

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

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SOCIALISTS AND THE WAR

Socialists who have been able to keep their wits in spite of the all-but-universal cry, "My country right or wrong," realise that the origin of this War is the desire for capitalistic expansion. The treaties which Germany has forced on Russia, Ukraina, Roumania, and Finland clearly reveal the German War aims. These treaties have given Germany access to corn lands, mines, and factories in Ukraina, oilfields in Roumania, and copper, manganese, and oils in the Caucasus. They have also given to Germany control of sea-ports in the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea, and the North Sea, and railway communications to the East and North. German capitalists had long determined to secure, when opportunity should offer, more raw materials, and greater railway and seaport facilities. These, if they can hold them, they have now gained by conquest.

The Allied War aims have been exposed, not alone by their conquests, but also by the secret treaties which have been published by the Bolsheviks, who discovered them in the Petrograd archives. These treaties have been re-published also in the DREADNOUGHT. By their secret treaties, if and when they were able to realise them, the Allies would gain oil in Persia and Mesopotamia and ports in the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Arabian Sea; also Constantinople and the Dardanelles, and much other rich Turkish territory. In Alsace-Lorraine the Allies would get iron and steel, potash, and other mineral deposits. In Germany, west of the Rhine, they would gain coal. They would also gain a big piece of rich territory in the Balkans, snatched from Austria; another piece in the Tyrol, again at Austria's expense; ports and territory on the borders of the Mediterranean, and oil, rubber, and mineral wealth in Africa. The treaties prove that the aims of the Allies are the same as those of Germany, namely, the securing of raw material, railway communications, ports, and markets. The War is, in short, a commercial War.

We Socialists know this; we realise that world-politics are mainly matters of business to the financier, and that so long as the world is run on a capitalistic basis it will be mainly controlled by financiers. We therefore regret to find the following declaration of opinion in the "Editorial Outlook" of this quarter's "Socialist Review." The writer begins by saying that Lord Lansdowne has rendered "tolerably respectable a new and peaceful orientation; he then continues:—

"This, however, would have to be preceded by a change of Government itself. And in changing horses we must be careful. Naturally I should prefer a Labour Government were that possible. . . . What sort of Labour Government should we get now? The Labour Party is only finding its feet in these questions, and for it to step in before the issues are prepared for it would be to commit a blunder even greater than was its decision to join a War Coalition. It would have to face with an untried team a maximum amount of difficulty on a field where its past experience has been most scanty, where it would be easiest for it to come to grief, and where its failure would be most fatal to itself and the country. Every month that passes makes its arrival more probable, and it can afford to wait and use the present governing authorities to pave its way. In face of this it is argued that we should let the present Government go on its further ruin. I do not consider that cynical view to be in accordance with our duty to our people. We have to conserve the salvage, and not stand by and see more of it merged in the general ruin. I believe that a policy with peace at its end ought now to be begun; that is why I want to see a change of Government without a day's delay. I believe that a Government can be formed which will have a grasp upon a policy of peace just as firm as any Labour Government which can be formed now, and though it will not suit me for reconstruction, I am willing to use it for the great pressing need of the moment. If such a Government were to ease the Censorship and give us facilities to speak to the Central peoples it would do a service for the time being equal to any that we could do if in office ourselves. The support we should give it would be independent support. We could defend it from Jingo attack and put at its disposal our great international influence, and when it had done its work Whitehall would be ready for Labour. None of us would be very much older when that opportunity would come!"

In other words, the Editor of the "Socialist Review" is of opinion that a Labour Government could not make a satisfactory peace, and that this difficult question should be left to experienced capitalist politicians. Having left Lord Lansdowne to tackle the War problem, the Labour Party is to find an easy way to office, perhaps by criticising Lord Lansdowne's mistakes. Men who should deliberately take such an unheroic

course would deserve political extinction; but what has given the Editor of the "Socialist Review" so much faith in the diplomacy and the intentions of Lord Lansdowne and the other politicians of the old school? Lord Lansdowne's record is not inspiring. He was in office either as War Minister or Foreign Secretary throughout the Boer War. He was Foreign Secretary in the year 1904, when, as Mr. E. D. Morel says, in his "Truth and the War," "the seeds of this mightiest of all Wars were being sown." Mr. Morel here refers to the betrayal of Morocco, which was begun in 1904. In that year France and Spain publicly declared themselves to be "firmly attached to the integrity of Morocco," and an Anglo-French manifesto declared France to have "no intention of altering the political status of Morocco." At the same time secret understandings were adopted by Britain, France, and Spain, under which France and Spain should divide Morocco into spheres of political and economic action for themselves. That Lord Lansdowne was aware of, and responsible for, this dishonest act, is proved by published letters which passed between him and the French Ambassador concerning the public and secret treaties between France and Spain. Mr. Morel and others who have exhaustively studied the events leading up to this War, consider the Morocco intrigue to have been one of the principal causes of the international tragedy. What faith can we have in Lord Lansdowne as the saviour of the country since he was responsible for the beginning of the intrigue, and since he and his colleagues laid the foundations on which Sir Edward Grey and the Liberal Government continued so disastrously to build?

The Editor of the "Socialist Review" speaks of the issues being "prepared" for the future Labour Government. Dear heaven help the Government which has the edifice prepared for it by the men who prepared the Morocco intrigue! During the years 1904 to 1914 when War broke out the shadow of the Morocco intrigue and its double-dealing and broken faith darkened the horizon of foreign politics. In every foreign engagement made during those years the people were deceived. During the term of office of Lord Lansdowne and his associates the more brutal and reckless type of foreign politics began to appear—South Africa and Morocco are dark blots to place to the record of any group of men. Personal blame we will not cast upon them; we will only say that, believing in the capitalist system which makes pawns of the world-peoples in the interests of finance, they have been the tools and coadjutors of the pushful modern financiers whose operations produced this War. Political memories are short; we shall be accused of mere bitterness in recrimination; but have we a right to display too much gullibility where the welfare of the people is concerned; have we a right to walk open-eyed into a snare? No, no, we must not support the return to office of any of the makers of this War! The Editor of the "Socialist Review" promises Socialist advice, influence, and support for a Lansdowne Government; we do not think that a Government of aristocratic Tory tradition would welcome such co-operation. The Socialists' strength lies not in wire-pulling politicians, for wire-pulling is but bargaining after all, a matter of give and take at bottom. And what have we to offer the Tory politician save the promise of an awakened democracy—the very thing that he does not want?

The Editor of the "Socialist Review" asks: "What sort of Labour Government should we get now?" And in the point of view which the question reveals he has our sympathy. We, too, shrink from the prospect of a Labour Government manned by the Labour leaders who have co-operated in the prosecution of the War and its iniquities and who have been but the echo of the capitalist politicians with whom they have associated.

"But what is the alternative?" you ask, O comrades. Is it not to propagate International Socialist thought and thereby secure International-Socialist leadership in the Labour movement? The Editor of the "Socialist Review," though he does not say so, obviously prefers not to allow Labour leaders of the type of Messrs. Henderson, Hodge, Barnes, Clynes, and Roberts to come into office during the War, for he knows that they would merely drift in the wake of the prevailing capitalist policy. He fears that the Labour movement is as yet too little coloured by Socialist thought to choose men of more advanced ideas and he would reserve the reign of these men for peace time, for the period of reconstruction after the War. Does he fear the destruction of the reputations of the present-day Labour leaders? To adopt his policy is to postpone the awakening of the Labour movement; let its chosen leaders, whoever they are, go forward and acquit themselves as best they may; they cannot do worse than the men who have gone before them. And meanwhile we who are International Socialists must toil with all earnestness to propagate our ideals in the Labour movement. A long

way round you think, dear comrades, but it is the only way. There are no short cuts to righteousness. Christ came to teach men that, but to this day they will not heed him. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life." Let us be like the "wise man which built his house upon a rock," for if we build upon the shifting sands it will fall once more when the rain descends and the floods come.

"Our country would gain in popular esteem," says the Editor of the "Socialist Review." We plead with him not to let his thoughts run in such channels, for in these days it is indeed true that we cannot follow the strait and steep path, and yet find that all men will speak well of us.

We commend this fact to him in his dealing with Lenin and Kerensky. It was not Lenin, but Kerensky who "trusted to the sword" when he re-started the offensive in the Eastern trenches. And here let us quote again the letter of Rosa Luxemburg to a Russian friend in July, 1917:—

"So you have broken the peace. The Russian Revolution was everything to us, too. Everything in Germany was tottering, falling. For months the soldiers of the two armies fraternised, and our officers were powerless to stop it. Then suddenly the Russians fired upon their German comrades. After that it was easy to convince the Germans that the Russian peace was false. Alas, my poor friends! Germany will destroy you now. And for us is black despair come again!"

We plead with our Socialist comrades to have faith in Socialism—to work for it, recognising that it alone can end all wars, as it can end, too, the sordid miseries of peace. The War has been caused by capitalism, it is our duty and our privilege to show men that Socialism alone can preserve them from such catastrophes—shall we throw the opportunity aside in order to place in power some idol with feet of clay? These are the days in which to pray for more greatness and steadfastness of purpose, for wider knowledge, stronger powers of persuasion; these are the days in which to stretch out our hands and the warm and glowing sympathy of our hearts to the living, suffering, struggling peoples—our comrades in life—in order that we may be worthy and successful in teaching Socialism. In these days let our spirits be far from the deceptions and wire-pullings of the counting-house and the committee-room.

THE MAN POWER BILL.

The Man Power Bill will bring disaster upon the country. In Ireland will be massacre and revolt, and scenes more terrible than those of the European battle-fields. Mr. Lloyd George has announced that conscription is to be enforced there as soon as the necessary machinery can be created and put into operation. The Rebellion of Easter Week arose because of the fear of conscription; conscription can only be enforced in Ireland at the cost of a massacre in every street. There will be unprecedented numbers of C.O.s. And conscription is to be thrust upon Ireland without even the definite promise of self-government or Home Rule of any kind. Mr. Lloyd George announces that the much-vaunted Irish Convention, which was never a democratically constituted body, has failed to achieve unanimity, and that the Government will draft a Bill on its own lines. But he adds: "Let there be no misapprehension, the two questions (conscription and self-government) will not hang together."

Obviously the Government Bill will not be acceptable to the Irish people, and the Government will attempt to force conscription upon Ireland by the sword. Only 85 Members of Parliament protested in the Division Lobby. The democracy will remember this.

For the rest the Man Power proposals raise the military age to 50 or 55 in certain cases, and extend conscription under what appear to be modified conditions to the clergy. The leaders of the Churches, according to Mr. Lloyd George, have agreed to this use of Christ's ministers. Ministers of Religion will now have an opportunity of suffering for their faith on equal terms with lay conscientious objectors. Exemptions are to be cancelled by Proclamation, and Tribunals to be re-constituted. Already the military authorities are sending boys of 18½ years to France.

All this, Mr. Lloyd George assures us, is necessary because of the reverses on the Western Front; yet he admits that the Allied forces are already numerically greater there than the German forces and America is pouring in more men. Mr. Arnold Bennett, in the "Daily News," elaborately seeks to prove that the Man Power Bill is unnecessary to achieve victory in the West. But in war millions of lives are recklessly sacrificed and the Government is already sending men out to Vladivostok to support the Japanese troops in the effort to crush out Socialism in Siberia.

The Government's wanton disregard of the lives of British men and the true spirit of capitalist administration have been shown in nothing more clearly than in this embarkation on a new War in the East in order to put down the Socialist Republic.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

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