

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

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Published by the Workers' Socialist Federation

Annual Subscription - Post Free, 10s. 10d.

Back Numbers, 4½d, post free.

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Vol. VI., No. 4.

Sat., April 19th, 1919.

YOU ARE CALLED TO THE WAR.

Wake up! wake up! oh, sleepy British people! the new war is in full blast, and you are called to fight in it; you cannot escape; you must take part!

Out of the old inter-capitalist war between the Allies and the Central Empires, the war, the actual crude, cruel fighting between the workers and the capitalists has emerged.

Soldiers who enlisted, or were conscribed, for the old war have been quietly kept on to fight in the new war which began without any formal declaration. They have not been asked: "Do you approve this war; do you understand it?" They have merely been detained and will now fight against their comrades.

Officially the British Government is not at war with Socialism in Europe, though in actual fact British and other Allied soldiers have been fighting it for a long time, and British money and munitions are keeping the soldiers of other governments in the field against it.

There has been no official declaration of war, but the House of Commons, on April 9th, expressed its opinion in support of the war on Socialism in general, and on Russian Socialism in particular. This expression of opinion the Home Secretary claims to have been unanimous, and certainly when he challenged Members to express a contrary opinion, no voice of dissent was audible enough to reach the columns of *Hansard* or the press. No Member of Parliament has written to the newspapers to make his protest.

Some Socialists tell us that the floor of the House of Commons is a splendid platform for propaganda; but the trouble is that when they get into the House, their courage seems to evaporate like a child's soap bubble. We have heard of Labour Members of Parliament being ready to do and say all sorts of heroic things, to get themselves put out of the House, to arrest the world's attention on some appropriate occasion. That is not much, of course, as compared with running the risk of death in the horrible trenches or with being incarcerated for years in prison; but here was an opportunity, if ever there was one, for Members of Parliament to display all their pluck! Clem Edwards, the notorious anti-Socialist, moved the adjournment of the House, "to draw attention to a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the alleged overtures from the Bolshevik régime in Russia to the Peace Conference in Paris."

In the debate Brigadier-General Page Croft and Lieut.-Col. Guinness suggested that some Members of Parliament supported the Bolsheviks. Did any man cry out: "Yes, we are proud to stand by our fellow workers in their fight for Socialism"? No, on the contrary, the Labour Members broke out into cries of protest against the suggestion that they had any such sympathies. Bottomley rewarded them by an assurance of "the profoundest and most affectionate respect." The Home Secretary hammered in the point, saying the debate had called forth "from every quarter of the House an indignant repudiation that the House contained a single Bolshevik sympathiser." He described the Soviet Government as "a mere gang of bloodthirsty ruffians," and said it would strengthen the hands of the Government to know there is "no quarter" for any Soviet

supporters, "at any rate in the British House of Commons."

Even then there was no protest! Where was the lead to the country, and especially to the lads who may mistakenly enlist in the counter-revolutionary armies, which our "leaders" in Parliament might have given? Of what were the opponents of the resolution afraid? Either they are cravens, or their opposition to the new war is of a very lukewarm character. The real work for the Socialist revolution must be done outside Parliament.

On April 10th, the day after the House of Commons had thus expressed itself, the first contingent of volunteers set sail for Russia.

Remember what happened in the old war: first the voluntary system; then compulsion, growing till millions of men were drawn into the net. Kitchener's first call in the late war was for 500,000 men, but the Army Estimate of the other day was for 2,500,000! Conscription remains, and presently we expect to see class after class of men called up. Will they go to the war against their fellow workers who have set up a workers' government?

The child, hearing of other people's misfortunes, says, with a tiny half-regret that his own life will always be tame and jog-trot, and yet with a very comfortable sense of security: "Things like that do not happen in our family." Death comes and suddenly strikes down his brother; but, after the first stunning shock, which reveals to him life's instability, he assures himself that his misfortune is an isolated event, that nothing like it will ever again trouble him. So he returns to his old belief till his father is killed, the household plunged into ruin, and he himself is thrust out into swiftly-changing and precarious currents. So many people remain always like that: clinging, untaught by life's experiences, to the belief that there is no change; that evolution, having created this our time, will carry humanity no further. They do not believe that great wars will come, or, if wars come, never to their country, never to their households. They do not believe in the possibility of revolutions, and if such things happen, they try to dismiss them as mere temporary upheavals, certain to be crushed by the forces of established order, which never will change, at least never in their country. A revolution in their country is unthinkable; they know it is impossible: the majority of the people are too sluggish, too ignorant, would not even vote as they did at the Parliamentary election, would not even put them on the Board of Guardians or the Town Council.

And yet we in this country are actually in the revolution, although the eyes of most of us are still shut to the fact. We are in the revolution, as we were in the war with Germany. The revolutionary war is not a fight between country and country; it cuts across national boundaries and British people are already fighting on both sides.

The British men who are in the army of the Government are fighting against the Workers' Socialist Revolution, just as are the men who are fighting in the armies of the capitalist Governments of Germany, France, Italy, America, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and any other governments which are joining in the strife. In all these armies the truth that they are fighting Socialism has dawned on some of the soldiers, and many of these have deserted and joined the Red Armies of working-class Socialism.

Many who are not actually in the fighting ranks have nevertheless ranged themselves against the capitalist governments, and on the side of the Soviets. Phillips Price, who is editing a Bolshevik newspaper in Russia, and many other British people, are aiding the Soviets over there. In this country we can also help by working with might and main to establish the British Soviets, by telling the soldiers, sailors, and workers the issues that are at stake in the International Civil War.

That war has now spread far beyond the boundaries of Russia. General Smuts has left Hungary abruptly, finding that Soviet Hungary stood firm for Communism. Shall we presently

see the armies of capitalism marching on Hungary? *The Evening News* reported that the Serbs had refused to obey the order of the Big Four to send their troops to attack Hungary, because the Allies had not yet recognised the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. But the Allies will presently secure a capitalist army from somewhere to carry on the fight. Paderewski is reported to have refused to send Polish troops to fight Communism, unless Dantzig and other territory is conceded to Poland. The Allies will bargain with Paderewski till they have bought his support or substituted a Polish ruler who is more amenable.

Churchill has revealed the fact that Germany is ordered, as one of the peace conditions, to fight Communism, and that the Germans may buy their way into the League of Nations by doing this efficiently. Indeed, the entire policy of the Paris Conference is dominated by the policy its members are pursuing in the war between the capitalists and the workers. Both false and foolish are the stories, so industriously circulated, that the British and American politicians at the Peace Conference are the pacifying influences and that they are working against a peace of annexation and oppression; whilst the French and Italian politicians are the greedy Jingoists, who, by demanding all sorts of advantages for themselves, are preventing the peace. The plain fact is that British and American capitalists have got what they set out to gain by the war with the Central Empires and the French and Italians have not.

The Secret Treaties represent the basis upon which the Allies entered the war; the prizes which induced them to support each are there set forth.

British capitalists have got all, and more than all, the Treaties promised to them. They have secured control of the German Colonies, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Persia, all that was promised them in the East. They have seized Spitzbergen, with its rich stores of coal and iron, which was not mentioned in the Treaties; they have crushed their trade rival Germany, and their Government is apparently to retain for the present the dominion of the seas.

The secret arrangements which brought America into the war were not disclosed when the Bolsheviks seized the Czar's archives, because they were not made until after that date. Therefore we can only surmise what they were from the passing of events and the disclosures of politicians. American capitalists have gained by the war substantial advantages in China. They have done some very remunerative trading with the Allies, and have lent them much money on exceedingly profitable terms. More important still, as will presently be seen, American capitalists have induced British capitalists not to make a fuss when they presently annexe Mexico and its wonderful oilfields, which the Mexican Government is endeavouring to re-nationalise. But America is not yet satisfied. President Wilson has ordered his ship. It is said that he is dissatisfied with the slow progress made at the Paris Conference. Perhaps he is; but it is also said that American capitalists desired to sell to France and Italy motor tractors and other goods and that France and Italy refused the offer. Since then, it is said the Americans have obstructed the Peace Conference. Time will show how much there is in the rumour. It will also throw light on the rumour that America is bringing pressure to bear on the Allies by threatening to sell the rejected goods to Soviet Russia—a step which would greatly assist her—instead of waiting to trade with Russia till the Soviets are defeated and capitalism re-established. Was not Bottomley referring to this rumour in the House of Commons on April 9th, when he spoke of "some wild, airy, idealistic element, which, under the guise of great ideals and altruism, is keeping a keen eye all the time upon material benefit which will come to those which are farthest away from Europe"?

British capitalists have gained all that the Secret Treaties promised, but French and Italian capitalists have not. French capitalism

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wants more of Germany's territory than perhaps the German Government dare give, lest the German people retaliate by setting up the Soviets. French capitalism was promised the Saar basin, with its coal, and the other Allies have been hesitating as to whether it is safe to force Germany to surrender it. French capitalists were promised Syria by the Secret Treaties, but British capitalists are loth to let them have it.

Moreover, it seems that if France is to take part of the indemnity which Germany is to pay to her in the form of the Saar basin and its coal, Britain may decide to take the whole of the German mercantile marine as part of her pound of flesh; and France and Italy would both like to have a share of that.

Italy's territorial claims come into conflict with the claims of the Southern Slavs and the Big Four cannot offend the Slavs because they need them to fight Bolshevism. Italian capitalism has threatened to send soldiers to fight her late Allies to defend the territories the soldiers have occupied on the Adriatic. Italian capitalists are not concerned that those territories are not inhabited by Italians; they point out that Mesopotamia and Palestine are not inhabited by British populations.

British and American capitalism has got all it can out of the war with the Kaiser; it is preparing for the war against Socialism, in which, beside crushing a menace very dangerous to capitalism itself, they may gain still further extensive profits. Great Britain, as *The Times* puts it, "has made herself responsible for the railway communications in Poland, the Baltic States, the Caucasus, and the Don country. Czecko-Slovakia and Yugo-Slavia have been allotted to the United States." Who controls the railways controls the nation! As *The Morning Post* has it: "The cant cry of the 'self-determination of peoples' is, we believe, a German invention." Everything is said to come from Germany now which is embarrassing to Allied capitalism!

France and Italy are again unfortunate. *The Times* explains: "Greece, Turkey in Europe, the Ukraine and the Donets basin have been undertaken by France, though with the evacuation of Odessa, her efforts in the last two regions can hardly be effective for the present." (The italics are ours.) The French left Odessa, by the way, for lack of food—the peasants of the Ukraine would not serve them; they appealed to have it sent to them from Roumania, but the request was not granted; Canada, by the way, seems to have something to do with the Roumanian railways. French capitalism thinks its Allies have not treated it very well. "Italy is looking after Austria-Hungary." Poor Italian capitalism: it has a set of very vigorous Bolsheviks too in Hungary; Vienna may set up the Soviets any day; and Italy itself gives cause for very serious anxiety!

It is stated now that Germany is to pay the Allies between ten and twelve thousand million pounds and that the payments will be spread over fifty years, during which the Allies will occupy Germany, we suppose. Evidently it is thought that fifty years will not be too much for the crushing out of Bolshevism. Moreover, after such a period of occupation, history teaches us to anticipate that the occupying Powers will consider it inexpedient to withdraw. Ireland, Egypt, and India all stand as landmarks calling us to this conclusion.

To this pass has capitalism brought us. Europe, neutral and belligerent alike, is starving: not a household in our country, or any other, but mourns some of its members who lost their lives in the last war; and the world, in order to maintain the capitalist system, stands on the threshold of a time of still more extensive war.

British workers, which side are you on in the International Civil War?

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.