

The New Germany

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Allied nations. For these reasons the Haase-Kautsky group is opposed to radical measures on the industrial field. They have joined the Ebert group in assuring the German people of the absolute safety of their bank deposits and of their readiness to meet all obligations incurred by the monarchy in the shape of war loans. They believe that the time is ripe for a social revolution in Germany, but desire that it be introduced gradually, without skipping what they believe to be the necessary steps in evolution.

One of the interesting figures of this group is Kurt Eisner, the leader of the Independent Social Democrats of Bavaria. The extraordinary conditions that confront Bavaria and South Germany as a whole have made this strong and energetic personality the storm centre in the revived fight between the North and the South. As is well known, Germany became a federation of States in 1870. The South—Bavaria, Wuerttemberg, Hessen, Baden and a number of other smaller states—had more democratic forms in its social and political life than Prussia. The caste system had not become as marked there because the class interests had not been able to divide the people of the South as they had the more industrially developed North. Soon after the federalization of Germany, therefore, a strongly particularist movement grew up in the South, against everything that was Prussian. The Prussian was more hated in the South, and especially in Bavaria, up to the late 90's than any foreigner. Then it died out to reappear again the latter part of the war. During the first years of the war, the South was as belligerent and just as imperialistic as the North. In fact, the King of Bavaria sent a special envoy to the Peace Conference at Brest Litovsk because it was feared that Prussia would deal too leniently with free Russia. For this he was loudly acclaimed by the Bavarian capitalist press. But the misery and starvation of the last twenty months has made the Bavarians forget their own part in the war, and Prussia became the butt of their fury.

When Kurt Eisner, in October of this year, became the candidate of the Independent Social Democrats in the by-election made necessary by the severe illness of the majority Social Democrat, von Vollmar, he strongly fought this tendency, which had found some degree of support in the official Social-Democratic movement and its candidate, Auer. But the queer logic of events has made him—at least to the uninformed outsider—the expression of the separatist, particularist movement. He belongs to that wing of the Independents which insistently demands that all remnants of the old regime must be thrown into the discard, and with commendable directness he applies this not only to the Erzbergers and the Solfs but also to the Suedekums and the Davids who have been just as thoroughly discredited by their imperialist activities. He demands that a government of Socialists be established for Germany that is free from the domination of any one state. As this demand is naturally directed against the leading personages in Prussia he has been supported by the particularist element in his own state who fail to understand the real motives that prompt his demands.

Reports that have come from Germany in the last weeks have been so clouded, and show such incredible ignorance of persons and conditions, that we here must judge rather by what we know of the most recent past of Eisner from German Socialist papers than from the badly garbled reports that appear in the capitalist press by correspondents who attribute to him statements and opinions expressed by his supporters among the particularists. Thus, for instance, we take the following from a campaign speech made on October 23, after his release from prison where he had been held for ten months on account of his activity in favor of a poli-

tical mass strike against the war:

"When I took up the fight against the pan-Germans at the beginning of the war, I was ridiculed. Scheidemann and Auer took up the fight against the pan-Germans only when they became their competitors for political office. Today, under the new (Maximilian) government we are still living in a sea of lies. To call upon the people today to defend their fatherland, as has been done in the last appeal issued by the National Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Party, is to mislead them. We are facing today not the destruction of Germany, but the destruction of those who bear the responsibility for the war. When the majority Socialists demand today the abolition of the monarchy they are only putting up a big front to cover up the defeat of their entire policy during the war. The new era under Maximilian, based as it is upon fraud, is not a new era. . . . Germany, that has permitted its rulers to commit the big crime of war in its name, must be prepared to pay the price. We will have to be ready to give up Alsace-Lorraine as well as Prussian Poland and Polish territory. Danzig must become the new harbor of the Polish Republic. The damage done in Belgium and in Northern France must be at least partially repaired."

This extract shows that his whole line of thinking is in sympathy with the Haase-Ledebour rather than with the more conservative Kautsky and Bernstein, with a strong leaning toward the position of the Spartacus Group. This explains the phenomenon that the Independent Social Democracy as well as the radical wing seem to be with him in his fight, even in the contradictory reports of the American correspondents.

In open opposition to the attitude of the two main groups is the Spartacus group, that, under the leadership of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, is conducting a feverish agitation all over the country in favor of a government under the exclusive and absolute control of the proletariat. They are opposed to the calling of a constituent assembly and demand the political supremacy of the Soldiers' and Workmen's Councils. They favor immediate social ownership of the means of production and the repudiation of the debts incurred by the old regime for the conduct of the war. They are bitterly caustic concerning the peace-at-any-price position of men who, during the entire course of the war, belonged to the most consistent supporters of the war machine, and are the only element in Germany that openly opposes the terms of the armistice.

These last two questions, the question of peace and that of the payment of war debts are of no mean significance for the future development of the German Republic. In Russia, the Milyukoff and the Kerensky governments were overthrown because they were not prepared to carry out the peace demands of the people, while the Soviet Government owes its strength and its hold upon the people of Russia to the fact that it stands ready, at all times, to carry out their demands. In Germany it is possible that the same conditions may bring about exactly the opposite effect. The soldiers and the working class, according to all indications at the present time, will probably support the Moderates of the Independent Social Democratic Party against the radical wing because they fear, and as the experience of Russia has shown, not without cause, that they may hope for but little mercy at the hands of the Allies should Germany establish a dictatorship of the proletariat. The fact that even the poorest classes of the country were made partners to the war by the clever policy of the monarchial regime of practically forcing all classes of society to buy war bonds—and the socialist press gave its columns freely for this purpose—may also prejudice a considerable portion of the population against a wholesale repudiation of the war debt of the nation.

While this struggle for supremacy among the three socialist groups is occupying the minds and thoughts of the world, the capitalist class of Ger-

many is rallying its disorganized forces. Already the call has gone forth to unite the liberal bourgeois elements, and all non-socialist elements in Germany today belong to the "liberal" bourgeoisie, into one great organization, whose aim is the re-establishment of "order" in Germany and the fight against anarchism and Bolshevism. Already the leaders of this movement have appealed to Washington for aid, and in spite of the open sympathy that is shown in these quarters for Ebert and Scheidemann at the present time, the time will come, and it is probably not far distant, when the Russian Bakmetieff will be joined by some equally representative ambassador of the German Republic, to safeguard the interests of the German "people." In Germany the capitalist class is by no means the negligible factor that it was in the Russian revolution. It is a powerful body, that will be as brutal and unscrupulous in its methods and its warfare upon its own people as it was in its treatment of the unfortunate peoples that stood in the way of its determination for world power. The capitalist class of Germany, with its enormous wealth and its manifold international business relations that the war may have disturbed but has not broken, is a formidable enemy, an enemy that will fight without mercy and without quarter, once it feels that it has again gained a foothold in the country.

The demands of this capitalist class cannot be met with compromises and concessions on the part of a socialist government. No capitalist class can or will consent to exist under the rule of a working-class party, no matter how moderate. The class war that has produced the Social Democracy will go on until classes have ceased to exist, until the proletariat has assumed control over the economic as well as the political forces of the nation.

The revolutionary uprising of the proletariat of Germany and Russia has not put an end to class war. But the class struggle in Europe has entered upon the last and most bitter stage of its existence. It has grown beyond the national boundaries within which it has hitherto fought its battles. To the struggle between the classes within the nation has come the struggle between nations, between the nations controlled by the capitalist, and those controlled by the working class. Instead of wars for national aims there will come the great class wars, waged on an international basis. Whenever the working class of one country has succeeded in overthrowing its bourgeoisie, this counter-revolutionary class will appeal to its brother capitalists in other nations, and in self-defense these will have to come to their assistance. There can be no harmony between the opposing classes of one country. There can be no peace and understanding between capitalist and socialist nations. The war now being waged against Russia, directly or indirectly, by the Allied as well as by the Neutral nations, is an outstanding confirmation of this new phase of the world-wide class struggle.

Upon this rock the ship of opportunism will founder. The theory that the Russian and the German revolutions can be saved only by supporting the moderates against their radical opponents is based upon a misunderstanding of the fundamental class character of society. The capitalist class, nationally as well as internationally, will compromise with the workers only so long as it feels itself at the mercy of the proletariat, just as the class-conscious Socialist will submit to the rule of a capitalist government only so long as he is powerless to overthrow it.

The international class war has reached its critical stage. And whether we live in Germany or Great Britain, in Russia or in America, we will have to take sides. Their war is our war, their problems are ours. And we will have to pay just as dearly as they themselves for the mistakes they make. We have profited by the glorious achievements of the Soviets; our comrades everywhere will gain from our revolutionary understanding.