

## The Situation in the Baltic Provinces

THE events transpiring in the Baltic regions reveal much that is characteristic concerning the sincerity of the aspirations of Allied "liberation." . . .

In the whole world, there is probably not a single social group as reactionary as the small group of German landowners in the Baltic provinces, a group closely united by its traditions and organization, and which bitterly hates the workmen and peasants. If the artists who drew the posters during the recent Liberty Loans had required a living model for their presentation of "The Hun," they could have found none so appropriate as the Baltic German baron.

From the very beginning of the war these barons went over to the side of Imperial Germany, partly because of their racial kinship with the Prussian Junkers (there are a number of god-sons "Wilhelm II" and the "Crown Prince" among the barons), but chiefly owing to the fact that they saw in Germany a strong and solid bulwark for their power and privileges. After the German occupation of the Baltic Provinces, all the chief functions of administration in these regions were entrusted to the "landtags" controlled exclusively by the barons. It is said that for the purposes of "democratic" camouflage the barons, in some places, allowed participation in particular sessions of the landtags of "representatives of the people," coming chiefly from the well-to-do Lithuanians and Estonians; but even this contemptible "people's representation" was not elected by the people, being appointed by the barons themselves. z

During the war we became accustomed to attacks

full of wrath and hatred directed against the Germans by the Allies. These attacks were manifold. The Germans were branded as "beasts" and "Huns," they were charged with perpetrating all sorts of horrible crimes, with severe treatment of the people in occupied districts, etc. Then came the armistice, and it was astonishing to see among its provisions one which delayed evacuation of Russian territory (the Baltic Provinces) by the Germans until a time that the Allies should consider appropriate.

Many wondered. But a few days later it was all clear. It transpired that the Allies intended to entrust to the German "Huns" the maintenance of "law and order" in the occupied Russian territory.

A few days after the signing of the armistice, moreover, it was declared that the peoples of Estonia, Courland and Lithuania, and the provinces, also the islands of Esel, had decided to create an independent state. Who were the "people"? A referendum vote in such a short time was impossible. With the exception of the landtags of the German barons, there was not a single other political institution. Therefore, neither directly nor indirectly could the people have given an expression of their will. But the German barons, who controlled the telegraph, and telephone and posts, could indeed very easily get together within a period of two or three days and reach any decision among themselves. They were the "people" who decided to form an independent state, not to unite with Socialist Soviet Russia. The German barons could very easily adapt themselves to new circum-

stances and give their interpretation of the principle of "self-determination" of peoples.

But Socialism was rampant among the masses; as early as September, 1918, it was reported that Bolshevism had created a "serious situation" in the Baltic provinces.

Then in December came rumors of the British warships being off the Baltic Coast, and British co-operation with the armed forces of the German barons.

"The Estonian workers are almost all Bolsheviks," says Baron Aekekil. . . .

The workers of the Baltic regions can be proud that they are united with the revolutionary movement of the Russian workers, and of the world. Despite their desperate situation, they don't falter, and they are playing an enviable part in the task of emancipating the international proletariat.

At the beginning of the war Ernest Wasserman, a prominent German, wrote about the Baltic provinces:

"When under the rule of the Russians, the Baltic Germans showed merely a superficial loyalty to the Russian government, but secretly co-operated in the Pan-German cause. . . . We are jubilant over the fact that the time is not far off when our dear brothers in the Baltic regions will have a better life."

With the defeat of Imperial Germany these hopes of the Junkers in Germany as well as in the Baltic provinces have assumed merely another form. They hope now, also, to have a "better life," not under the protectorate of Germany, but under the protectorate of Germany's conquerors!

## The Birth of the New Age

PRESIDENT Wilson has returned from Europe, from the Peace Conference that is to settle the problems now weighing heavy on humanity, only "to report progress" and to express vague hopes couched in the language of idealism. For nearly five years the world has mourned the death and mutilation of her young men, for nearly five years man has crouched in wait for his fellow that he might leap upon and destroy him, for nearly five years the babes born in the agony and bloody sweat of woman have cried for food, for nearly five years desolation has walked in the path of the sun and lurked in the curtain of night, for nearly five years mankind has poured forth its blood and then came a halt and the Peace Conference. . . .

The war ended and the peoples of the earth heaved a sigh of relief, relief that the fighting, which they never sought and never wished, was over, that settlement would soon be made, and that in peaceful reconstruction man would seek to wash away the traces of his shame. But the war's end is already four months past, the Peace Conference is already two months old and the report is one of progress.

What is the progress that President Wilson reports? Is it the progress of the bloody battles in the frozen steppes of Russia? Is it the progress of new quarrels among the small peoples of Eastern Europe? Is it the progress of the crushing of labor in England, of the starvation of the workers into submission, of the distribution of peoples against their wills, of the armed

ring around the German workers struggling for liberation, of the looting of China, of the renewed enslavement of the dark peoples of Africa, of the beating back of the workers of Seattle, Patterson, Butte, Lawrence into the hells from which they dared emerge that they might gaze upon the peaceful world and seek to find their place therein? Is it the progress of the building of mighty navies that the seven seas may again be strewn with wreckage, of the training of gigantic armies that the blood-stained earth may more red blood soak? Or is it the progress of international peace among nations, of the coming together of the peoples of the earth in "the Brotherhood of Man the Federation of the World," of the liberation of the industrial wage slaves from the factories, mines and workshops of the world, of the conquering of the world by the workers?

" . . . And now these ideals have wrought this new magic, that all the peoples of Europe are bouyed up and confident in the spirit of hope, because they believe that we are at the eve of a new age in the world when nations will understand one another when nations will support one another in every just cause, when nations will unite every moral and every physical strength to see that the right shall prevail." Says President Wilson. And again: "I have come back to report progress, and I do not believe that the progress is going to stop short of the goal. The nations of the world have set their heads now to do a great thing, and they are not going to slacken their

purpose. And when I speak of the nations of the world I do not speak of the governments of the world. I speak of the peoples who constitute the nations of the world. They are in the saddle and they are going to see to it that if their present Governments do not do their will, some other Governments shall. And the secret is out and the present Governments know it."

Do the peoples of the nations of the world want the invasion of Russia? Do even the peoples of the five nations, that have appointed themselves the masters of the world, want the invasion of Russia? Are the peoples of America the jailers of Eugene V. Debs, Tom Mooney, Bill Haywood and the thousands of others who have also seen the new age through the mists of today? Is the progress of the deportation ships across the ocean an index of the kind of progress President Wilson means? Is that the ghostly progress of the shadows of prison bars across the cell floors a reflex of the progress of the Peace Conference?

It is true we are on the eve of a new age. The new age is even now being born in the pangs of the world's oppressed. In the death struggles of the Soviets of Russia against the reaction, in the fierce fighting of the Sparticides of Germany against the retention of Capitalism, in the strikes of the English, Scotch, Irish and Welsh workers against their exploiters, in the eruptions of Lawrence, Seattle, Butte, in the revolutions of Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, in the writhings of the world's workers, the new age is being born.

## An Independent Labor Party Leaflet

THE I. L. P. of Britain has just issued the following striking statement on the position in Russia, as a leaflet:

What are the reasons that you are now paying your millions of money, sending your thousands of men to a long campaign in Russia?

Excuses have been given at different times. They are conflicticting and feeble. Just consider them:—

(1) To protect the Czecho-Slovaks, prisoners of war, who wanted in the summer to return to fight as our Allies in France. But they were always free to come if unarmmed; they are still kept by our Government fighting against the Russians in Russia.

(2) To establish a new Eastern front against Germany. But this is now absurd, as the Germans have collapsed everywhere.

(3) To prevent the White Sea (Murmansk and Archangel) becoming bases of any meaning, for Germany has given up her submarines to us and can fight no more.

(4) To hinder peaceful penetration of Russia by Germany. But this was most difficult in any case after Germany imposed in February, 1918, her Peace of Brest-Litovsk on Russia.

(5) To punish the Russian Revolutionaries for their crimes. But what right has Great Britain to punish crimes in foreign lands? It never punished the Czar for his much worse crimes, but made an ally of him and heaped honors on him. It never pun-

ished the Turkish Sultan for his Armenian massacres, but told him when the war began that he might keep Armenia if he remained neutral in the Great War.

(6) To establish a stable Government in Russia. But the present Soviet Government is stable; it has become stronger today than ever, in spite of war from five or six sides by five or six powers, and in spite of Czarist and bourgeoisie plots and insurrections, which our agent and secret service money have immensely aided.

Lies and absurd promises have been made to support these shameful excuses, e. g.:—

(1) That the Bolsheviks, the present ruling Socialist Party in Russia were Jews and criminals. The fact is, as the *Daily Mail* said of them long ago they are men of intellect, character and ability. They have been joined by men originally opposed to them like M. Gorky, the most famous Russian writer now alive. At least two famous British correspondents have supported and worked for them.

(2) That the Russian terror of executions and bloodshed has alone kept the Bolsheviks in power. The fact is that the few authenticated cases of putting to death without trial have been due to panic, self-defence, or agents provocateurs, and most have been followed by official punishment of the perpetrators. Many stories are manifestly absurd, e. g., the Grand Duke Nicholas has been reported as murdered on four separate occasions. The official report was that Petro-

grad was being burned down; an obvious lie! etc., etc.

(3) That the whole of Russia would rise and welcome the Allied soldiers at once and turn down the Bolsheviks. The fact that intervention by our armies has brought many former opponents to support them, and they are now stronger than ever, even the *Times* admits.

(4) That the Bolsheviks were only five per cent of the Russians and would soon fall anyhow. The fact is that they are now the only party capable of governing Russia, and independent anti-Bolsheviks (Dr. C. H. Wright) say that there is no party to take their place if we defeat them and occupy Moscow.

(5) That we have very few soldiers in Russia and shall not send any more. The fact is that we have sent several thousands, and there are Canadians, Americans, French, Italians, Serbians, Chinese and Japanese—in all an immense force, and our payments of money, shipping, naval support are very large.

The truth is that we are making war against Russia in order to—

(1) Exploit Russia and support the claims of bondholders, concessionaires, oil kings (like L. Urquhart), and profiteers.

(2) Extort from impoverished Russian workers, in many districts starving, the debts which we thrust on the corrupt Czar's regime.

(3) Set up an anti-revolutionary Government, which will do the bidding of reactionaries in England, France, etc.