

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

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PUT NOT YOUR TRUST IN CAPITALIST POLITICIANS.

The great news of this week is the growing power of the German Socialists, of Liebknecht and the Spartacus group. They now control the office of the great daily newspaper *Vorwaerts*. That they now possess the paper and plant means a fine accession of propaganda force; that they have been able to secure this valuable property means that they have grown very strong. Some days ago it was already rumoured that the Spartacus group now formed the Government of Germany with Liebknecht at its head. The rumours were not confirmed, but from many quarters comes the report that this thing may happen at any time.

The Ebert Government appears to be acting with unexampled folly. Its commandant in Berlin, Wels, seems to have been very hostile to the Marines, who were called from Kiel to keep order on the outbreak of the revolution. According to *The Manchester Guardian* Wels in Christmas week refused to pay them their wages unless they would immediately disband or leave Berlin, where many of them had their families. The Marines marched to Wels's headquarters on December 24th, but were fired on and two of them were killed. Whereupon they arrested Wels and two of his lieutenants. After a series of conferences it was agreed that the three prisoners should be released, the Marines should get their pay, and evacuate the castle where they were stationed. Neither side kept the undertaking. The castle was bombarded and serious conflicts took place. Finally the Marines triumphed because the troops ordered to fire on them took to fraternising with them. General Leguis, who was in command of the troops, declared that this was due to Government hesitation, which during ten days exposed the troops, newly arrived from Finland, to "influences," and because during a twenty minutes' armistice, unarmed crowds, including many women and children, obtained a chance to work upon the feelings of the soldiers. This appeal to brotherhood and comradeship from civilian workers to workers in khaki, was in complete harmony with the spirit of Russian Bolshevism. Very many people were killed, but public opinion necessitated that the positions of Wels and Leguis should be filled by others.

Nevertheless, at the conference of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates held subsequently the supporters of Ebert's Government were in the majority. On the main point at issue, namely, whether Germany should be governed by the Soviets or by a Constituent Assembly on parliamentary lines, the majority decided for the Constituent Assembly.

However, the struggle between the Marines and the Government appears to be leading to the withdrawal from Ebert's Government of the Independent Socialists, who stand midway between Liebknecht and the Ebert-Scheidemann party. This would be a serious blow to the Ebert Government's popularity.

Any day now the news may come that the Spartacus Party is in control and that Soviet Socialism reigns in Germany. When Soviet Germany joins Soviet Russia, the two great nations will form a Socialist alliance, so strong that no capitalist combination will have power to destroy it.

Seeing this danger, capitalism is on the alert to crush the growing power of the workers ere it becomes invincible. Whilst the workers of France and Britain are cheering Wilson, his fourteen points, and his League of Nations, and, under cover of the general rejoicing at the ending of the war, the League of Capitalist Governments is laying its plans to destroy Socialism, or, as they call it, Bolshevism.

President Wilson had but newly arrived in Paris when, on December 21st, *The Times* published this note from its Washington correspondent:—

NEW YORK, Dec. 19.

The New York *Sun* states that, according to diplomatic advices received at Washington, a definite programme of action by the Allies and the United States is being prepared in the hope of re-establishing some semblance of order in Russia. It is understood that the tentative plan is to begin military operations this winter instead of in spring. Though the expedition will necessarily be of a military character, it will be in no sense a war waged against Russians, but rather an extension of the idea of police duty to protect foreign interests as well as the interests of civilian Russians.

The *Sun* observes that Mr. Wilson and the Entente Prime Ministers realise that it will be virtually impossible to establish anything resembling a world peace at the Conference table if Russia, representing one-sixth of the world, remains in a perpetual state of civil war and anarchy. It is not believed that the Bolsheviks are capable of resisting the efforts of the Powers to bring relief to particular districts.

This statement that Wilson was conferring with the Allies in regard to the Russian intervention has been confirmed from many other quarters, and numerous press paragraphs have urged that, whilst intervention in Russia is necessary, intervention, to be effective, must be on a large scale. The desire to proceed with the campaign in the winter season, which in Northern Russia must cause appalling hardship to the poor fellows fighting on both sides, probably springs both from the knowledge that the power and popularity of the Soviet system grows with every day that it is permitted to survive and from the fear that capitalism may shortly be confronted by a number of other Soviets if that in Russia be not crushed.

Comparatively few of the workers of this country as yet realise that their interest lies in close co-operation with the German Soviets. Nevertheless that realisation, on a very wide-spread scale, is not far distant, in spite of the desperate efforts of old-fashioned Labour leaders and opportunist politicians to maintain the race hatred engendered by the war.

Already masses of workers in this country have awakened to the knowledge that the sort of social structure which the Russian Soviets are erecting is one which would be of inestimable benefit to the workers of this country. Already the opposition to the Allied intervention in Russia is general amongst the organised workers of this country. In France it is also strong and in response to it Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, tried to assure the people that France will not make war on Russia. Many people grasped eagerly at Pichon's statement and interpreted it as a promise that the intervention was about to be abandoned, but Marcel Cachin's further questions to Pichon in the French Chamber on December 30th unmistakably revealed the fact that the intervention is not abandoned, though it is not called a war. French Ministers state that the Allies intervene in Russia "to resist the prevailing ruin and anarchy" there; yet the Allied intervention, by holding up the supplies of food and raw materials and monopolising railway stock, is causing untold misery in Russia. Pichon described the action of the Allies as an economic encircling of Russia: that means starving out Russia.

Lord Milner, in a communication to *The Daily News*, defended the intervention on similar lines, and adopted a number of quite untenable contentions; for instance, he accused the Bolshevik administration of causing the defeat of Roumania in the war, though Rou-

mania was completely defeated in December, 1916, whilst the Russian Czar was not dethroned till March, 1917, and the Bolsheviks did not obtain power until the following November!

Lord Milner's further contention that the Allies intervened to save the Czechs has been again controverted in these columns on what appears to us to be absolutely incontrovertible evidence, but there is now just published an account of the present Czecho-Slovak situation, which shows that those troops are being unwillingly induced to fight the Soviets on the ground that the Allies have aided the Czechs and Slovaks to establish their Republic. *The Times* correspondent, writing from Omsk on December 19th, states:—

The Czechs are Socialists, and have a natural affinity for the Russian Socialists who shaped the Samara Government and other local bodies, which have given the Czechs military and other assistance. Their relations with the Siberian Government at Omsk, on the other hand, had been steadily getting less satisfactory until the overthrow of the Directory, which the Czechs have viewed as a set-back to Socialism and the triumph of reaction. For this reason they withdrew from the front, and some of them have been suspected of readiness to throw their weight against Admiral Koltchak's Government. M. Stefanik, however, has visited all the units and impressed their delegates with the fact that the Czechs owed their new position in the world to the Allies, and that the future of their country still depended largely on Allied assistance and sympathy. In view of what they have gained by the sacrifices of the Allies they were bound to continue to act as Allies and do whatever was required of them. M. Stefanik's reasoning with them had an excellent effect, and one battalion went back to the front of its own accord, and others have asked to be allowed to resume their places in the fighting line. M. Stefanik then summoned the local council and pointed out that with the formation of a Czech Government the council no longer had a *raison d'être*, and in the name of the Czech Government he formally requested them to consider themselves dissolved. These developments have not been to the liking of all, and a section of the Czechs has talked either of cutting or bargaining a way home through the Bolshevik lines."

These arguments seem to imply the possibility of a threat that, if the Czecho-Slovak do not fight as they are required in Siberia, the Republic may be endangered. The new Republic of the Czecho-Slovaks is by no means free of the need for Allied assistance, for already a dangerous controversy has developed between the Jugo-Slavs and the Italians. Sir Arthur Evans in *The Manchester Guardian* has made many protests on this head. He points out that Italy is attempting to secure both Fiume and Sebenico, and the Dalmatian territory promised to Italy in the Secret Treaty of 1915, which would place a large Dalmatian population under Italian control, beside robbing Dalmatia of its harbour Proklyan.

The Montenegrins have also complaints to make against Italian aggression. The French censorship has joined in maintaining silence on these questions, but now the matter has grown so serious that Clemenceau has told Italy that she must be content with the Adriatic as her eastern boundary. Whether the Italian Imperialist Capitalists will accept that dictum remains to be seen. They will probably declare that another scrap of paper has been torn.

Indeed, what a mass of warring interests the war has revealed!

President Wilson admitted in Manchester I am not hopeful that the individual items of the settlement we are about to attempt will altogether satisfactory. One has but to apply his mind to the question of boundary and alter sovereignty and racial aspirations to do something more than conjecture that there is no man, no body of men, who know just how it ought to be settled."

Surely those words mean that Wilson realises the interests of the small, weak nations go to the wall when the great Powers start in rivalry together. Does he now repent the high-flown, altruistic-worded utterances built up for him such a tremendous reputation? If he ever believed them to be more than

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exercises in picturesque oratory, is he disappointed now? Does he, at last, begin to realise that power has only been given to him to obey, and so long as he will obey, the strong forces of capitalism which control the policy of the party he nominally leads? Or has he known it all along?

The question is an interesting one, but the answer matters not. What is essential is that the workers should realise that the world is controlled by two strong forces—Capital and Labour—and that the struggle between Labour and Capital will never cease until Capitalism is abolished.

Very fiercely the old struggle is now raging. British war correspondents report that the children of Germany are being starved and the Allies disperse the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils of Germany. The Ministers of a Capitalist Government boast that they have captured Perm from the Bolsheviki and taken 8,000 prisoners. Where the workpeople of Omsk attempted to overthrow the domination of Koltchak's counter-revolutionary Government 47 were shot in one day, and of the railwaymen who held up the traffic and cut the telegraphic communications 60 were killed and 70 executed.

But in spite of the cruel hardship it entails the Bolsheviki are said to welcome the intervention, because, they say, the occupying troops will become enthusiastic workers in the Socialist Revolution.

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