

country itself did not bring up the land question, the Scheidemann servants of the bourgeoisie and the Junkers had no cause for grasping this hot iron. Some of the medieval rubbish, such as the rules for servants, was abolished—on paper—the estate districts were abolished—likewise on paper—and finally the settlement law was accepted—which also leads a quiet existence on paper, which never has harmed the hair of a Junker's head, and never intended to. It was really no more the inheritance of the Hindenburg-Ludendorff plans of colonization in the Baltic region than the Ebert-Scheidemann Government was executing through this innocent legislation, which on its own account fitted perfectly into the Junker settlement policy. The purpose of the move in both cases was the settlement of the land with squatters, as a reservoir for the labor needs of the large landowners, only with the difference that to some extent the settlement plans of Hindenburg were meant seriously, being at the same time intended for a "dependable" border protection, military and political, in the east, while the land settlement law of Ebert-Scheidemann was from the start nothing but demagogic trick.

The former passivity of the country is revealed drastically in another phenomenon, in the peasants' councils. While the workers' and soldiers' councils were crystallized directly from the revolutionary movement of the workers and soldiers, and therefor from the first bore a decided class character, in their composition, the peasants' councils were an artificial creation of the Ebert-Haase Government, that is to say, a clumsy deception. Under the name of "peasants' councils," the Farmers' League presented the country with an organization which, a brazen caricature of the soviets, coupled the Junker and large estate owner with the rural workers and small farmers and gave this organization a suffrage privilege that afforded an excellent substitute for the abandoned three-class voting system. It is characteristic that the erstwhile independent Food Minister Wurm gave official recognition to this brazen swindle and unblushingly defended it. It is clear that such a caricature of the soviet organization in the country was possible only because the country was still asleep, and that the first independent action on the part of the rural workers it must be cast aside.

The country population has thus far been the last great reservoir of the counter-revolution, both through its passivity and through its active participation in counter-revolutionary actions and organizations. The incursion of troops in East Prussian and Pommeranian land districts for the purpose of quelling the land-workers' movements is an indication that at last in the country too the Revolution is beginning in earnest. But this means that the question of militarism and Junker rule is only at this moment being attacked at the root. For militarism can be torn out by the roots only where it has gone most deep, in the Prussian "heart provinces," and the political domination of the Junkers can be torn down for good and all not in the streets of Berlin—to say nothing of a Weimar or Berlin National Assembly—but only in the 30,000 estate districts, only through the uprising of the rural workers. And only now is the land question moving out of the twilight of theory or of demagogic routine into the light of the practical revolutionary conflict.

There are two chief elements that are bringing the rural proletariat into the revolutionary arena. First, its own passivity has permitted the Junker Counter-revolution to recover from its first stupefaction and not only to hold all its positions of power in rural government but to strengthen them and to more and more boldly take the offensive in re-

establishing the pre-revolutionary despotism of the Junker domain. The land-proletariat, which saw the chains that had enclosed its limbs loosen without any effort on its own part, now struggles with all its might against a return to the conditions previous to November 9th. The second factor is the effect of the increasing economic and financial disorder upon the rural workers and the small farmers: the growing depreciation of money which forces the agricultural workers into mass strikes. The small farmers still try to make up for this condition by raising prices, but these attempts are becoming constantly less satisfactory, and the pressure of direct taxation imposed by native and foreign capital must stir them to action completely. The small peasants before the revolution followed the Junkers in politics because they were attached to them economically. The bankruptcy of capital and state finances is breaking this economic union. Necessarily it must also sooner or later break the political band.

Thus the Agrarian Program of the Communist Party of Germany comes at exactly the right moment. The program itself is the product of the first independent movements of the rural proletariat, leading to the founding of the Communist Agricultural Workers' and Small Peasants' League in Central Silesia. The Agrarian program was worked out in common by the Party Headquarters and officers of the League. And its appearance coincides with the first great mass movement of the agricultural workers. Thus it will soon be more than a piece of paper. Soon it will be the battle-cry of millions of country proletarians when they attack the Junker strongholds.

For not until this standard is carried before the country folk, will the ranks of the Revolution close, then only will the Revolution be irresistible. Therefor let the city proletarians with all their strength carry the revolutionary message to the farmlands. The rural and urban proletariat divided cannot gain the victory, only their union will be their triumph.

A.th.

Here follows the text of the Agrarian Program. It should be remarked that it is yet to be presented for ratification at a party conference.

The immense economic work of destruction of the World War has undermined the foundations of Capitalism in Germany. In this hell-fire the apparatus of production has melted. Labor power, machinery, raw material, auxiliary materials, currency, all have been decimated. And in the same degree that these values of use were destroyed the war debt rose, and with it rose the demands of the capitalist class upon the fruits of labor. In the same degree anarchy in production increased. Capital, whose historic role was the widest development of the forces of production has itself developed into a pure parasite upon the body of society, into a force of destruction and confusion. Its historical hour has struck. The proletariat is called upon to execute the sentence of history on pain of the decay of production.

The military collapse of German imperialism on the fields of France gave the impetus to this conflict which has been lying ready in the womb of society. Its signal was the Revolution of November 9th. But this revolution, although carried on by war-weary and disappointed soldiers and the workers, has left the foundations of the capitalistic system untouched. It attacked only the outer state-form. It transformed the monarchistic military state into a bourgeois republic, with the traitors of So-