

The Revolutionary Age

A Chronicle and Interpretation of International Events

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We need to have the clear party note sounded now and our position sharply defined as an uncompromising revolutionary party if we are to take and hold our rightful place in the international movement. We have got to plant our party upon the rock if it is not to be swept away in the oncoming tempest.—EUGENE V. DEBS, February 15, 1919.

Political Action

TO those members of the Socialist Party who are continually stating that Socialism is a political movement and that the party is a political party only we would draw attention to the following paragraph from *The Call*, the organ of the British Socialist Party:

"Bear these figures in mind when, on the reassembling of Parliament, you hear all about the 'People's Voice.' There are 20,000,000 electors in the United Kingdom. At the General Election only 9,690,109 voted—5,096,233 for the Coalition and 4,593,876 against it. And the Coalition has a majority of over 250 in the House of Commons!"

On a rough estimate it took 27,000 votes to elect a candidate on the Labor Party ticket and 13,000 votes to seat a Coalition candidate. No wonder 10,309,891 workers decided to do their voting in the shops of Glasgow, Belfast and London.

We would add, however, for the benefit of those who are opposed to political action that *The Call* advocates the use of the ballot as *one* of the weapons the workers must learn to use.

Prinkipo

IT would seem that the much heralded Prinkipo conference was to be delegated to the realm of forgotten things. Vague surmises about the improbability of holding such a conference at Prinkipo filter through the columns of the press from time to time accompanied by conjectures concerning the suitability of this or that spot as the seat of the conference. It would be interesting to know what developments have caused Prinkipo to be unsuitable.

As a matter of fact the Allies are not anxious to confer with the Bolsheviks. The offer of such a conference, it would appear, was merely a trick and was made on the supposition that the Bolsheviks would refuse to attend. Then a new and more powerful offensive could be started against the Russian workers under cover of the argument that the Bolsheviks were unwilling to debate the matter. But the shoe is on the other foot now. Soviet Russia is quite willing to state her case in the open, she is willing to meet the Allies and discuss her position. And the Allies, with all the cards stacked in their favor, with the control of the press of the world, with the power to present most favorably their side of the case to the workers of the world, well—they have discovered that Prinkipo is unsuitable for such a conference and naturally it will take them quite some time to find another place where they might arrange a meeting.

In the meantime they are trying their best to overthrow the Bolsheviks and then of course there would be no necessity for conferring with them. But then other things might happen in the meantime.

The Communist Congress

THE call issued by the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Russia for an International Socialist Congress draws the line sharply between revolutionary Socialists and those social-patriots, bourgeois liberals and intellectual riff-raff who have hitherto called themselves Socialists and who have entered our movement only to betray it in the first crucial test. As in the actual scenes of the revolutionary struggle in Rus-

sia and Germany there is no place for the middle-of-the-road parties so henceforth in the International there can be no straddling the fence.

During the last four years Socialism has become a living vital movement, a movement for which men and women are fighting and dying, and the movement to which humanity is steadily turning for the solution of its problems. Today Socialism is fighting in open fight against the combined capitalist forces of the world, in Russia and Germany the Socialists are waging a desperate fight with their backs to the wall, the day of compromise is gone, those who are not with us are against us. Where the struggle is in action the relentless logic of events have forced the wavering to line up with one side or the other, and invariably the "moderates" have lined up with Capitalism. These facts have had their effect on the Socialist movement throughout the world and the Berne Conference, the last desperate attempt to resurrect the Second International, has clearly shown where the "moderates" stand, even in those countries where the class struggle is in a comparatively passive stage. The Berne Congress is organized against the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Communist Congress is called to perfect this instrument of the revolution.

The Social-patriots, the betrayers of the workers during the long years of the war, have chosen to join the ranks of the capitalists. They still mouth the language of Socialism but their deeds are dictated by their masters. The Communist Congress, called by the Bolsheviks, is called not in amplification of the Berne Congress but *against* it. There can be no unity between these two bodies, but on the contrary relentless war.

They Are Still There!

THE war against Russia continues. The most contemptible and brutal phase of this war is the blockade of Russia, a blockade the purpose of which is to starve the Russian people into submission. Allied warships and troops at Archangel, Vladivostok and Odessa "plug up" Russia's outlets to the world. Capitalism cries copiously about "industrial disorganization and starvation" in Russia; and then refuses to allow Soviet Russia to purchase agricultural machinery and food in the markets of the world. This blockade of Russia is proceeding under the auspices of the Peace Conference in Paris, the same conference that is framing a "League of Nations." The attitude toward Russia indicates the character of this League—a combination of capitalist nations against the peoples, against Socialism, against the proletarian revolution whenever the Revolution may appear.

Recently, it was stated that Allied troops were to be withdrawn from Russia. But the fighting is still on. Moreover, reports come that the Peace Conference proposes to reconsider its plans about Russia; and the clamor for larger armed intervention has acquired larger scope. In this war, the Soviet troops, inspired by the revolutionary spirit, are proving victorious; while the main Bolshevik army is being held in reserve for action, if necessary, with the revolutionary army of Germany when the Spartans conquer power.

By all the means in their power, the Allies are acting and intriguing against Soviet Russia. The *Christiana Social-Demokraten* published the following item recently:

Berlin, January 27.—Alleging that Russian prisoners of war in Germany are being sent home only in order to strengthen the military forces of the Bolsheviks, the Allied representatives on the Armistice Commission demanded last Saturday that the return of Russian war prisoners should stop. The German Commission protested against this order, declaring that such an act would lead to revolt as the Russian prisoners have for some time been notified of their impending return.

The Allies usurp control of the gold that the Imperial Government stole from Russia; they insist that German troops remain in the Baltic provinces to protect the power of the reactionary barons; they are using every means to crush Soviet Russia. But they are afraid to use real armed force, an army of two million men, for that would produce revolt in their own countries; instead they try starvation. A writer in *Colliers* for March 1 said:

There are plenty of people here who press for armed intervention in Russia. But anybody with any scholarship in the background of his thinking knows that the thing which caused the French Revolution to drag along for twenty years was the effort to stop it from the outside, the effort of the other nations of Europe to stamp it out with armed forces. . . . There isn't a nation in Europe which at this moment would dare to summon its army to march into Russia. It wouldn't dare risk the danger of the army rising up and announcing it wouldn't go. . . . The peoples, the masses who make up armies, are in Europe about as much opposed to sending their men to fight the Russians as are our people at home. The plain truth is that in most of the European countries there is among the masses a certain sympathy with Bolshevism. . . . at least a disposition to give the Russians a chance and see how it works out.

Armed intervention accelerated the revolution in Russia, making many wavering elements rally to the Soviet Government; it is accelerating the oncoming proletarian revolution in other nations. The attitude of the Allies and Germany revealed the purposes of Capitalism and Imperialism, emphasized that the issue is now international Capitalism against international Socialism. . . . Alien troops are still at Archangel, Vladivostok and Odessa. But for how much longer?

Industrial Parliaments

THE intensity of the industrial unrest in England is shown by the convening of an "Industrial Parliament" on February 27. This Parliament, while its purpose was to allay the unrest, indicated that a real industrial crisis is on, of which the flaring up of great strikes is another indication.

This "Industrial Parliament," an adaptation of the "Industrial Councils" idea decided upon by the British Government about two years ago, was composed of 500 delegates of organized labor and 300 delegates of the employers. The parliament decided upon motion of Arthur Henderson, to elect a committee of sixty composed of 30 delegates each of labor and capital, to "inquire" into the causes of industrial unrest, the general conditions of industry, unemployment and measures for its prevention, and methods for cooperation between labor and capital. The committee will report to another session of the "Industrial Parliament" on April 5.

The sessions of the Parliament indicated that the official trades union officials and the employers are each eager for "industrial peace," each are in dread of a proletarian revolution. The union delegates were very moderate, John Robert Clynes warning labor not "to demand too much in too brief a space of time." But Arthur S. Draper, in a cable to the *New York Tribune*, said: "The labor leaders are much more moderate than the workers and are rather doubtful of their ability to hold them in check."

The trades union officials at the Parliament insisted upon the state ownership of mines, railways and mercantile transportation. But these demands are repudiated by larger minority of the workers, who are insisting upon industrial self-government, the Soviet administration of industry. The parliament is accepted by the union officials, but is being repudiated by large groups of the workers, who want no conciliation with capital. A delegate of the Transport Workers' Federation bitterly attacked the resolution for an investigating commission declaring: "The conference has been called for the purpose of side-tracking all the efforts of the men and women workers to improve themselves."

The Parliament was a temporary victory for the union officials and the employers—for the union officials, in that it maintained their prestige; for the employers, in that they have secured a respite from large strikes, particularly in the case of the miners. The most serious problem of the British Government is to maintain the authority of the reactionary union officials; the revolt against these misleaders is assuming formidable proportions, they have been repudiated in strike after strike, the workers turning to mass action, and they are becoming the bulwark of capital against proletarian revolution.

In his address to the Parliament, Lloyd-George said: "It is not for the Government to dictate to either capital or labor, but to be impartial." A capitalist government impartial! The bourgeois state is the enemy of the proletariat, the instrument for the coercion of the proletariat; that is its principal function. In its very nature it cannot be impartial; and the action of the government during the recent great strikes is proof of this. Yet the whole idea of the Industrial Parliament, held under Government auspices and controlled by the Government, is based upon this idea of the impartiality of the state. The proletariat must wage war upon the state as the organ of the ruling class, to organize for the conquest of power, the destruction of the bourgeois state and the construction of the new proletarian state of the organized producers.

The "Industrial Parliament" is a higher development of the American Civic Federation. It will founder upon the rock of the class struggle, which prevents the realization of harmony between labor and capital; at most, it may promote Laborism and the interests of the aristocracy of labor. Capitalism, verging on collapse because of its own industrial insolvency and the developing revolt of the workers, will try scheme after scheme to prevent revolution. But all that Capitalism can accomplish, with the co-operation of reactionary trades unionism and petty bourgeois "Socialism," is to deceive the proletariat temporarily—only temporarily. The world has definitely emerged into a revolutionary epoch; and the proletariat must prepare itself, will prepare for uncompromising war upon Capitalism, for the conquest of power and Socialism.