Assembly meet and decrease a "democratic" republic, it would automatically decree the abolition of the Councils, and should this, as is likely, provoke a new revolutionary struggle, the Councils would emerge victorious and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. The measures being adopted by local Councils can never fit in with a regime established by the Constituent Assembly. The Communist Labor Party builds upon the basis of the Councils; and Scheidemann was right: as long as the Councils exist, they must drift toward Bolshevism, develop into a proletarian dictatorship.

The call to revolutionary action is clear, insistent, aggressive, and clearer, more insistent, more aggressive is developing the response. It must come, it will come—the Revolution. The general European, the world revolution depends upon the completion of the proletarian revolution in Germany; but equally, the proletarian revolution in Germany depends upon the general revolution.

Each to his task! The proletariat in its own way and in accord with its own conditions, must further the general revolutionary struggle. But one tactic is common to all: the relentless struggle against petty bourgeois Socialism as an indispensable phase of the struggle against Capitalism and Imperialism. The theory and practice of the Bolsheviks—Marxism in action—alone constitute the theory and practice of Socialism and the revolutionary proletariat.

"The Revolutionary Age Red Week Conference"

meets every Friday evening at 8 P. M., Room 1, Dudley Street Opera House, 113 Dudley Street, Roxbury, Mass. All S. P. organizations of Boston and vicinity are invited to join the Conference by sending two delegates to the earliest meeting.

ROBERT ZELMS,
Secretary of the Conference.