

Correspondence

The Situation in Canada

DEAR Comrade: I will try to give you a little history of the past two months. I guess you know that the workers of Winnipeg were out on strike, and I may say that they put up a great scrap. They had most of the City Aldermen, the provincial legislature, the Federal Government, the International Union Officers and a bunch of the reactionary elements in the unions against them. It was surprising to me how they kept it up so long.

After they had been out a month the radical boys were arrested, Armstrong, Russell, Johns, Blumenberg, Verenchuk, Charitinoff, Alanazoff, Private Schappellie of Winnipeg, Prichard of Vancouver, all of whom belong to the Left Wing, then there were Queen and Heaps, who are Social-Democrats and Aldermen of the City, Bray of the returned soldiers, Dixon and Woodsworth of Vancouver, who are members of the Labor Party, and Ivens, the editor of *The Western Labor News*. They were all taken from their beds between 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning and taken to the Stony Mountain Penitentiary, except Prichard, who was arrested in Calgary, Johns and Dixon, for whom warrants were issued and who gave themselves up, and Woodsworth, who was arrested on Main Street and taken to the Provincial Jail. Mrs. Armstrong was also arrested and taken to the Provincial Jail.

With the exception of Blumenberg, Charitinoff, Alanazoff, and Schappellie, who were transferred to the Immigration Hall, and Verenchuk, who was released, all those arrested are out on bail.

The day of the riot—we call it Bloody Saturday—the returned soldiers were to hold a silent protest parade in the afternoon, but before they got in line about 50 North-West Mounted Police and mounted regulars in khaki started their horses at full gallop into the crowd. Of course some of the boys were run over, which made the rest angry, and when the soldiers and police re-charged the boys had a bunch of stones ready for them and let fly with full strength. Shortly afterward a street car tried to get through the crowd, but the boys attacked it, broke the windows, ordered the scabs off, and then set fire to it with the result that the Fire Department was called out. The Mayor read the Riot Act and the *Mounties* again charged the crowd only to receive the same dose as they got previously. Two *Mounties* were knocked off their horses and were taken into an undertaker's parlor opposite the City Hall.

The *Mounties* reformed and came round the front of the City Hall, pulled their guns and opened fire on the crowd, killing one man and wounding over thirty, while about forty arrests were made. I forgot to mention that when the Mayor read the Riot Act the Special Police were called out with clubs and revolvers. About twelve of these police had their guns taken from them and believe me it was a scene that the workers will never forget. It was the finest education they have ever had. I had all kind of fellows come up and shake hands with me and say they were Bolsheviki from now on. You know comrades, it made me laugh to think of the uphill fight we Left Wing Socialists have had and now the workers are coming to us of their own accord.

Johns and Russell got a great ovation when they appeared at the Trades and Labor Council last Thursday. The workers see that they are the only ones to be trusted. The Labor scabs and fakers have got themselves in bad with the masses, so much so good for us.

About midnight on July 1, I got a visit from the North-West Mounted Police, four were in uniform and one in plain clothes. I went to a Federation meeting that night and when I came out I met our International Officer and

Zetkin Defends the Bolsheviki

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class. She urged that the dictatorship of the proletariat is an essential transitory measure, the object of which is the abolition of the capitalist class. *In opposing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Independent Socialist Party had become an accomplice in preserving the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.*

Zetkin demanded the immediate resumption of relations with the Russian Soviet Republic. The fact that the Soviet Government had so long maintained its power was the best proof that it was not an arbitrary regime resting solely upon the force of bayonets.

It was wrong for the Independents to go to Berne and illogical for those to participate in it who had been represented at Zimmerwald. Berne she described as "a conference of reciprocal and general amnesty." The delegates conjugated: "I am a sinner, thou art a sinner," and so on, and believed that it was possible thus to re-establish the International! "*The old International died in shame: it can never be resurrected!*"

The Berne Conference, so far as it could, had frustrated the establishment of an International of action, and had betrayed and deceived the masses. Great confusion had been created by the fact that the German Independents had refrained at Berne from separating themselves from the Majority Party.

Zetkin insisted that: "A union of peoples will never result from Wilson's League of Nations, but at the Berne Conference more faith was placed in Wilson than in Marx." Kautsky abused his influence at Berne. The repudiation of the Bolsheviki deserved the strongest condemnation. The rejection of the Adler-Longuet motion was a provocative insult to the Bolsheviki.

Hitherto the German Independent Socialist Party had not been inspired by that necessity. It was a product of the process of decomposition which had been going on in the old Social Democratic Movement, and its parentage has involved it in that process. The antagonisms which existed in its very midst could not be eliminated by a mere resolution of the Conference. A complete severance between the left and right wings had become imperative. "Personally," said Zetkin, "I am faced with a painful and difficult decision. It is impossible for me to remain in the Party if it maintains its present majority. I will not spend the closing years of my life in an atmosphere of death. I will spend my last years in an atmosphere pregnant with the forces of the future. Some people appear to think they can bury the Revolution, but the Revolution is more alive than ever. The agitations for higher pay have become revolutionary. The masses are animated by a new spirit. It is our duty as Socialists to guide them, but to do so we require a vision rendered strong by its keen foresight. Thus Socialist theory will become a living force which will take possession of the masses."

Clara Zetkin's closing words were received with loud and prolonged cheers.

walked down the street with him until I met the President of the Policemen's Union. I spoke to him a little and then boarded a car to go home. About half a block from my home I came upon a policeman sitting on his doorstep having a smoke, I stopped to talk to him as he comes from the same part of the old country as I do. (The North-West Mounted Police, who are a semi-military body, acted against the strikers while the regular city police offered to go out on strike in sympathy with the men—Ed.) While we were talking a car passed us, stopping about two doors from where we were sitting, the plain clothes man jumped out and asked a man sitting in the veranda what the number of this house was. We noticed four *Mounties* in the car, and the policeman said to me: "I'll bet they are going to your house." As he said it they stopped right in front of my door and asked my wife, who was sitting on the veranda, the number of the house. My wife went into the house to wake my brother up and when the detective knocked at the door he opened it. The men in the car got out with their guns in their hands and immediately dropping on their hands and knees began crawling over the boulevard towards my house. I watched the whole affair from the policeman's door-step. He said to me: "Well what do you know about that? I never saw the likes of it in all my life, you would think you were a desperate murderer."

They got a lot of books and papers and I learned later that they raided about fifty houses that morning. They are carrying out these raids all over the country and they have got the people sore, and believe me the workers are preparing for them now.

Well comrades, we lost the strike, but we gained a lot of experience. The police, firemen and all the rest of the civic employees had to sign a card that they would not belong to the Trades and Labor Council. Lots of them lost their jobs because they would not sign. All the mail carriers in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, and Calgary lost their jobs but I guess the workers will get over that. What they have lost in jobs they have gained in experience and they have also lost a few phrases like: British Justice, Our King and Country, Britons never shall be slaves, etc.

I am sorry I am not getting your papers and books. I could sell them very easily now, but I guess this "People's Government" we have got is holding them up. I will see the boys at the next meeting and will send you some money along for the papers that arrive.

Well, the One Big Union has started and the majority of the unions have decided to leave Gompers' outfit and go over to the O. B. U.

I forgot to tell you that this is Decoration Day—the capitalist class puts flowers on the graves of the Canadian boys who died here as a result of the wounds they received in the war. They always have a parade of the returned soldiers and the Boy Cadets on this day but this time it turned out a fizzle. About 150 returned soldiers paraded out of over 20,000, but to make the thing look big they turned out the mounted police, so you can see that the returned soldiers are getting wise. There is going to be a peace parade on Saturday, but not so far as the workers are concerned. I will let you know about it later.

Yours for the cause,

WALTER HENDERSON.