

# THE RED FLAG

A Journal of News and Views Devoted to the Interests of the Working Class

VOL. 1 NO. 17

VANCOUVER, SATURDAY, MAY 17, 1919

FIVE CENTS

## A Letter from a British Soldier---A Prisoner in Soviet Russia

Below is a reprint of a circular distributed among British soldiers in Russia by the Russian Soviet Government at Moscow. It will be of interest to Canadian workers.

### QUIT FIGHTING, BRITISH SOLDIERS, AND JOIN YOUR RUSSIAN COMRADES!

British Prisoner from Archangel Front Writes to His Brother Scots.

"Is it right for working people of one country to kill working people of another?"

The Allied troops, invading Russia, have so often been told that if they are taken prisoner they will be tortured and killed by the Bolsheviks, that it is interesting to see what in fact happens when a British soldier falls into the hands of the Russian workmen's and peasants' army. Here is the letter of a private of the Royal Scots taken prisoner last month near Archangel:

To the Men of the Royal Scots

Koutlas, Monday, Oct. 14, 1918.

"I wonder if you all know the kind of men you are fighting. I do. You are fighting an army of workingmen, and there are no officers amongst them. Everybody is the same. They ask, why do we fight them? Well, that is more than I can say; in fact, I don't know why we have come to fight them, and another thing that counts is, they don't want to fight us. They are not fighting their own class, the working class, but the capitalists of Russia and other countries. Since I have been a prisoner I have been treated as one of themselves, and they have given me plenty to eat and drink. I have also seen one of our men that lies in the hospital wounded. He tells me that he has been well treated and looked after as a friend, a working man, and not a soldier.

"Now I ask you this question; is it right, that

the working class of one country should come and fight the working class of another country? We are not at war with Russia, and the Russians are not at war with us, but with the capitalists of all countries, the people whom we work for and keep in plenty, while we, the working class, merely exist. If the working class knew why they are fighting and for who they would refuse to fight any longer. Think things over and ask yourselves, is it worth while killing each other to please other people, who care not what happens, as long as their pockets are being filled at our expense. From what I have seen the Russians are a good people and they are fighting for a good cause, a cause that every country in the world should follow.

"PRIVATE LAPHAM,  
"10th ROYAL SCOTS."

## Socialism a la Mode

"RADICALISM" has become fashionable. To be in the mode now one must speak of "the radicals" in an intimate sort of way, discuss "radical" movements, advocate "radical" changes, and be a regular fire-eater generally. "Have you read Upton Sinclair's latest book?" asks our hero when you meet him on the street; Isn't it fine that the A. F. of L. is coming out flat-footed for freedom of speech?" "Did you hear that radical sermon in the Congregational church last Sunday?" And some one else, fresh from a perusal of a New Republic editorial or Wilson's "Fourteen Points," sidles up to a Socialist with an unmistakable air of comradeship and remarks, "Why I'm a radical myself."

Even the churches are becoming "radical"—taking them at their own valuation. There are "open forums" in our Y. M. C. A.'s where questions of the day are discussed "from all angles." Respectable pastors are almost preaching revolution, but not quite. In fact, wherever people

congregate you will find self-styled "radicals," whose opinions are about as vague as the use of the term implies. The word "radical" may mean anything or nothing; it is an euphemistic expression supposed to be a password into Socialist circles, but at the same time not connecting any definite Socialist idea that would at all embarrass its possessor in a bourgeois drawing-room.

It is a bit disgusting to observe the importance attached to this word by some Socialists. Even "members of the party" may be heard referring to Anarchism as "more radical" than Socialism; whereas as a matter of fact Anarchism is "radical" only in the sense that it is radically wrong. The same class of half-informed Socialists look with admiration and favor upon the "radical" platforms of the Non-Partisan League and the Catholic Bishops and the "Committee of Forty-Eight." It is essential that the working class, in order not to be misled, realize that these are signs, not that capitalism is on the verge of adopting Socialism, but that an ambush has been set for the awakening proletariat. We must realize that these programs are not for the proletarian emancipation, but for proletarian palliation. They may be regarded as signs of capitalist capitulation only under this condition, that the proletariat maintains warily its class-conscious, uncompromising position on the basis of Marxism—and nothing else. No "radicalism" will do as a substitute.

One of the striking phases of this Cult of the Radical is the flood of red that has today dyed a multitude of emotional Socialists who were but yesterday decidedly lukewarm in their allegiance to revolutionary principles. They are aptly called "November Bolsheviks"—Bolsheviks who out-revolt the original revolutionists. They revel in descriptions of "mass-action" and are not averse to riots—anything that has a "radical" look, whatever the basis or the object may be. Such Social-

ists, who may have scarcely a speaking acquaintance with the "Communist Manifesto," call loudly for the immediate organization of "Soldiers' and Workingmen's Councils" in the United States, styling all calmer Socialists "Mensheviks," forgetful of the fact that these "Councils" may, if controlled by reactionary elements, hinder rather than help the Socialist cause. What is needed by these discontented soldiers and workmen is rapid educational work, intensive and extensive, in the principles of Scientific Socialism, so that these "Soldiers and Workmen's Councils," when organized under the pressure of social conditions, will contain the largest possible number of well-informed Marxians. It is SOCIALISTS that are needed now, not "radicals."

—OAKLEY C. JOHNSON.

### DECLARATION OF FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY

"Hoping to re-establish that socialist unity which is indispensable to the activity of the proletariat, the Party declares that those who refuse to recognize the essential principles of the class struggle and of Socialist opposition to all other parties, and those who refuse to accept the necessarily internationalist character of Socialism are the declared enemies of Socialism.

"Now, more than ever, when the revolutionary state of affairs becomes more accentuated day by day, the proletariat needs definite guidance. . . .

"The French Socialist Party speaks loudly and clearly. It raises its voice against capitalist society, which is responsible for the war; it advocates the complete destruction of militarism; it labors for the liberation of the workers by the establishment of collective production and collective ownership; it appeals to the revolutionary energy of the proletariat, in whose cause it proposes to employ every possible form of activity."

## SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

### PROPAGANDA MEETINGS

SUNDAY, MAY 18

At 8 p.m. Sharp

### EMPRESS THEATRE

Corner Gore and Hastings

Speaker.....Joe Knight, of Edmonton