

# THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

For International Socialism.

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## THE BERNE CONFERENCE AND BOLSHEVISM.

### How British Delegates Voted.

As we consider it highly important for British Socialists to know what transpired at Berne and how the delegates representing this country voted on the important question of Revolutionary Socialism, in spite of their inordinate length we print in full both the resolution, and also the Adler-Longuet Resolution because we desire British Socialists to know exactly what is being done in their name. The I.L.P. Conference is about to meet. Members of the I.L.P. were present at the Berne Conference. They were the only British Socialists at Berne. The I.L.P. annual meeting will give them an opportunity to explain their action on this important question, and it will give the I.L.P. rank and file an opportunity to express their views upon that action. Circumstances are forcing the Socialists of every country to choose whether they will work to perpetuate the Parliamentary system of government, or to build up an industrial republic on Soviet lines. It is impossible to work effectively for both objects.

It will be observed that the official resolution of the Berne Conference declares for Parliamentaryism and attacks the Russian Soviets by implication. It welcomes expressly the political revolutions in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany, leaving it to be understood that it does not welcome the industrial revolution. It declares for Parliamentary government which it insists to be the only form of democratic government. It implies that the Soviet system has "no chance of gaining the support of the majority of the people" though even its capitalist opponents admit that it has gained that support. It declares against the dictatorship of the proletariat, but does not openly say so. In its effort to belittle the great achievement of the Russian Bolsheviks, it pretends to agree to send a delegation to Russia because of the "general interest Socialists in all countries have in exact knowledge of the facts bearing on these popular upheavals." It thus attempts to dismiss the appearance of the Soviets as a temporary upheaval which will disappear having no place in the steady development of peoples. It should be noted that according to the official report the entire delegation from Britain and Canada voted for this resolution, but only the minority of the French and Italian, and half the German-Austrian delegation.

The Adler-Longuet resolution lacks the courage to take a decisive stand for the Soviets, but it says: "we warn the working classes against any kind of stigma which may be applied to the Russian Soviet Republic." The French majority, half the German-Austrian, the Dutch, Norwegian, Irish, Spanish delegations and one Greek delegate voted for this resolution. The Italian majority did not vote; evidently the Italians did not desire to sit on the fence but to give open support to the Soviets. We are surprised that the Irish delegation was content to support this compromise resolution. The Workers' Revolution begun in Russia is approaching this country westward through Germany. It is surely necessary for the various so-called Socialist parties to discuss their attitude towards it; to make up their minds whether they are to support or oppose the Industrial Revolution. The minority in each party can then devote its energies to furthering the policy it approves.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

### DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP. THE 'ADLER-LONGUET' RESOLUTION.

The leading idea of the policy which we have energetically and unflinchingly pursued throughout the whole course of the war, was the reconstruction of the international front of the conscious revolutionary proletariat. This same fundamental principle also determined our attitude towards the Berne Conference.

We maintain that this Conference runs the risk of provoking grave criticism, not because of what is contained in its resolutions, but because certain commonplace truths have been expressed too late, not during the war, but after the war is over.

On the other hand, the resolution on Democracy and Dictatorship gives rise to most serious objections. The same men who have passively or actively hindered international action for four and a half years, who have thought it their duty to abstain from any international meeting, now eagerly utilise the Conference for a course of action which will inevitably increase the difficulties of the International.

We warn the working classes against any kind of stigma which may be applied to the Russian Soviet Republic. We have not sufficient material for a judgment. One thing only do we know with certainty, that the shameful campaign of lying in which the press and agencies of the Central Empires and the Entente have vied with one another during the war, continues unchanged to-day.

We do not wish, by passing premature judgment on political methods, to be the victims of the manoeuvres and interested calculations of bourgeois governments. To our great regret, we are unable to rely solely on the information received from those Russian delegates present at the Conference, who represent only a minority of the Russian working class. We do not cast the slightest doubt on their good faith, but we must demand that the International remain true to its old principle of hearing both sides before coming to a decision. The Berne Conference is but a first feeble attempt at an international assembly. Whole Parties, such as the Italian, Serbian, Roumanian, and Swiss are staiding aside! Others are taking part reluctantly.

We have warned you against any decision which would make the meeting of the working classes of all countries more difficult in the future. We desire to reserve free entry into the International for all Socialist and Revolutionary Parties of all countries conscious of their class interests.

The majority of the Sub-Committee have not listened to our warnings. We do not wish to be parties to any action against the International and we cannot be bound by the resolution as a whole, since certain paragraphs can be exploited by the bourgeoisie.

[This resolution was adopted by: Holland, Norway, Ireland, Spain, the French majority, by half the German-Austrian delegation, and by one Greek delegate.]

### THE OFFICIAL RESOLUTION.

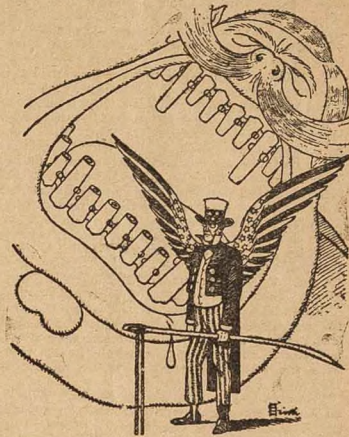
The Conference hails the great political revolutions which, in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany, have destroyed the old régimes of imperialism and militarism and overthrown their Governments.

The Conference urges the workers and socialists of these countries to develop democratic and republican institutions which will enable them to bring about the great socialist transformation. In these momentous times, when the problem of the Socialist reconstruction of the world is more than ever before a burning question, the working classes should make up their minds unanimously and unmistakably about the method of their emancipation.

In full agreement with all previous Congresses of the International the Berne Conference firmly adheres to the principles of Democracy. A re-organised society more and more permeated with Socialism, cannot be realised, much less permanently established, unless it rests upon triumphs of Democracy and is rooted in the principles of Liberty.

Those institutions which constitute Democracy, freedom of speech and of the press, the right of assembly, universal suffrage, a government responsible to Parliament, with arrangements guaranteeing popular co-operation and respect for the wishes of the people, the right of association, etc.; these also provide the working classes with the means of carrying on the class struggle.

Owing to certain recent events, the Conference desires to make the constructive character of the Socialist programme absolutely clear. True socialisation implies methodical development in the different branches of



"Wilson comes to Europe to stitch with 14 points the mouth of Imperialism."

(From the Italian Socialist paper THE AVANTI.)

economic activity under the control of the democracy. The arbitrary taking over of a few concerns by small groups of workers is not Socialism, it is nothing but Capitalism with many shareholders.

Since, in the opinion of the Conference, effective socialist development is only possible under democratic law, it is essential to eliminate at once any method of socialisation which has had no chance of gaining the support of the majority of the people.

Such a dictatorship would be all the more dangerous if it were based upon the support of only one section of the working class. The inevitable consequence of such a régime would be the paralysis of working-class strength through fratricidal war. The end would be the dictatorship of reaction.

The Russian delegates have proposed that a commission composed of representatives of all socialist tendencies should be appointed by the Conference and sent to Russia for the purpose of making an impartial report to the International on the political and economic situation there. The Conference fully realises the difficulties involved in such a task; nevertheless, considering the general interest Socialists in all countries have in exact knowledge of the facts bearing on these popular upheavals, the Conference authorises the permanent Commission to arrange for a delegation to be sent to Russia on this mission.

The Conference decides to put the question of Bolshevism on the agenda of the next Conference, and recommends the permanent Commission to carry out the necessary preparatory work.

The Conference, however, desires to call immediate attention to the fact that the famine and misery which the war has brought to the whole world, and more especially to the defeated countries, was bound to lead to social disorganisation.

Instead of using Bolshevism as a bugbear, and denouncing under this term every revolt of working people reduced to the lowest depths of despair, Governments should face their own responsibilities. Counter revolutionary forces are already at work everywhere. The Conference warns those who now hold the fate of the world in their hands, against the dangers of an imperialistic policy, and of a policy of military or economic enslavement of the peoples.

It calls upon Socialists throughout the world to close their ranks, not to deliver up the peoples to international reaction, but to do their utmost to ensure that Socialism and Democracy, which are inseparable, shall triumph everywhere.

[This resolution was adopted by the delegations from Sweden, Germany, Russia, Estonia, Letland, Georgia, Alsace, Argentina, Denmark, Bulgaria, Armenia, Hungary, Finland, Great Britain, Canada, by the French and Italian minorities, by half the delegation from German Austria, and later also by the Ukrainian delegation.]







THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

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THE GREAT CONSPIRACY. The Bar Between Russian and German Socialism.

The greatest effort of the Council of Ten, which controls the Peace Conference, is to keep Russia and Germany apart.

Russia's paramount need is modern agricultural machinery, in order that her 140,000,000 peasant cultivators may be enabled to produce enough to maintain themselves in comfort, and sufficient surplus food to sustain the industrial population of the towns.

Russia, in time, could develop manufactures of all kinds to supply her agricultural needs. Unless and until she does that, she should import large quantities of manufactured articles from abroad.

Germany, a country of vast industries and Russia's near neighbour is the natural source for supplying her with manufactured goods.

Two factors have closed to the Russian peasant their most convenient source of supply—the autocratic Government of the Czars, and the jealousy of the Allied Capitalists, who are the rivals of the German Capitalists.

Oppressive laws, and the exorbitant of tax-gatherers and landlords, kept the Russian peasants in a state of such extreme poverty that they could not buy adequate agricultural machinery and manufactured necessities.

Though the peasants used only primitive implements on their own land, they were accustomed to using the most up-to-date machinery and modern methods of cultivation on the estates of their employers. Only poverty prevented them from getting these for their own land.

Allied intrigues, combined with the jealousy and suspicion, always entertained towards their near neighbours by imperialistic rulers, induced the Czar to form alliances hostile to Germany.

Nevertheless prior to the war the greater part of the manufactured goods and especially the machinery and the tools for making machinery, which Russia imported, came from Germany.

Though these imports did not find their way to the poor Russian peasants, though only the landlords could buy German agricultural machinery, Russian manufactures were mainly dependent on German machinery and Russia was largely dependent on Germany for manufactured goods.

Imports from Germany ceased on the outbreak of war, and except in munitions there was on the whole, a progressive decrease in the imports from other countries.

Since the Workers' Socialist Revolution, imports from Allied countries have ceased, and the Allies prevent importation from the Central Empires and even from neutral nations.

The Allied intervention in Russia is moreover hindering the development of Russian industries by preventing raw material from reaching her industrial plants.

Russian peasants are not able to raise abundant crops, because the importation of seed and agricultural machinery is prevented by the Allied Governments.

Russian peasants finding that money is valueless to them, because they cannot buy with it what they need, are reluctant to sell their crops which are barely sufficient to maintain their families.

Socialist Germany would come to the aid of Socialist Russia and, each supplying the other's needs, they would together establish an inviolable

combination, from which the Socialist community would grow in such strength and beauty, that the entire continent, and shortly the whole world, would be drawn, by its influence, to organise on the Socialist basis.

The Allied Governments understand that if Socialist Russia be allied to a Socialist Germany, Socialism will be irrevocably established; but blinded by capitalist greed, and tenacious of power, they fail to realise the glorious possibilities and the rich stores of happiness and evolutionary development, which the golden era of Socialism will open to the human race. They fail to realise also that the coming of the Socialist era is inevitable.

Therefore the Allied Governments are straining every nerve to prevent the alliance of Russian and German Socialism. To prevent German manufactures reaching Russia, they are endeavouring to reduce Germany's manufacturing power to the lowest possible ebb. They are preparing to take from Germany large territories containing raw material required by her for manufacturing purposes. They are preparing to hand over to other countries between 12,000,000 and 13,000,000 of her people. They are creating new states to reduce the power of the German people and to divide them from Russia. Allied armies are occupying the railways and important industrial centres of Germany. They are reducing the energies of the German people by starvation. Rather than allow Germany's manufactures to aid Socialist Russia, the Allied Governments seem prepared to maintain indefinitely a military occupation of the whole of Germany, or as much of it as may be necessary to their purpose.

In their efforts to prevent the growth and establishment of Socialism, this Council of Ten is plunging the people of the greater part of Europe into untold misery, holding them in the grip of relentless famine, forcing them to slow painful death and sub-human degradations. In order to accomplish their purpose the members of this Capitalist Council of Ten will enforce upon the people still greater suffering, but their effort to prevent the coming of Socialism will be in vain. It is inevitable.

Innumerable writers have portrayed the hard life of the Russian peasant under the Czardom; a life whose poverty was not lessened, but instead greatly increased, by his enfranchisement from serfdom. True he was no longer openly bought and sold; his freedom to marry was no longer by legal right interferred with, as it was in the old days, notably by a certain old maiden of the nobility, who, as recorded by Turgeniev, forbade her serfs to marry, saying: "God forbid. Here am I living single. What indulgence! What are they thinking of!"

Generals Koltchak and Denikin are fighting to re-establish the old régime. The Allies are supporting Generals Koltchak and Denikin. When the peasants were freed the landlords drove them from their land, and either forced them to buy it, or if they chose, gave them a small piece of stony ground usually less than one dessiatine (two and three-quarter acres) and called a "beggar's lot." Those who refused to leave their land were flogged and even killed. When the peasants were serfs the Government estimated that a peasant family needed at least 23 acres of land to maintain itself, and took steps to assure this; but in 1900 the average amount of land possessed by each peasant family was only 17 acres. Perhaps it may be thought that the peasants were able to raise more produce per acre than in 1861. On the contrary, the rate of production had actually fallen.

It is estimated that if Russia were cultivated as Britain is, she could maintain 500,000,000 people; as it is, her 140,000,000 people are starving. Walling, who made a special study of this question in the years 1905-8, reports that most of the wagons and barrows were made without a scrap of iron, and the ploughs in general use were of a type used a hundred years ago. The ploughing was only six inches deep with the result, that as drought is frequent in the most fertile districts, the crops fre-

quently failed. If the ploughs had been capable of turning up twelve or eighteen inches famine would have been rare. The high tariff on iron and the peasants' extreme poverty are responsible for the fact that only one-tenth as much iron was used per head as in the United States.

The Russian peasant had an income equal only to one-third that of a poor German peasant and one-fourth that of the poorest French. The Russian peasant produced only half enough to maintain his family and animals in decency yet even the little that he produced was not left to him. He had so little land of his own that a part of what he had was rented from the landlord, and the rent charged was often as much and sometimes twice as much as the land could produce. To make up the difference the peasant was forced to work for the landlord.

The Government taxed the peasant very heavily, both directly and indirectly. The cost of petroleum when Walling wrote was multiplied four-fold by the tax, the tax accounted for four-fifths of the price of alcohol, one-half the price of tea. The taxes on the peasants' land amounted to all that their land could produce, and much of what they could make by their labour elsewhere. The tax collectors appeared at the harvest, and took every scrap of the peasants' property which was not considered necessary to prevent immediate starvation. Professor Simkhovitch showed that in the province of Novgorod the food deficit, to be made up by the peasants' work in the cities or on the landlord's estates, amounted to 3,000,000 roubles. The taxes reached a similar sum, and all that remained to the peasants was about 12½ roubles (25s.) per household, from which they had to buy a part of their food, and all their clothing, agricultural implements, and other necessities.

The peasants could scarcely afford to have for themselves a sheepskin coat, and this necessary garment was worn till it was in rags, the leather they produced, but wore shoes made of bark. The harness was made of rope or knotted vegetable fibre. They could not afford woollen underclothing even in winter. The high tariff on cotton increased their difficulty in buying it to wear. They seldom eat meat (usually only four times a year), or vegetables. They could not afford tea, but drank a brew of sour black bread. Their staple food was black bread and potato soup.

The women worked 12 to 15 hours a day. They often gave birth to their children in the fields, and returned to work within three or four days. These women could not long suckle their children and when their milk failed, they chewed black bread and put it into little bags for the babies to suck. No wonder there was a high infant mortality. The death rate for all ages was higher than that of any other civilised community, and half a million people died annually, sacrificed to poverty.

Famines, owing to the primitive methods of cultivation, were frequent as we have said. In the district of Buzuluk in the Samara province in 1906, the peasants plucked the ears of grain by hand, lest any should be lost; and fed their starving animals with the thatch from the roof. A certain Mr. Keeling has recently complained to The Westminster Gazette that in Petrograd in this year of war and scarcity, his bread ration was only half a pound a day, and that the public dinner, to which he was entitled, consisted only of thin soup, meat and bread. What was the relief granted by the Government of the Czar in the famine of 1906? In that year there was no war and no Revolution; in that year Russia exported grain to the value of more than 500,000,000 roubles though 30,000,000 of her people were starving, and the export of rye actually continued in the famine districts. The peasants there who had sold their grain at three-quarters of a rouble were a few weeks later forced to buy it back at a rouble and a quarter.

continued on Page 1265.

THE GREAT CONSPIRACY. Continued from page 1264.

The relief sent by the Czar's Government to the famine areas was 40 lbs. per head for the whole season; according to Walling at least 90 lbs. was necessary; his estimate is terribly low. The people were fed not with bread but with a weak soup made with bread and potatoes. In many places the grain sent by the Government for seed was rotten and full of worms and mixed with earth and manure, and it arrived late for the sowing. In some cases the sum assigned for this relief was stolen outright. The contractors and Ministers responsible went unpunished.

And what view did the Czar's Government take of the peasants' life of hideous poverty? Walling reports the view of a lieutenant of the notorious Witte. Having observed that the peasants commonly wore a belt which they tightened to allay the pangs of hunger, he said: "Why, under the present perfectly hopeless circumstances, is not this a very practical device? The peasant is underfed, but there is not enough work for him to do. Why should he be kept in full strength? Is it not fortunate for Russia that her peasants do not have the habit of eating as much as they do elsewhere?... There are many savage races that, forced by necessity, have accommodated themselves to the most varied and meagre diet."

But Social Reform was demanded. The Social Reform inaugurated by the late Czar consisted, firstly in the abolition of the Mir, the peasants' ancient communal council, which was too democratic for his liking; and, secondly, the passage of a law to enable the peasants to sell or mortgage their lands. This simply meant that in the first year of famine the poorer peasants would lose their land, and become wholly dependent on what they could earn as labourers at an average wage of 8d. per day.

Shortly the mass of the Russian peasantry would have been landless, but the Revolution has changed the course of events.

The Revolution gave land to the people, but it was impossible that the desperate situation of the peasants could be righted all at once. In the year 1911, 46.6 per cent of Russia's total imports were from Germany, 45 per cent from Britain, 42 per cent of the agricultural machinery, 80 per cent of other machinery, 59.6 per cent of parts of machinery and apparatus, 88 per cent of the scientific apparatus and instruments, 77.7 per cent of iron and steel goods, and 89.9 per cent of the goods made of copper and alloys, which Russia imported came from Germany. The respective percentages from Britain being 11.1 per cent, 15 per cent, 11.4 per cent, 2 per cent, 10 per cent and 2 per cent. All imports from Germany ceased with the war. And now all allied imports are stopped and neutral imports are largely prevented by the Allies. Maxim Litvinoff has told us that 40,000,000 roubles worth of vegetable seeds bought from Denmark and paid for in cash by Russia, were stopped by the Allies, and of the Allied ultimatum which has forced the Scandinavian nations to refuse to trade with Russia, the Russian peasants were starving for lack of agricultural implements before the war, and though the Soviet Government and the peasants' land committees have collected the agricultural machinery of the great landowners, and now that in Petrograd in this year of war and scarcity, his bread ration was only half a pound a day, and that the public dinner, to which he was entitled, consisted only of thin soup, meat and bread.

What was the relief granted by the Government of the Czar in the famine of 1906? In that year there was no war and no Revolution; in that year Russia exported grain to the value of more than 500,000,000 roubles though 30,000,000 of her people were starving, and the export of rye actually continued in the famine districts. The peasants there who had sold their grain at three-quarters of a rouble were a few weeks later forced to buy it back at a rouble and a quarter.

The petroleum oilfields of Baku in 1912 reduced 169,124,914 roubles worth of oil.

According to the Russian Year Book, edited by Dr. Edward P. Kennard, the average total earnings of the industrial workers who are subject to the law of nine hours (more than half) was £25 a year in 1912, two-thirds of the women got less than 30s. a month.

Of this 8,882,408 roubles worth was kept in Russia, and 147,106,580 roubles worth was sent abroad. Russia is not getting the benefit of her oilfields. The people are without oil for domestic use. For the trains run by oil it is necessary largely to substitute wood. Russia does not even receive the money which she should gain by the sale of her oil abroad. Mr. Churchill has explained that a British Army of "a certain size" is concentrated at Baku, and The Mining World, casually referring to the Baku oil product under the heading "News from the Properties," confirms the news that Russian petroleum has passed into British hands.

Russia was always deficient in railway accommodation. Walling tells us that the railways never could transport the produce of the peasants: only that of the landlords. He says that the peasants were often obliged to wait three or four days in the station for a train which would hold them. The roads were an even worse case. In Simbirsk, he says, the peasants paid a farthing per head per annum for the upkeep of roads, and the landlords, who had "an absolute monopoly of local government," paid nothing whatever for such purposes. War has in every country made terrible havoc of roads and railway equipment, and war still continues in Russia.

Under these conditions it is to be understood that the Russian peasant, still scarcely able to produce food enough to feed his family, should shrink from parting with his grain for paper money, which, under existing conditions, cannot purchase anything that he needs. Bessie Beatty, an American writer, who was in Russia during the Kerensky regime and until the early part of last year, speaks of the peasants' reluctance to part with their grain even then. She says:—

"The greatest difficulty that each succeeding Government experienced was that of making the peasants give up their grain. They wanted plows, cotton for their looms, shoes for themselves and their children; and the roubles they received had depreciated so greatly in value that they had no purchasing power. The peasants looked upon them as so many scraps of worthless paper."

A Russian who had two estates down in the south told me of an excursion that he made to the Government of Chernigov in September. He went there to try to induce the peasants to sell their grain to the army. "There was one village," he said to me, "where there were two thousand inhabitants. It was in the heart of the rich grain country. Since the previous December no official had been allowed to enter the village. The people had isolated themselves from the rest of Russia, and officials remained away under threat of being killed. I went alone on horseback with a rifle and some ammunition. As I neared the place I saw the villagers coming out to meet me. I told them they must give bread to the army, which was in danger of starving at the front. I made what I thought was a forcible plea. When I finished an old grey-haired peasant, who seemed to be the spokesman of the crowd, said: 'That's all very clever talk, but now listen to what we have to say. You want our bread. You offer to give us five roubles a pood (forty lbs.). What is five roubles to us? We want to buy shoes. For shoes we must pay a hundred roubles. We will keep our grain.' 'All right,' I answered, 'if you want to keep your grain you can keep it; but you need petrol, and sugar for your tea, and iron for your plows. If you do not give us grain we will not give you these.' The old peasant smiled and beckoned me to follow him. He led me to a window where a couple of crude pine torches cut from a near-by wood had been placed. 'Those were the lights our grandfathers used,' he said. 'They are good enough for us, you can keep your petrol.' 'But sugar—you must have sugar for your tea.' 'Our grandfathers needed no sugar for their tea. They got along without tea, and they had as much bread as we have.' 'What about iron for your plows?' I asked. Surely, here at any rate I had him stumped. He led me to a shed at the back of his house, and showed me a small, primitive scotch plow, in use now only in the most backward sections. 'Do you see that blade?' he asked. 'Our fathers used those and they had bread. There's enough steel on the old plows in the village to make new plows to last four years. You can keep your petrol and your sugar and your iron,' he said triumphantly. 'You know,' I said, playing my trump card, 'we can bring troops down here and force you to give up

your grain for the good of your country.' 'Yes, of course,' he said, 'we are only two thousand, and if you brought a whole regiment you could beat us. But we will recall our own peasants from the front, and when they come, do you suppose they will fight for you? No, they will fight for us.' It was of no use—all threats had failed. I tried persuasion. 'But please, please,' I said, 'your brothers are starving—please give us some grain for the army.' 'Yes,' he said, 'we will give you bread. We will give you two thousand poods of bread for our brothers at the front.' 'We will be glad to pay you—' I began. He interrupted. 'No,' he said, 'it is a present—we will not sell you bread. We have no use for your roubles. They are scraps of paper.'

...The peasant who could neither read nor write knew enough to realise that money is paper when its purchasing power is gone. Unless it could be transmuted into farm implements, it was of less value to him than his grain. The dream of the Soviets was communally owned farm machinery that would lift Russian agriculture out of its primitive state and lessen the drudgery of the peasant's desperate struggle for life.

Lenin tells of the well-to-do peasants; the little capitalists who hoard and profiteer whilst their brothers starve. Bessie Beatty adds:—

"The same official told me that he had visited the village of Radouel, and found the people without bread, while two kilometres away the peasants were feeding bread to the pigs and selling pigs for lard. 'Why should we sell bread for 2 roubles a pood, when we can get 150 roubles a pood for fat pork?' the peasants asked."

The Germans, with their highly developed industries and manufacturing skill, might come to the aid of Russia; but the Allies prevent it. When the German Revolution broke out, the Russians offered food trains to Germany, and desired that the two nations should co-operate; but such co-operation was forbidden by the Allies, and the reactionary elements in Germany were thus able to point out that friendship with Russia meant renewed war with the Allies.

The Allies refused to negotiate with the German Workers' and Soldiers' Council, which was the equivalent of the Russian Soviet. Each ordered the Allied armies to dissolve such councils.

Since the Armistice Germany's own hardships have grown more serious than when she was still at war. Mr. Churchill's own words are the best proof of this:—

"We are holding all our means of coercion in full operation or in immediate readiness for use. We are enforcing the blockade with rigour. We have strong armies ready to advance at the shortest notice. Germany is very near starvation. All the evidence I have received from officers sent by the War Office all over Germany shows, first of all, the great privations which the German people are suffering, and, secondly, the danger of a collapse of the entire structure of German social and national life under the pressure of hunger and malnutrition. Now, is therefore the moment to settle."

British soldiers have complained of the hardships of German people. General Plumer has protested. Here comes a protest from another young soldier:—

"The following information has been given to me by the mother of a soldier just returned from Cologne, from the Army of Occupation there:—

"Sad as it is," he says, "to see the children so pale and thin and so timid of every one, there is one thing far worse in his opinion. It seemed to him nearly every woman and girl seen in the streets of Cologne was a prostitute, and for a piece of soap and a lump of bread or a few biscuits, a soldier could live with a German girl for a week. He called it 'live,' his mother said. 'God forgive us.' I cannot conceive that such ill can be done, as is being done by the continuance of this inhuman blockade, and no just punishment follow."

Folkstimme's report of the wholesale destruction by the French troops of Occupation in the Maingau chemical factory, for which no redress could be secured, is ominous of future possibilities. Very ominous, too, is the account of Allied intentions given in The Times, March 8th, by Mr. Frank H. Simonds, an account corroborated from other sources. According to Mr. Simonds when the peace treaty comes to be signed, Germany will have been deprived of between 12,000,000 and 13,000,000 people who are to be placed under foreign rule. President Wilson laid down as one of his peace terms:—

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ask out... might be reason in the Bill, the meantime... it had to claim more... annexations... the Bill was read... admunities... right of the peoples... that Mr. Bonar... that Mr. Bonar... to grant facilities... the



THE GREAT CONSPIRACY.

Continued from page 1265.
The settlement of every question whether of territory or of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery.

Disregarding this pledge to the peoples of the world, the Council of Ten is arranging, as Mr. Simonds explains, to hand over to France not merely Alsace Lorraine, but also the Saar Valley an area of about 1,000 square miles, "because of its great coal deposits." Says Mr. Simonds:—

"The 30,000 inhabitants would unquestionably choose the German rather than the French nationality at this time, but the question of self-determination in this specific case is affected by other considerations."

Even in Alsace Lorraine the workers are holding demonstrations to express their desire to return to German rule because a change of citizenship has meant that their masters cause them to work longer hours for lower wages than before. Germany is to lose, Mr. Simonds continues, not only Alsace Lorraine and the Saar basin, but, as Sir Edward Carson and the Secret Treaties promised, all the territory on the west bank of the Rhine. A Rhenish republic is to be created to cover the remaining area. This is not all; the Rhineland east of the Rhine, are to be occupied indefinitely by the Allied armies, perhaps for 10 years, probably more, till the heavy indemnity which the Allies are demanding has been paid; an indemnity incurred, if incurred at all, by the Kaiser's Government, not by the people. This is not all. Posen, Danzig, together with the whole of East and West Prussia, are to be taken from Germany and handed over to Poland, in order that Poland, as Mr. Simonds tells us, may become capable alike of resisting German and Bolshevik attack. Thus on the French frontier and in Schleswig 2,500,000 Germans are to be removed from Germany, 5,000,000 or 3,500,000 Germans are to become Poles and 4,500,000 are to belong to the Rhenish Republic.

Europe will be divided into water-tight compartments for resisting Bolshevism. Russia is to be kept apart from Germany by a strong Poland and Allied money and munitions will help Poland to fight Bolshevism. On the west the danger of Bolshevism spreading from Germany is to be prevented by further buffer states. The present terrible blockade is making German capitalists and aristocrats ready to suffer a British occupation which will hold down the workers, especially as the German Government, in response to pressure from the workers, has anti-sonised them by taking some feeble steps towards the Socialisation of industry, and has agreed to incorporate the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils in the Constitution.

There is evidently a difference of opinion amongst the Allied politicians as to the best way to stay Bolshevism. Lansing, the American Secretary of State, says Germany must be fed: "not out of pity for the German people... but because we, the victors in this war, will be the chief sufferers if it is not done." The Liberal newspapers continually urge that the people must be fed to defeat Bolshevism. The Spartacist battles in Germany, they point out to be largely a fight for actual food. The Daily News records that the fighting discloses hidden stores of food, which are seized by the starving people; and tells that the people waiting in the food queues say: "Thank God, we are armed." Press reports declare that the German rich are indulging in an orgy of luxury and pleasure, dancing whilst the people starve, and Germany is being reduced to ruins. Yet the same newspapers are unanimous in opposing the Spartacist Socialists, who wish to end this corruption and to establish the era of equality.

In spite of the frequent declarations of Allied Ministers and members of the Council of Ten that Germany must be fed, the blockade continues with unabated rigour; the ultra-coercionist politicians hold sway.

STRIKE POSSIBILITIES.

The employers and the Government, which more and more reveals itself as the Executive Committee of the Capitalist class, are now so contemptuously flouting every demand of the workers, that even the least class-conscious of the old-fashioned Trade Union leaders, are moved to indignation. A situation is developing, in which, in spite of their desire to avoid conflict, the National Trade Union officials may be forced to approve a strike and to follow the lead of the restive rank and file, as did those district officials whom the A.S.E. lately dismissed. The Railway Executive has indeed thrown down the gauntlet to labour, in refusing to allow the 33s. war increase won by the railway workers to remain a permanent part of their wage. The railway men in pre-war days were amongst the sweated workers of the country; to propose a gradual reduction of 15s. to 24s. a week in their present wage is not only an outrage; it is just one of those provocative proposals which no body of workers will accept, the refusal of double pay for Sunday duty, and the offer of time and a quarter instead, will serve to inflame the situation. One can only conclude that the Government expects that a strike will eventually develop and is choosing its own moment for it. Perhaps, also, it prefers to have the workers fighting a defensive battle to retain their present status than an offensive to secure improved conditions.

The coal inquiry has revealed much profiteering, and on behalf of the Executive of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, Mr. W. Straker has submitted proposals for nationalisation. These provide for a national mining council appointed for five years, and consisting of five representatives chosen by the Miners' Federation, five appointed, presumably by the Government, to represent consumers, and a Chairman appointed by the Government who will be Minister of Mines. The scheme provides district mining councils and pit committees constituted in the same way, and sitting for three years and one year respectively. It is proposed that the Minister of Mines may compulsorily purchase mines and land for sinking new mines. It was suggested that the mine owners could be paid the value of their invested capital out of the average profits of 25 per cent

The German soldiers cannot be trusted to fight Socialism: therefore, though the German Government has announced its intention to build up a substantial army, Mr. Lloyd George insists, and the Peace Conference has agreed, that the German army shall consist of only 70,000 or 100,000 men (though General Foch and his military colleagues would have allowed 200,000) and that conscription in Germany shall be abolished. Britain, on the other hand, is to take Germany's place as a military nation with an army of 900,000, in the first instance, and conscription is to be extended till April 20th, 1920. Germany is to be allowed no military air force and the question of a German commercial air force is still under discussion.

The German Navy, it is suggested, should be distributed amongst the Allies, the greater part of the German mercantile marine is also to be so distributed, and the British are to have three-quarters of the tonnage. Whilst capitalists are prosecuting the war against Bolshevism and punishing Germany, they take care to look after their own private interests, for, of course they intend that these ships shall pass to them, like the ships built by the British Government during the war. The British Navy is meanwhile to be maintained at the pre-war two-power standard, which will undoubtedly mean an enormous increase, because America is also we believe about to become a great Naval Power. E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

IMPORTANT.

NEXT WEEK we shall publish criticisms of the Bern Conference by International Socialists including: F. Loriot, of the Left Wing French Socialist Party; Ernst Toller, Member of the Executive Council of the Bavarian Soldiers' and Sailors' Council; K. Grimm, Swiss Socialist Deputy; Ch. Rappoport, famous French Socialist writer; Louise Munch, Swiss Socialist, &c.

and that they could have 5 per cent interest meanwhile. We are opposed to the principle of re-paying invested capital. In the case of the mines the capital has already been repaid again and again out of the profits. We think that the right principle is to offer work to the dispossessed capitalists, for a pension, equal to that given to any one else, if the ex-capitalist is unable to work. That is the Soviet plan, and we think it is the right one. The control scheme is not so good as the Soviet method, by which members of the controlling body are delegates who must report to, and receive instructions from, those who appointed them, and can be changed at any time. The basis of the workers' control under the Soviets is the workers in the pits or workshops. Delegates from the Co-operatives which represent the consumers, the Soviets (themselves formed of delegates from the industrial workers) and the industrial and professional organisations concerned are added to the district and national councils.

Nevertheless, we must admit that this M.F.G.B. scheme is a great advance, coming, as it does, from a National Executive. We may look to see improvements introduced under stress of events. Mr. Straker said that there would be a strike if nationalisation were not conceded. Nationalisation on the Post Office lines or on the lines of the present Transport Bill, would not benefit the workers, except by stimulating their class-consciousness by bringing to them a practical realisation that their conflict is with the Government—with the capitalist system itself. The Government will not readily agree to such proposals as those put forward by Mr. Straker, defective as they are from the workers' standpoint. If the workers adhere to their demands, a great conflict will arise, which may include miners, railway workers, dockers, and all others engaged in transport. The demand of the agricultural labourers for a wage of £2 5s. has also been refused, and though the labourers offered to accept 30s., the farmers refused to concede more than 30s. If the Triple Alliance decides to strike, the agriculturalists will probably join them. The dockyard workers, who so lately were beaten, will be glad of an attempt to reverse their defeat. But a strike of the miners and transport workers inevitably means that the majority of workers are thrown out of employment. Will the workers use the general strike to establish the Soviets in Britain?

TARDY JUSTICE.

Ten months have elapsed since the Government imprisoned leading Sinn Feiners. They have been denied the chance of trial, and no charge has been preferred against them. As our readers will remember, an alleged German plot was used as a reason for the arrests. Now they have been released just as unceremoniously as they were arrested. Nothing has been gained from the Government's point of view by this absurd and unjust transaction. On the contrary, Ireland is more Sinn Fein, if that be possible.

Countess Marekiewicz, Ireland's first woman M.P., has just returned to Dublin after her long imprisonment—her reception in Dublin shows that she is even more popular than ever. Her sojourn in prison gave her time to study methods for the advancement of Ireland. In a conversation she told us that she favours the Russian Soviet system, though owing to differences in the countries, the system would have to be adapted to Ireland's needs. The Soviet idea is nothing new to Irish people; Connolly was its exponent. The future of Ireland will be watched by Socialists on this side of the Channel with the greatest interest.

W. F. WATSON.

A further remand until to-day (Saturday), at 2 p.m., was secured by W. F. Watson, at Bow Street. Watson kept the Court busy for a full three hours, and as all his witnesses were not present, procured an adjournment. On account of the lively scenes at Ramsay's trial, only those specially named by Watson were allowed to be present. Nevertheless, we urge all supporters to come in force this time.

There might be reason in the Bill, the meantime our right it had to claim more annexations. The Bill was read a second time. The right of the people, MS. The International Federation of "New Endians" agents to grant facilities. statement.

There is no good authority that since last July John Maclean has been on hunger strike and undergoing forcible feeding. Is this country to be the last in granting reprieves. Germany has shown the way by freeing Karl Liebknecht, whose popularity has been increased enormously by the unjust treatment meted out to him. When are we going to have our political prisoners reprieved? All sections of the community should protest against

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