

the same thing—the realization of Socialism). This appeared also in the peace question. The peace question afforded a new, a classic example, illustrating the divergent fundamental character of the three parties, and at the same time another touchstone to test their socialistic insight, their adherence to principle, and their vitality.

Here the Majority Socialists proved themselves as ever the faithful lackeys and representatives of the bourgeoisie. The "flaming protest" against the Entente's peace of violence which they trumpeted forth into the world in a thousand speeches and gatherings, it was the protest of the German bourgeoisie, which, enraged at the impending loss of its imperialistic strongholds, was trying once more to rouse the nationalistic passions of the people, to force concessions from the Entente by means of threats. How completely the protest of the Majority Party was saturated with this imperialistic spirit is best proved by the reservations with which they, concurring with the Centrum, were prepared to sign, when their stage-shouting subsided before the inexorability of the conquerors: the Kaiser not to be surrendered, the guilt of Germany not to be recognized, the claim to the colonies not to be given up. As though it were not the first duty of a Socialist government to brand those who were guilty in its own country and bring them to justice and to solemnly abjure forever every imperialistic policy, particularly the policy of the exploitation and domination of colonies.

Of course, there was no lack of attempts on the part of the Scheidemanns to represent their policy as truly socialistic. "The fight against this peace treaty is a part of our class struggle," cried the "Vorwärts" pathetically, only a few days before the decisive turn of affairs. Meaning the class struggle which they have been carrying on since the beginning of the war, with the concurrence and for the advantage of their own bourgeoisie, against foreign capitalism. And even this "part of their class struggle" they were prepared to forego when there remained for them only the alternative of signing or retiring from the government, thereby proving without a doubt that the only foundation of their policy was—clinging to the ministerial chairs, that is, boundless opportunism and complete lack of principle. Hence their hypocritical appeal to the International could naturally carry no weight whatever.

Quite different is the case of the Independents. They were from the first most decidedly in favor of signing the treaty. They showed the people that a refusal would mean more unnecessary bloodshed, a still greater tightening of the

oppressive conditions, still more hunger, misery, and bondage. On the other hand, they tried to make the peace conditions in their present form seem "not so unbearable" and anticipated their future revision through the "growing international solidarity of the proletariat" which alone could create a just peace. But while their recommendation to sign was correct from a Socialist point of view, still their stand was rather a humanitarian than a political one, or better, it was rather of a pacifistic than of a socialistic nature. They pointed out the harmfulness and uselessness of a renewal of the war, for the "people," instead of showing that a new campaign, even under the present circumstances, could be fought only in the interests of the bourgeoisie and could not serve the cause of the proletariat of Germany or any other country. They were so unmindful of the necessity of maintaining the class point of view (the fundamental opposition to the present state and the present government) that through their slogan "We must sign," set in scare-type at the head of their organ, "Freiheit," they created the just suspicion that they wished to assume the reins of government themselves in order to sign the treaty.

It was also in accord with the pacifistic character of the party that they made their whole policy center about the question of "acceptance or rejection," wishing to stamp it as the most important issue of the moment. "There must be no delay," wrote the "Freiheit" at the time of the crisis, "if peace is to be signed and Germany to be saved!" Peace was signed, Germany was saved, but what has been gained by it for the German and the international proletariat? The Independents today find themselves once more in the same embarrassing and at the same time ridiculous position as last fall; they are in a position to declare triumphantly that all the government parties have been converted to "their program." At that time it was "disarmament and the League of Nations, all of Wilson with his fourteen old and five new points which the German Government had swallowed whole," this time it is the actual, imperialistic peace of violence which it has been forced to accept. Neither of these things came about through the pressure of the Independents but under the threat of foreign arms, and neither the conversion to the Wilson program nor the acceptance of the peace of violence are the expression of a real proletarian policy.

The task of a really socialistic party would have been different. It must resist any attempt to drive the masses into the war anew but at the same time point out that the fight for peace in the present bankrupt Germany could no longer be a