

the established order and has taken the power out of the hands of the capitalist class. In every civilized nation revolution is hanging by a hair over the heads of a trembling capitalist class. And these gentlemen come together, placidly, with the dignity that becomes ministers and diplomats, to discuss "A League of Nations," "the regulation of territorial questions," "international labor legislation." Further they did not dare go. For these careful gentlemen felt, and perhaps not without good and sufficient cause, that a serious discussion of the fundamental questions that are agitating the world would bring about the hopeless collapse of the whole carefully erected edifice.

The purpose and aims of the entire Congress were very accurately characterized by Lorient (France) in his declaration to the International Conference:

"You have come together not for the purpose of finding a Socialist solution for the tragic problems that have followed in the wake of this greatest of all capitalist crimes, but for the purpose of finding some sort of justification for the governmental, nationalistic, chauvinistic neo-war-Socialism that flourished upon the ruins of the Socialist movement after the outbreak of the war.

"You are here, not in order to give expression to your determination to fulfill your Socialist ideals, but in order to document the agreement of the International with the policies of Wilson, the representative of American multi-millionaires.

"You have met, finally, and above all, to condemn the tremendous struggle for freedom that is spreading out from Russia all over Western Europe

"The history of Socialism will not be written in your Congress. It is being written, page by page, day by day, by the proletariat itself, and today the elite of this, the class-conscious, revolutionary proletariat, no longer stands behind you!"

The conference itself was characterized by certain departures from the method of procedure usually adopted at former International Congresses. Though unimportant in themselves they serve to accentuate the spirit in which it was conceived. Newspapers of all shades and political affiliations had been so liberally deluged with reporters' cards that there were, in the convention hall, far more "gentlemen of the press" than there were actual delegates. On the other hand, the transactions were closed to the general public, "to avoid undesirable ovations." This did not prevent, however, the admission of ladies and gentlemen of the

"better class," while comrades, who are familiar figures in the international movement, were refused permission to enter the Conference Hall. The credentials of the so-called delegates were not passed upon by the body itself but by a commission, which, likewise, was not elected, but had been appointed for this purpose. Delegates were admitted against the protest of a part of the conference that objected to the admission of men, as in the instance of Frank Bohn from America, who had been sent by their respective governments, while the actually elected and accredited delegates from these countries were prevented, by the same governments, from attending the Conference.

In other respects also the Conference differed from Party Congresses of former years. The Socialist Party of Belgium refused to send delegates to meet the representatives of the German Social Democracy, until the latter have formally repudiated the crimes committed by the German militarist autocracy during the war. The Socialists of Switzerland, Italy, Serbia, Rumania, Norway, Denmark, and the Left Wing Socialists of Sweden had refused to participate in a conference controlled by social-patriots. Important questions were not decided according to the invariable method pursued at all International Socialist Congresses—by recorded votes—but by the very questionable and uncontrollable showing of hands. In fact the entire Conference, its order of business, the nomination of committees and commissions, the list of speakers and the presentation of resolutions, were all so completely in the hands of the engineers of the Conference, that one could not but receive the impression that these gentlemen favor democracy only when it can be used as a weapon against revolutionary Socialist methods.

At the insistence of Thomas, the arch-nationalist of the French Socialist movement, the question of responsibility for the war was taken up as the first order of business, and occupied the evening of the first and the entire second day of the session. As was to be expected, the German majority Socialists presented a resolution which, in spite of an evident desire to placate the French and Belgian Socialists, whitewashed not only their own actions, but indirectly even those of the former German government, and attributed the war to the general imperialistic development of the last decades. They did, however, promise to investigate the immediate occurrences that were responsible for its outbreak, and to publish, as soon as possible, all documents that may serve to shed some light upon this question. The committee-made resolution that was finally adopted, with very obvious reluctance on the part of the French majority Socialists, evaded the issue by accepting,