

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

For International Socialism.

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WHY SWITZERLAND JOINED THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL.

By Our Special Correspondent, HIRAM K. MODERWELL.

BERNE, AUGUST 20th.

The Swiss Socialist Party, in its conference of last Saturday at Basle, decided by a vote of 318 to 147 to become an integral part of the Third International of Moscow. The general referendum which is to follow will not change the result. The Swiss Socialists have made up their minds.

Lest anyone should think that this was a hasty, impulsive decision, it is well to describe how it was arrived at. It is the result of four years of hard thinking and six months of active discussion.

The Swiss workers suffered from the war exactly as the workers of all other neutral countries suffered. They suffered from prices that rose relentlessly, while their efforts to have their wages raised in proportion were met with increasing brutality on the part of the employers and the government. They saw, what all the other workers have seen,—the few speculators becoming inordinately rich, while the workers became steadily poorer.

But they saw something else also—the foolishness and criminality of war for imperialistic loot. Switzerland is partly French, partly German, and partly Italian. All the propagandists of the world gathered in Switzerland, where the people could check one lie by another. They could see the process by which the German papers manufactured atrocities to make their working-class hate the French, and the French papers manufactured similar atrocities to make their working-class hate the Germans. They saw what the French and German and English workers, blinded by hate and fear, could not see—that whoever may win a war, the workers lose.

For a time they looked to the Socialist parties of the Second International to issue the call for the international solidarity of the working-class, which would make future wars impossible. But no such call came. Instead, suspicion, recrimination, hatred, and feeble attempts at "parliamentary pressure" which were merely laughed at by the governments. They saw that, as a result of Socialist indecision, future wars were not only possible, but certain.

When the preparatory conference for the reconstitution of the Second International met last February in Berne, the Swiss Socialists determined to have no part in it. And immediately they began to discuss whether they should join the Third International, organized early in March at Moscow.

They discussed with workmanlike thoroughness. Each section, each local group, undertook to make up its mind, preparatory to the general party conference of August. First the group would invite two speakers to address it, one for and one against adherence to Moscow. Then would follow a general discussion. Then the question was divided into its component parts: The Soviet System; The Dictatorship of the Proletariat; The Class

Struggle; Immediate Tactics, and so on. On succeeding evenings each of these subdivisions would be discussed separately and voted on. At last, the whole subject would be re-assembled, the final vote taken, and the delegates to the Basle convention instructed accordingly.

And now that the convention has decided, by a vote of more than two to one, a referendum is to be taken, to make things doubly sure. There can be no question here of the party being "stampeded," no question of "persuasive demagogues." The Swiss Socialists decided by a democratic vote to join the Bolshevik International, because, after long deliberation, they were convinced that there was nothing else that Socialists could honorably do.

The question at the Basle conference was never "Second International OR Third International." A motion to join the Second, the International of Vandervelde and Scheidemann, of Branting and Noske, of Ebert and Arthur Henderson, received only two votes. Indeed it was not a question of joining, or not joining the Third International; it was only a question of joining with Moscow, now, or later.

A motion to consider the question after having revised the party constitution was defeated by 267 to 204 votes. A motion to make a last attempt to unite the working-class of western Europe before joining with Moscow, was defeated by a similar vote. A motion to join, but to reserve complete liberty of tactics, was defeated by 261 to 193 votes. So the Swiss Socialist Party decided to join now.

Of all the people in the world, probably, these Swiss are the least likely to take a hasty, passionate decision. They sat at their tables in Basle like grave judges in Court. They did not, as their German comrades would have done, drink beer during their deliberations. They went at their duties as at the hardest kind of hard work. They listened to careful arguments repeated again and again. They never tired of these repetitions, so long as the speaker was in earnest about what he had to say. They scarcely showed a sign of approval or disapproval, except for a little applause at the end of a speech. They simply sat and deliberated. Yet these men and women were deciding no less serious a question than this:

REFORM OR REVOLUTION.

Only now and then was any passion displayed, as when one speaker imparted the information that the Hungarian Soviet Republic had fallen, not through outside military pressure, but through its own inner weakness. Then these studious, phlegmatic Swiss showed angry emotion. But they seemed a little ashamed of themselves when the chairman reminded them that they should listen patiently to both sides.

The arguments for and against joining



"Our" Delegates to the Peace Conference.

Moscow, were those which every Socialist group in the world will have to consider in the next few months. So it is well that they should be summarized here:

Arguments against joining the Moscow International:

To join the Third International would separate us from our French and British comrades and deprive us of their support.

Would lead us into new tactics, concerning which we are not clear, and the end of which no one can see.

Would cost us our middle class votes (sic!) and the votes of the more timid members of the working class.

Would embitter the opposition of the employers and the owning class,

Would commit us to policies which, though they may suit Russia, do not correspond to Swiss conditions.

Would be no more than a platonic expression of sympathy with the Russian Revolution.

Capitalism is not crumbling as the Moscow manifesto says; on the contrary it is stronger and more united than ever before.

The Third International does not in reality exist; it is only a paper organization.

Arguments in favour of joining the Moscow International:

The Socialists of Western Europe, especially of France, are moving in the direction of the Third International, just as we are; our action will only encourage theirs.

There is no lack of clearness in the programme, immediate or ultimate, of the Third International: for the present, full use of parliamentarism* as a means of agitation, and at the same time the building and strengthening of workers' and soldiers' councils.

Continued on page 1454.

*Is this correct? EDITOR of the "Workers' Dreadnought."

THE BABIES' DEATH KNELL.

MILK WILL COST 1/- OR 1/3 A QUART.

A few days ago the Food Controller, Mr. Mc.Curdy, M.P. (who, by the way, first came into prominence by writing anti-Bolshevik pamphlets) announced that the price of milk might be raised to 1/- a quart.

It now appears that the farmers and dealers want the price to be made higher still. Mr. Hyndman, a member of the Consumers' Council, and another strong anti-Bolshevik, says the price will rise to 1/3 a quart. Meanwhile the London price has risen from 8d. to 9d. per quart. This means death to countless babies. It is true that masses of poor people's children never see milk in these glorious days of victory and that menaced by rickets and other forms of malnutrition, they are brought up on condensed milk, usually "skimmed;" but the increase in the price of liquid milk will enable the manufacturers to put up the price of condensed milk also. The condensed milk manufacturers can not only increase the price of tinned milk, they can also reduce its quality. A "Wiltshire Farmer," writing to the *Times*, a little jealous, no doubt, of condensed milk competition, complains that this is the only civilised country where there is no definite legal standard for condensed milk. He supposes the regulation that milk must contain at least three per cent. of fat would apply also to condensed milk, but he points out that since condensed milk is to be diluted the equivalent percentage to the three per cent. for fresh milk, should be at least nine per cent. for milk that is condensed. Mr. Mc.Curdy, whilst admitting that he means to raise the price of milk, sanctimoniously remarks:—

"Our baby crop for the years 1914 to 1919 is in danger. We must save it."

He adds that up to five years of age every child should have a quart of milk a day. Everyone knows that working-class children never get it. According to the *Times*, the Ministry of Health considers that the "local authorities have ample powers to cope with any physical hardship which may result to mothers and babies." The local authorities have power, as a matter of fact, to supply milk at or under cost price to children and expectant or nursing mothers, but only in "necessitous cases." We know what that means! Working-class mothers have had experience of it! "Free Milk: Why do you want it? Are you destitute?"

"My husband's down with pneumonia, and my eldest little girl, and I can't go out and leave them, and the baby's only five months' old, and I have two others under school age and three of them at school."

"Have you anyone working?"

"Yes, my daughter: she works at the dress-making and earns 15s. a week."

"If you've anyone working you oughtn't to be coming here for charity. You'll manage somehow!"

A pre-war case; but the wonderful war to end war has not made the leopard change his spots. Perhaps the daughter is earning 25s. or 30s. a week to-day; but the Prince of Wales's Fund fixed £1 a week as the maximum relief to be given to a family, and that was not so very long ago. Prices have risen, and the standard of relief to the "necessitous" has certainly done no more than keep pace with prices.

The Social Revolution will abolish necessitous cases by paying equal wages to everyone as a step to complete Communism. In Soviet Russia milk is free to all the children!

AN EAST END ATROCITY.

The precarious state of the workers under Capitalism is cruelly exemplified by the determined attempt of the landlords to evict at a week's notice 135 people, workers and small shopkeepers, in Brick Lane, Old Montague Street, and Finch Street, Bethnal Green, East London, to make way for a picture palace. Throughout East London there is an appalling scarcity of house-room, and it is certain that the evicted people will be forced to leave the neighbourhood altogether. The workers will probably lose their employment in consequence, a serious matter for them in these days of growing unemployment. The shopkeepers who have been building up their businesses for many years would have been heavily compensated had they been rich and influential, and had a public body acquired the premises to use for the common good. But it is, after a week's notice, in which it would be impossible for any one to make arrangements to transfer a business, their roof is torn off, and the demolition of the premises is begun.

And this is not Bolshevism: this not an unavoidable hardship arising out of swiftly-moving changes in the social organism during the time of Revolution: no, it is one of the everyday happenings of the Capitalist régime. The London County Council and the Government, if necessary, with an Order in Council under D.O.R.A., could step in if they would. But only poor working people are being turned out, and, therefore, unless they should happen to be very noisy—nothing will be done for them!

Is it not time to abolish Capitalist rule and to put in its place Socialism and the Workers' Soviets?

THE WORKERS' SOCIALIST FEDERATION

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LONDON MEETINGS—OUTDOOR.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 5th.

Tower Hill (12 noon), Melvina Walker.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 6th.

Great Push for Socialism and a People's Peace in the S.E. District. Meetings: Lewisham Market Place, 3 p.m.; Grove Lane, Camberwell, 7 p.m. Speakers: Minnie Birch, Melvina Walker, Ph. Edmunds.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 7th.

Osborn St., Whitechapel—11.45 a.m., David Ramsay.

Piggott St., Poplar—11.45 a.m., Melvina Walker.

Dock Gates, Poplar—7.30 p.m., Jack Tanner; Chair: Melvina Walker.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 12th.

Outside Siemen's Works, Woolwich—12 (noon), Melvina Walker and others.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 13th.

Great Push in Waterloo Road.

INDOOR.

MONDAY, SEPT. 8th.

20, Railway St., 7.30 p.m.—W.S.F. Business meeting. 8.30 p.m., Reading Circle.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 12th.

400, Old Ford Rd.—7-10 p.m., Dancing.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 17th.

400, Old Ford Rd.—8 p.m., General Members' Meeting (London Section).

OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

East London Workers' Committee.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 7th.

Victoria Park, 12 (noon), W. Ponder & others.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 9th.

Queen's Road, corner of Dalston Lane, 7.30 p.m., Walter Ponder and others.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 11th.

400, Old Ford Rd.—7.30, Business meeting.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 9th.

Walthamstow League of Rights, Wm. Morris Hall, Somers Rd.—3 p.m., Ph. Edmunds: What Socialism Means to the Workers.

YOUR FOOD WILL COST YOU MORE, THERE WILL BE LESS FOOD TO BUY.

The only way to prevent hardship is to share what food there is equally and to socialise the food supply. Do not go for the small shopkeeper only; go for the landlords, the growers, the shippers, and the big wholesale dealers. Make the land and the industries common property; pay everyone who works on the land or in the industries an equal wage, and sell the products at cost price: that will prepare the way for Communism. Parliament will never do it. Set up the Workers' Soviets and abolish the landlords and capitalists.

BREAD WILL COST MORE.

Some Lancashire bakers have already been allowed by the Food Controller to raise the 2lb. loaf to 5d. and the quarter loaf to 10d.

The National Association of Master Bakers refused to carry out the Government award concerning the men's hours and wages unless the Government raises the price of bread.

The price of bread is accordingly to be raised a halfpenny per 4lb. loaf.

Mr. H. M. Hyndman's remedy is look after the rats; our remedy is communism.

AMERICA SMUGGLES AID TO KOLTCHAK AND DENIKIN.

The *New York Call* has learnt from members of the U.S.A. Congress that large stores of ammunition prepared in the United States for the war are now to be sent to Koltchak and Denikin. These include a quarter of a million Russian Remington Rifles, tens of millions of rounds of ammunition, machine guns and so on. The Russian steamship, *Vladimir*, controlled by the Allies on Denikin's behalf, was to set off for Black Sea ports ostensibly carrying only machinery and farm implements, but it was planned to include secretly in her cargo 28,000 rifles and 8,000,000 rounds of ammunition.

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