

THE INTERNATIONAL

AUSTRIAN SOCIALISTS AND THE NEW WAR OF GERMANY AGAINST RUSSIA.

The "Arbeiter Zeitung" on February 19th, writes that: "Now, in truth, it is no longer the same war as in 1914, protecting Germany against the Cossack hordes. The new war of Germany against Russia is not our war and must not become our war. The secret treaty with the Ukraine must not be a pretext for sending troops to help the Rada."

In speaking thus, the paper voices the opinion of the Socialist Parliamentary group. In fact, on February 20th, Dr. Adler declared that the Socialists would vote against war credits because Austria has no longer to maintain a war of defence.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.

At the sitting of the Socialist National Council in France, on February 17th, Vandervelde, Belgian Minister and President of the I.S.B., said: "The number of men, who, on either side of the trenches, believe in a decision on the field of battle is diminishing. Whether they are right or wrong, the fact is there, and it is impossible not to recognize it. . . . Under these conditions, it is inevitable for the working classes in all countries to count less on governments than on themselves to solve the formidable problems arising out of the war."

THE ANTI-MILITARIST STRUGGLE IN SWITZERLAND.

In Switzerland the anti-militarist struggle seems to be forging ahead. A very large number of resolutions protesting against the militarisation of labor, and the treatment of deserters and refractaires, have been passed by various labor organizations in Basle, Berne, Zurich and la Chaux-de-Fonds. At the end of Jan-

uary, a special meeting of the woodworkers passed the following resolutions:

"The Swiss Association of Trades Unions and the Executive of the Social Democratic Party, are asked to present the following ultimatum to the Federal Council: (1) The scheme for the introduction of the national service to be wholly withdrawn, and deserters and refractaires already mobilized to be released; (2) To provide for the labor necessary for an intensification of our agricultural production, demobilization of the army to begin immediately, and to be completed by May 1st, with the exception of a small number of troops necessary for the prevention of smuggling; (3) The plenary powers accorded to the Federal Council on the outbreak of war, to be abolished by the Federal Assembly; (4) If these demands are not complied with a general strike to be proclaimed immediately and the Federal Council to be made to resign, and to be re-elected by the people."

The left Socialist Party and Press, of course, supports the movement vigorously, threatening a general strike against compulsory military service in any form, and on account of the Socialist pressure, the Government had to withdraw the clause in their scheme relating to the enrolment of all Swiss citizens. But this has, naturally, not satisfied the Socialists, who demand equal just treatment for their foreign comrades. Thus the "Volksrecht" of Jan. 19th says: "The Swiss Socialists will maintain their position not only as a party which consistently stands for democratic principles, but also as a member of the international proletariat. As such, it will never regard the question of deserters and refractaires as one lying outside itself. The proletariat has common interests

which must be defended in common. The struggle will not be only half carried out, it will be continued and will extend far beyond the limits of national service.

DISCHARGED SOLDIERS' DESIRE FOR PEACE.

A congress of French invalided and discharged soldiers held Sunday, February 24th, passed unanimously a resolution of sympathy with their comrades at the front, and together with them, demanded the conclusion of a speedy peace.

ITALIAN SOCIALISTS IMPRISONED.

Comrade Lazzari, secretary-general of the Italian Socialist Party, and Comrade Bombacci, assistant secretary, were brought on Wednesday last before a Rome tribunal charged with carrying on propaganda calculated to diminish the country's power of resistance, and were sentenced, the former to two years and eleven months' confinement and a fine of 3,900 lire, and the latter to two years and four months' confinement and a fine of 2,100 lire, in addition to payment of costs. Various witnesses, among them being Comrades Treves, Turati, Prampolini, and Morgari, maintained that the Socialist Party considered itself bound to keep the pledges given at the International Socialist Congress at Basle in 1912. It was their duty to remain apart from the war and to do everything to secure peace. All the witnesses named declared their solidarity with Lazzari and adhered to the contents of the circulars.

THE RUSSIAN LOANS.

On January 31 the French Government asked the Chamber to authorize an expenditure of about £16,000,000 for "advances to Allied or friendly governments." On enquiry it turned out that grant was wanted mainly to pay the interest on Russian loans to French holders of the

stock. The Socialists, therefore, strongly opposed it, especially as M. Klotz, the Finance Minister, would not say whether the Government proposed to go on paying the interest indefinitely. France's allies, he said, would have to be consulted on the point. The government secured a majority of 360 against 111, but a speech made by Moutet is said to have made a great impression.

FRANCE AND THE RUSSIAN LOANS.

Marius Moutet, in the French Chamber, made a speech in which he scoured the financiers who had supported Czarism. He said: "It appears as if Russia denies her obligations just now. In 1905, however, when a revolutionary government was formed for the first time in Russia, it asked that the policy of loans which constitutes a permanent interference in Russian internal affairs should be abandoned. This was refused and now the consequences of this mistake is being felt. Those who were confident must pay for their confidence. Are the war losses going to be repaid in full like those of the holders of Russian investments? Is the Russian debt going to be a French national debt? The Russian bankruptcy is your bankruptcy."

RUSSIA.

Comrade Peter Petroff has been appointed president of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Soviet.

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A Petrograd Telegraph Agency telegram to M. Litvinoff reports that thousands of German deserters are arriving in the Russian lines. Revolutionary movements are making progress, and several regiments have refused to move, to the front line trenches. The German generals are perplexed by the situation created, and are demanding strong measures to be taken for the establishment of discipline.

GREAT WAR VETERANS Demand Conscription of Wealth.

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the inevitable alternative. Consider what that means. It means that we are going to say to every struggling professional man faced with a greatly increased cost of living; to every merchant handicapped by scarcity of capital; to every farmer, confronted with falling prices and higher wages; to every manufacturer, anxious to transform his business to peace conditions: "Carry on, but remember that for the rest of your life, if you make a success of your business, forty cents of every dollar you make is going to be taken from you. If you just contrive to make ends meet, we will probably be content with about twenty-five cents on the dollar." Is such a state of things going to increase the national energy and enterprise and conduce to the regeneration of Canada? Men cannot work with keenness and efficiency, if burdened with a load of debt that cannot possibly be repaid, and no nation weighed down by a burden of taxation that may sap its life for the coming generations can hope to regain its lost stability. But such is the fate that may confront us unless other courageous measures are taken.

TAX CAPITAL.

The obvious alternative is the enforcement of the financial conscription, by a levy on capital. Why

should there not be such, either a direct levy of ten per cent. of the amount of each individual's wealth or a grade scale of levy after the manner of death duties? There would, of course, have to be a minimum exemption of say two thousand dollars and all domestic furniture and house paraphernalia. The levy might be payable in instalments spread for a certain period of years and there ought to be a large discount for cash payments. Large land holders could surrender ten per cent. of their holdings. Holders of war loan stocks would simply have ten per cent. of their holdings cancelled. In Canada we could at least wipe out two-thirds of our national debt by such a policy and leave ourselves with a comparatively clean sheet to begin our schemes of reconstruction.

Such a partial conscription of wealth, falling principally upon people over military age, would be some small balance to the conscription of manhood by means of which the elderly people, themselves only suffering vicariously, have so far managed to throw most of the burden of the war on the young. Our elderly people who have given so freely of their relatives, will do well to think about giving something of their own; it will be better for them in the end. Wipe off most of the national debt and direct taxation can be levied at a modest figure. It is true they will have less to leave their children, but

they will leave them free from a heretage of national debt that might some day lead to national bankruptcy.

The obligation of property to pay for the expenses of war is as old as history itself. Throughout the middle ages most landed estates in Europe were originally granted and held solely on condition of war services. Tenures of property have changed, but the principle still holds good, that the people who have most to lose by a national defeat should contribute most to the cost of victory. Finance ministers should not regard how much they take from an individual, but rather how much they leave him. Ten per cent. of the income of a man who earns \$1,500 means a serious curtailment for his household, but 50 per cent. of the funds of the plutocrat who has \$50,000 per annum leaves him with a very ample margin for the necessities and reasonable enjoyments of life.

AN UNANSWERABLE ARGUMENT.

There is no argument against the justice of the conscription of wealth on a large scale. The financiers and plutocrats rarely attempt to produce their objections in public. A man gives his life, or if he is wounded, part of his life. He or his dependents are rewarded with a very modest pension, though it is calculated that the total annual cost of the pei-

sions will exceed in Canada thirty million dollars. If the lenders of money and the buyers of Victory Bonds, are to get all their money back, and in addition we are to pay them sixty million dollars per annum, there is not a shadow of justice in such a division of the recompense for "the defenders" of their country.

If the financiers who furnish arguments for the prosperous classes and the politicians who tamely accept them think that the soldiers and the workmen of this country are going to pour millions of dollars annually into the maw of their masters, they ought to read European papers and keep their ears to the ground.

It isn't how much an insect eats that makes him a bedbug, it's how he gets it. It isn't how much a man has that makes him a capitalist, it's how he gets it.

Capitalism makes criminals and then punishes them.

The workers build all the houses and then pay rent to live in the worst of them. The workers dig all the coal and then pay a profit to someone to sell it to them.

Socialists demand that wheat shall be raised to make bread instead of to make profits. Is there anything unreasonable in this demand?