

Later when the question of prisoners of war was under discussion, and the German majority delegates were bitter in their denunciation of the Allied governments for refusing to liberate German prisoners of war, thus provoking the French delegates to equally bitter recrimination against the Germans for their alleged inhuman treatment of Allied prisoners, Eisner again showed the same freedom from nationalist prejudice:

"Have we the right to protest? I say no. It is too late! Shall we protest against involuntary servitude, who countenanced the forcible employment of 10,000, aye 100,000 human beings, worse than in the middle-ages? Have we forgotten that young girls were dragged out of France and Belgium to work for their captors? Have we forgotten how French industry was destroyed, how their bridges, their factories, their railroads have been devastated? We have no right to protest. To alleviate the lot of these prisoners must be our first consideration. . . . It is the duty of Germany to help rebuild in France and Belgium, willingly, as a penance."

As we look back over the International Socialist movement of the last two decades, it would seem as if its entire development was one of stubborn and tenacious resistance to the inevitable day of reckoning that has now come upon it. We spoke of the coming world war, yet feared to look its consequences in the face; at Basel we staged an impressive and heart-stirring demonstration of proletarian internationalism—and steadfastly refused to decide upon that most important of all questions, the attitude of the Socialist movement in the various countries in case of war. We wrote books and delivered speeches filled with high-sounding phrases of the overthrow of Capitalism—and unconsciously shrank from forming in our own minds and in the minds of our hearers a definite concept of the course that such action would involve. We used the phrase "expropriation of the expropriator"—and our horror over the methods that have been employed by the Russian revolutionists to put this idea into active operation shows how thoughtlessly these words were actually used. The history of the international Socialist movement of recent years has, in fact, been one of consistent procrastination and self-deception.

What was unforgiveable short-sightedness before the war, however, becomes a crime in the face of the tragedy that the world has undergone. The Socialist leader who, in the midst of this ruin and devastation, face to face with nationalist hatred in the very heart of the International, still pins the future of the

working-class to a "League of Nations" controlled by Imperialism for openly imperialistic aims, who can aspire no higher than to the international regulation of labor legislation by capitalist powers at a time when Imperialism is trembling at the sound of revolution in every country of the world, is, consciously or unconsciously, betraying the spirit of the movement that looks to him for guidance.

Whatever one may think of the course of action that has been adopted by the Bolshevik rulers of Russia, there can be but one opinion as to the serious nature of the problem their activity presents. Russia is the first state to come under Socialist rule, the first state to attempt the full realization of the Socialist program of industrial socialization. This being the case, it seems that an international Socialist conference would under all circumstances regard the problems that have been created by this new social experiment as of vital and consuming interest, and would make them the center of discussion. When one considers that nation after nation is shaking off the yoke of capitalist domination, that the coming months may see the rule of the proletariat established in every industrially developed country of Europe, does it not seem as if some united course of activity, some method of binding together these proletarian nations for united resistance against the common capitalist foe should have been decided upon, or at least seriously discussed? Actually, however, the Berne Conference took exactly the opposite course. In the original order of business laid before the conference, there was nothing that even indicated the existence of such problems. Only upon a motion of Thomas was it brought up for discussion, and then in a form that circumvented the necessity of taking a definite position. Ostensibly the discussion was limited, or rather broadened so as to cover the entire question of "Socialism vs. Democracy." As a matter of fact, the speakers, from Karl Kautsky, who maintained that the Bolsheviks had accomplished nothing but the creation of a large army, to Axelrod, the violent Russian anti-Bolshevik Socialist, refrained, with notable unanimity, from discussing the question in its theoretical aspects. It was evident that the whole discussion had put the conference into an extremely uncomfortable position necessitating, as it did, some open statement of its position. But this is exactly what the gentlemen of the Right and the Center were not prepared to do. Not that they have hesitated in the past to speak their opinions openly where the Soviet government is concerned. But recent events in Europe, the spread of revolutionary sentiment, as well as the strong likelihood that the Allied powers will, sooner or later, come to some sort of a working agreement with the Russian govern-