

The Communist

All Power To The Workers!

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Czarism and American Freedom

NOVEMBER seventh witnessed the beginning of the third year of the Soviet government of Russia. After two years—two years of such resistance to internal and external assaults upon the working-class rule of Russia that it is impossible to find comparison in all history—Soviet Russia is on the eve of decisive triumph. But more, these two years of struggle by the peasants and industrial workers of Russia have already blazed the trail for the working class in all countries. Not only is there the great inspiration of working-class power and hope against the most fearful odds, but there is the concrete example of the proletarian revolution and of the Communist program of reconstruction.

It was in March 1917 that the Czar was overthrown. Everywhere the hearts of men and women were glad. Long had Czarism been the symbol of the world's darkest and most ruthless reaction—and now this high throne of despotism was gone!

From August 1914 to March 1917 the war had dragged its destructive course toward an ever deepening abyss of despair. There were phrases about liberties and about the fatherlands, but against the phrases there was Kaiserism on the one side, and on the other, Czarism.

Then on the side of the Allies came American Democracy to take the place of the fallen Russian Czarism—and the phrases took on a new life, the phrases glorifying the killing and maiming of the many millions.

The revelations of American Democracy with bayonet in hand, with its conscriptions of life and conscience, with its iron despotism crushing out even the least pretense of democratic privilege, with its open scorning of its own "representative" bodies in favor of Wall Street super-legislators and administrators, with its tolerance of such an orgy of profiteering as the world had never before imagined—these revelations dulled the promise of the war phrases.

But the peace would be the compensation! And now we have it, the "peace" of Versailles—the peace of glittering bayonets in every part of the world. The peace of the Adriatic, the peace of Roumanian devastation of Hungary, the peace of Chinese spoliation by Japan, the peace of the Saar valley with its constant challenge to renewed war, the peace of a Poland given new boundaries which carry the assurance of another world war, the peace of brutalities and oppression in Egypt, Ireland and India surpassing anything out of the old records of Imperialistic ruthlessness—the peace of a world at war with the workers and peasants of Russia, the peace of the deliberate aim to starve the women and children of Soviet Russia so that the resistance of the heroic Red Army will be broken.

The phrases of the war and of the peace are heard no more.

Now it is said: "Let us waste no more

time with phrases. American Democracy is what it is, and let those who do not like it hold their tongues. The time for camouflage has gone by. We have the courts and the jails and we mean to use them. We have the power to drive out of the land those who speak of these things in the foreign languages used by the mass of industrial workers in the United States. We will drive them out. We will use the mob power which is allowed by our servile officials when it suits our purposes. This country belongs to us—the men of substance and power today—and we will run it to suit ourselves."

In Russia the workingmen and peasants discovered between March of 1917 and November of that year that Czarism was nothing of itself, that the falling of the Czar made no change in their lives. They learned that Czarism could live though the Czar lived no longer. They learned that all the pomp and circumstances of the Imperial throne was only the hollow symbol of the real despotism which held their lives in bondage. The Lvoff-Miliukoff regime came and went, and life was the same. The Kerensky government came, and with it many new phrases of liberty and of peace and of the chance to till the soil so that there might be more bread for the people. Yet the life of the masses was the same.

It was the November revolution—the Bolshevik triumph—which gave to the masses of Russia, not new phrases, but peace, the land, and all power to the workers and peasants—actual control of the destiny and the wealth of their great country. The November revolution was a victory over the reality of Czarism.

And now it is becoming glaringly clear, day by day, to the working masses everywhere, that Czarism was different from British Imperialism and American and French Democracy only in form; that the reality of Czarism is the same in all countries where the life and substance of the nation is in the hands of a ruling class bent upon the perpetuation of the profit system, no matter at what toll of life.

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There never was a greater irony in all history than the performances of American Democracy at the time of the celebration of the second anniversary of the Russian Soviet Republic. The White Terror broke loose.

The page of history is hardly turned upon the Czar rule of Russia with its executions of agitators by the hundreds of thousands, with its countless exiles and imprisonments, and here we see the repetition of this "statesmanship" in the United States—upon the anniversary of Russian freedom!

We do not appeal for free speech. It is folly. Have we not seen our courts at work these past two years? Do we not know that the class rule of the bourgeoisie outlaws the revolutionary working class?

We appeal for working class understanding of what is going on.

Then, on this anniversary of Russian freedom, comes the decision of Judge Anderson—the order to rescind the call for the strike of the coal miners. This decision will have a more momentous place in history than the Dred Scott decision. Judge Anderson, by the trick of fate which located him in Indianapolis, will rank alongside of Judge Taney. Both able jurists, both men of high standing in their own time, both the unconscious means of precipitating the "irrepressible conflict"... There is an innate momentum in capitalist law and capitalist government which leads to the administrative, legislative and judicial expression of czarism.

We do not argue or appeal against the inevitable course of capitalistic czarism. We appeal to the workers to know and to understand.

Of what calibre will the officials of the United Miner Workers prove themselves? Perhaps a few among them will develop out of this experience and out of their instincts of freedom the same spirit of resistance which doomed czarism in Russia and which holds the newly-won liberties of the Russian masses safe today. Perhaps there will be another Debs among these officials, to give inspiring leadership to those who toil in weariness in the dark places under the earth.

No matter. If these officials fail the test, if they prove craven under the clear challenge, there will be others to say what is in the minds of the half million miners; there will be others to voice the passions of their hearts, their longings for more of the warmth of life which is kindled out of their heavy toil.

And will the Communists be dismayed by the deportations and the raids and the terrorism of the minions of profit?

It is the time-honored recourse of decadent power. It is another such historical episode as that of Louis XVI declaring his absolute power and the inviolability of the feudal rights before the State-General on June 23rd—when the Bastille was about to fall on July 14th!

Go on with your petty persecutions if you dare. It is within your hands to determine the mode of the class conflict in the United States. Deporting and jailing a few hundred agitators—the teachers of the masses—will only breed blind fury. But the mass life will have its say!

The day of the people has arrived! Czarism is doomed—everywhere. Freedom must prevail—everywhere. The freedom of Communism, of a society rid of profit oppression, of a society of freely co-operating workers!

The answer of the Communists to the White Terror: Long live the Social Revolution! On to the Federated Soviet Republic of the World!