

that added taxation would reduce the standard of living of the working class even more than before. But they forget that the standard of living is not fixed, that it is determined by that which the worker is in a position to demand, and to win from the capitalist class. A militant, firmly organized working class, can win a higher plane of life; where it loses on the political field, by increased taxation, what it has won on the industrial field, this but proves its political weakness and ineffectiveness. Where since August, 1914, the social democracy threw itself at the feet of imperialism and kissed its feet, it so weakened the proletariat, and condemned it to such hopeless stagnation, that it must not be surprised to receive, as a reward for its actions, a rapidly sinking standard of life for its proletariat. Their resolutions are ridiculous and therefore promote opposition to their own actions. *The protest of the working class must express itself in actions. Active opposition against taxation on articles of consumption that must be born by the proletariat.*

Does that mean that we shall demand property taxes? Bourgeois representatives are partly right, when they maintain, that taxation levied upon all incomes derived from the interest on the loans will prevent the accumulation of capital, and will, moreover, encourage the capitalist to unload them upon his employees in the shape of wage reductions. Now the payment of war debts means, in the last analysis, nothing more than the robbery of the working population of all classes in the interest of the holders of war-bonds, by means of taxes of one kind or another. Had the perpetuated classes acted from motives of true patriotism, they would, when the state needed the money to carry on a war in their interests, have placed a portion of their war profits at the disposal of the nation. Not having done this, shall they have the right to demand tribute for all future times from the population? Of all kinds of capitalist incomes, the interests that accrue from state bonds are, socially considered, the most useless. A revolutionary, socialist government will always tend to repudiate this tribute, to annul all national debts. Conditions are such that only this measure, the *annulment of the enormous state loans* can save the nations from the threatening financial débâcle. It is not to be expected that capitalist governments will

turn to this measure, for, to them, capitalist interests are holy. The more will it be the duty of the proletariat to raise this cry against every attempt to burden them with new taxes for the payment of war-debts. Together with *the confiscation of all war profits*, this measure alone will make it possible, to avert the most awful consequences of this war, from the mass of the people.

When the proletariat, during and after the war, resumes its political struggle, it must have a *clear cut program of action*.

The struggle for socialism is always a class struggle for the momentary interests of the proletariat. The methods, the means employed in this struggle, determine its revolutionary character. Of course, a part of the old demands retain their importance in the new program of action, as, for instance, the fight for full democracy in the nation, and the fight against militarism. But both will be given a new meaning, a new increasing prevalence of state socialism will weld industrial exploitation and military enslavement together with political oppression into one reactionary whole. The above article has shown that the demand for the assurance of a decent existence for the unemployed proletariat, as well as the demand for annulment of all national debts, are direct questions of existence for the working class, and must therefore receive the most important place in the program of action of the reawakening proletariat.

## Reform in Germany?

By LUDWIG LORE

Reform in Germany? What the struggles of years could not accomplish, fear of a desperate people has brought to pass. The Russian Revolution, like the handwriting on the wall, to the terror-stricken Junkers of Germany and the unspeakable sufferings at home, have opened even the dried-out brains of the German bureaucracy to progressive ideas. Hunger is threatening to overthrow even German discipline and the stormy demands for peace are forcing political reform. The