

with a few courteous generalities, the statement of the German majority group, and leaving it to future Congresses to render a decision. The words with which Wels, the spokesman of the German majority Socialists, closed the discussion were significant: "The German majority Socialists are silent, and we hope that our French comrades will understand our silence."

Since it was the avowed purpose of the Conference to bring pressure to bear upon the Peace Congress in Paris, the question of a "League of Nations" was accorded a lion's share, both of time and rhetoric. Speaker after speaker emphasized the necessity of exerting a strong influence upon the negotiations in Paris, without, however, in any case being anything but delightfully vague as to the means by which this much to be desired end was to be accomplished. Indeed it must be admitted that the powers that be who were making history in Paris, while the Berne Conference was consuming valuable time with optimistic speeches, seemed to have little or no regard for the intentions and desires of these powerful representatives of the international working class. By the strange irony of circumstance, the revolutionary uprisings of the German and the Hungarian proletariat, the threatening attitude of English and French labor, the rumbling in Southern Europe, in the Balkans and in Italy, and surely the Soviet Government of Russia, seemed to interest the great rulers of the world more keenly, seemed more forcibly able to influence their actions and decisions, than all the words and all the resolutions that were sent over the wires from the "Socialist" International Conference at Berne.

On the whole, the persons who participated in the Convention were far more interesting than the resolutions that were finally adopted. "In the eyes and in the whole deportment of most of the delegates," writes a Swiss comrade, "one saw the desperate desire to create an impression, the real bourgeois arrogance, the emptiness of soul and spirit that characterizes the political aspirant. One felt depressed in this sickening atmosphere of hypocrisy, of phrases and demagoguery. One longed for a breath of fresh, revolutionary air, of healthy fanaticism, and enthusiasm for Socialist ideals, for true freedom. One was forcibly struck by the contrast between the few revolutionaries who were present and the great majority of opportunists, who seemed to feel called upon to prove their individual fitness to occupy ministerial seats in their respective governments."

In comparison with the social-patriots of France and Germany, the British delegation, while no-one could accuse them of an overabundance of radical sentiment, appeared in an extremely

sympathetic light. There was in their speeches and in their attitude nothing of the intense nationalism, that placed the French and German majority delegations, and those that came from some of the smaller nations and national groups, so completely beyond the pale of serious consideration. They evidenced a clear desire to render impartial judgment. Their words and actions were free from jingoism, their speeches gave some indication at least, of a wholesome idealism and faith in the power of the working-class. While they did not go so far as to indorse the actions of the Russian revolutionary government, and, in the main agreed with the prevailing sentiment that "democracy" must not be subordinated to Socialism, they were obviously unwilling to render snap judgment upon the Russian comrades, based only on the strength of the lies and slanders that have thus far been the sole source of information about Russian conditions.

Of the delegates to the convention, Kurt Eisner was one of the few who showed a willingness to learn from the past and to meet the issues that face the world squarely and courageously. During the discussion of the responsibility for the war, while the French and German government Socialists were vying with each other in mutual recriminations, when Kautsky warned the Conference to forget past grievances in order to be prepared to meet the menaces that threatened the international Socialist movement, from counter-revolution on the one hand and Bolshevism on the other, when even Friederich Adler tried to bring about a peaceful understanding by explaining that the German and Austrian workers had striven to defend their country against the menace of Russian robbery and greed, just as the French had protected their nation against the ravages of German attack, Eisner unflinchingly shouldered the burden of responsibility. He condemned the attempts of the majority Socialists to hide behind exploded legends.

"Are you revolutionists or not," he demanded. "If so you must punish the old system . . . The minutes of the caucus session of the Socialist Reichstag group of August, 1914, should be published. Wels and the others have lost their memories."

"They helped to throw Germany into an abyss. They did not have the courage to vote against Brest-Litovsk. It is worse to carry the war into another country than to bear it one-self. We suffered unspeakably under the hunger-blockade, but we have no right to protest, for Germany provoked the blockade by her disregard of every principle of international justice."