

# The Second German Congress of Soviets

WE publish the following, knowing it will be of interest to the workers in this country as to the progress the German workers are making towards the concepts and practices of the industrial revolution, as distinguished from the merely political revolution, which has little or no effect on their lives unless accompanied by the other. Liberal or Conservative, Republican or Democrat or Coalition "so shall our days in one sad tenor run" of economic slavery to capital.

The Ebert Government, Socialist, so called, has fought just as hard against the admittance of the Councils of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Councils as an integral part of the German constitution as any out and out capitalist government, say the Canadian, could have done. However, to our excerpts:—

One of the chief reasons for the abortive general strike in Berlin from March 3 to 8, and the subsequent (second) Spartacist rebellion, was the dilly-dallying of the Government in regard to giving the council system a place in the Constitution; demand for which was by this time general even among the Majority faction. On March 3, the day the strike was called, the Government publicly promised to yield to the demand. Two days later the Vorwarts printed another pronouncement, outlining the governmental plan for anchoring the council system. According to this and subsequent announcements, Article 34a of the Constitution would provide for the election of "workers' councils" (Arbeiterrate,) endowed with rather amplified trade union functions. These councils would be in charge of general labor interests and welfare, and would have consultative powers in the management of enterprises. Furthermore, the proposal provided for "economic councils" (Wirtschaftsrate,) in which workers and employers are to be represented "equally." These economic councils are to be charged with supervising production; they have the right to initiate legislative measures, but otherwise they do not infringe on the sovereign power of the political Parliament. The economic councils of the realm elect a central economic council, with jurisdiction over the entire country. This may be consulted in industrial questions by the Legislature. The socialization of plants through the instrumentality of councils is expressly refused. This plan was a long shot from the straight Soviet system advocated by the Independents, and even from the more moderate Labor Chamber plan—a compromise between Soviet and political democracy—sponsored by Kaliski. Naturally, the Independents were dissatisfied and continued their agitation.

All this was, no doubt, excellent sport, but essentially nothing more; and the four first days passed without transacting real business. Even the report of the Executive Council, submitted by Leinert, was forgotten. The principal item on the programme was finally reached at the fifth meeting when the two reports on "anchoring" the council system were submitted by the official "referents," one, in behalf of the Majority Socialists, by Julius Kaliski and Max Cohen, chairman of the Executive Council; the other, in behalf of the Independent Socialists, by Ernest Daumig, one of the party's intellectual leaders.

The Cohen-Kaliski project is by far the most elaborate and ambitious scheme for making the Soviet idea an integral part of the German Constitution. It takes up the suggestions of organization laid down in the government proposal, but carries them further and develops them along both trade-industrial and political-geographical lines. It provides for "economic councils," embracing delegates of workers, office employees, and managers, to be organized in each plant. These councils are to supervise production. Economic councils in the same branch of industry are linked together in district, province, and state economic councils, the whole edifice topped by a central economic council repre-

senting the particular industry of the entire country.

The resolution, in contrast to the Government scheme, declares, moreover, that "the economic council is the fundamental structure of socialization" in the particular industry. Thus by an ingenious, if rather obvious, stroke, the Cohen-Kaliski proposal undertakes to solve simultaneously the two outstanding problems of national economy, that of nationalization or socialization, and that of industrial representation.

Now for the political side. All economic councils of a given geographical unit—a municipality, for instance—elect representatives to a "chamber of labor" of the unit; the same is done in the district, province, state, and finally in the entire country. This central chamber of labor, elected by the councils of the whole nation, becomes a Second Chamber co-ordinated with the Parliament, or as the latter is called here, the People's Chamber. The former is representative of the producers, the latter of the consumers. The Chamber of Labor has legislative initiative in industrial and economic questions; above all, in matters of socialization. The People's Chamber has similar initiative in more strictly political and in cultural matters. A bill becomes law only if adopted by both chambers; but if one is adopted successively in three years by the People's Chamber, it becomes a statute over the veto of the Chamber of Labor. Both chambers have the right to call a referendum.

Finally, the Cohen-Kaliski proposal provides for "anchoring" the trade union system. It states that the unions are associations of workers in a particular calling to conduct collective bargaining with employers' associations. In any one plant the union is represented by the "works' council" (Betriebsrat.) The entire machinery is extended to all lines of agriculture as well as to intellectual workers. It will be noted that the fundamental difference between this project and the plan sponsored by the Government is that while in the latter the Chamber of Labor is conceived as merely a consultative adjunct to Parliament, in the Cohen-Kaliski scheme the two bodies are put on an almost equal footing as organs of the National Legislative.

On the other hand, the Cohen-Kaliski proposal differs radically from the resolution submitted at the same meeting by the Independent Socialist Daumig, who characterized the former as a "miserable compromise," since it leaves the instrument of political democracy intact. At any rate, Daumig's measure has the virtue of extreme simplicity. It provides for workers' councils to take charge of political management, and works' councils, to handle economic-industrial affairs. The representatives of the workers' councils unite in a Congress of Soviets, which is the supreme political instance. It supplants the National Assembly, and has the right to appoint and remove the people's commissioners, who take the place of the Ministry. Only workers possess the right to vote and to participate in public affairs; the employing class is excluded, although intellectual workers are recognized on a fully equal footing with the proletariat. In a word, Daumig's system provides for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the establishment of a Soviet republic, but rather on the Hungarian than the Russian model. It differs from the latter by endowing the intellectual class with full rights—a difference carefully emphasized by Daumig and the other Independent speakers. In his speech, Daumig accused the present German Government of betraying the revolution and the interest of the proletariat, and of being a mere tool in the hands of the exploiting class.

A third proposal, submitted by Dr. Paul Michaelis in behalf of the Democrats, assigns to the workers' councils purely economic functions, and puts an embargo on political activities. In the discussion, the Cohen-Kaliski plan was denounced by the Independents, mainly on the ground that it em-

was taken, the Cohen-Kaliski scheme was adopted by the employing class. However, when a vote almost unanimously—five Democrats registering the only votes in opposition.

The seventh and last meeting of the Congress was taken up by the address of Karl Kautsky, one of the greatest of living Socialist scholars, on the subject of socialization. The address was read by Mrs. Kautsky in the absence of her husband, who was ill. It introduced a resolution declaring that socialization is a process indispensable for the welfare of the proletariat, the substitution of production by and for the commonwealth instead of capitalistic production for profit. However, he declared, headlong socialization has dangers no less than the continuation of capitalistic economy itself. Three factors must co-operate in a socialized state: the workers, the consumers, and the technical scientific experts. To disregard any of the three would be fatal. "Socialization does not mean simply the expropriation of capitalism and of the great landed proprietors, but also a reorganization of the entire economic life. . . . This can not be achieved in a summary way for all branches of industry, or without preparations. It must proceed step by step, and it will take years to carry it out in full." . . .

One of the chief witnesses for the prosecution in the preliminary trial of the labor officials was asked by the crown prosecutor what was his opinion of the effect of the speeches, at certain labor gatherings, on the audience. The lawyer for the defence objected to such questions as very leading, but was over-ruled. Evidently the opinions of secret service men are to count as evidence.

## COUNTRY POOR AS A CHURCH MOUSE— WONDERFUL BUSINESS IN JEWELS

Sir Auckland Geddes recently said that the country is as poor as a church mouse. The prices which are being realized at the sales of articles of luxury hardly confirm this view. The diamond trade is having unparalleled prosperity. The De Beers Diamond Company has just declared a dividend of 80 per cent. for the year, as compared with 50 per cent. for the previous year.

Fine jewels from various sources, all anonymous, one day last week realized £163,114 at Christie's sale. The outstanding feature was a pearl rope, composed of 315 well-matched and graduated pearls of the finest orient. The bidding for this started at £20,000 and fell at £41,500. All the war profits are apparently not going into the War Loan.—"The Labor Leader."

## CHATTEL SLAVERY IN AMERICA

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that if found slavery here when it arrived, and accepted it as a settled institution, not even that it is plainly taught in its "sacred" books, but that it deliberately created a new form of slavery, and for hundreds of years invested it with a brutality greater than that which existed centuries before. A religion which could tolerate this slavery, argue for it, and fight for it, can not by any stretch of reasoning be credited with an influence in forwarding emancipation. Christianity no more abolished slavery than it abolished witchcraft, the belief in demonism, or punishment for heresy. It was the growing moral and social sense of mankind that compelled Christians and Christianity to give up these and other things.

As a system, Christianity was irrevocably committed to the institution of slavery. That modern Christians try to prove otherwise, may be taken as only one more instance of the disintegrating effect of new ideas and new institutions on old customs and beliefs.