

The Russian Press on Versailles Treaty

THE organ of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, *Pravda*, compared the peace at Brest with the peace at Versailles and makes the following comment: "For Germany the peace instigated at Versailles by the very courageous English-French-American 'democracy' is a robbery through and through. The acceptance of the peace terms means, according to the present leaders of bourgeois Germany, 'the destruction of Germany', 'the grave of the German people.' Despair is heard in every utterance of the leading German bourgeois."

"A very short time ago German imperialism dictated almost the same kind of terms to us, in the peace of Brest. The fulfillment of these terms meant Russia's economic ruin, and the enslavement of the entire Russian people. Even at that time despair came from the bourgeoisie and their 'Socialist' followers but this despair could not be found in the real revolutionaries, the Soviet power representatives. Our Soviet representatives agreed to sign the peace of Brest because they knew that this peace would not last long, that it would be destroyed by the development of the world revolution."

"But the German bourgeoisie and its adherents find themselves in a different situation. They could not encourage the outbreak of the Communist revolution in the Entente countries because this Communist revolution would mean their own overthrow in Germany. They could only scare the Allies with this revolution. But the Allies understood very well that this was only a threat from the so-called 'Socialist' government of Germany, from social-traitors, and that these 'Socialist' individuals would never lend themselves to any such enterprise as a real revolution. There is no way of rescue for capitalist Germany. It stands at the very brink of destruction. The German people realize now very clearly that the bourgeoisie, with the help of the social-traitors, has led them to destruction and now cannot save them."

"But these men who cannot save the people from destruction will no longer be retained in the government. There is no room nor demand for 'fain hearts and weak hands'. They must be replaced by those who face the future with courage, who can lead the people onwards with strong brave leadership."

"Of all the political parties of Germany the Communist can fill these demands. That party fears the peace treaty at Versailles just as little as we feared the Brest peace, because it knows that like the Brest peace, the Versailles peace will also be swept away by the storm wave of the world revolution."

"The Versailles treaty is the suppression of Germany, the draining of all its economic forces,—open robbery. It imposes upon Germany eternal slavery. It places the rope around its neck."

"The signing of the peace treaty," writes Kerschenzev, in *Izvestia*, "which saved Germany from a new assault by the Allied powers, will not, however, be able to save the Berlin-Weimar government from the threatening danger within. On the contrary it has only aggravated this danger, for the reason that only now will the full weight of the war and the recent peace be really felt. Germany's leaders, who have proven themselves bankrupt in regard to their foreign

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policy, will show an even more deplorable bankruptcy in any schemes for the internal reconstruction of their land. With the signing of the peace treaty they have signed their own death warrant."

Regarding the economic significance of the Versailles peace treaty Meschtscheryakow writes, in *Pravda*:

"The victorious robbers demand that in less than two years, that is on May 1st, 1921, Germany shall pay them so many billions marks in money. But such a great quantity of gold does not exist in Germany. The Allies announce, therefore, that the debt shall be paid by the handing over of merchant ships already built, in the process of building, or planned to be built in the future; of cattle, machines, chemicals, pharmaceutical products, coal and all its by-products, ocean cables etc. etc."

"Germany has been fearfully ruined through the war. Of its former riches it has now only unimportant supplies. It will not be possible for the country to restore itself within two years. The carrying away of resources to the value of twenty billions of marks means, therefore, that Germany will be compelled to give up everything that she possesses at the present time and what she will absolutely need in the future to reconstruct her national economic situation, (merchant vessels, coal, cattle, machinery, etc.,) and in addition everything she can produce in two years."

"By grabbing for themselves these riches the Allies hope to re-establish their own industry. If their plans are realized, ruined Germany would at the end of two years compete in the markets of the world against these reestablished and rehabilitated competitors. Naturally she would not be able to endure this competition, and would thus become a victim of further draining by them."

"This draining has already been assumed as a matter of fact, by the peace treaty. Besides the twenty billions of marks which Germany has to pay by May 1st, 1921, she must also hand over 100 billions in notes. The payment of these notes will be not only in gold, but also with these same articles with which she is supposed to pay the first twenty billions."

"The payment of this tribute will be immensely difficult, further, because of the fact that Germany has lost all her colonies on which she was almost entirely dependent for her raw materials. The taking away of her merchant marine, not only her present one but all future and prospective ones, will make it impossible for her to import the necessary raw materials from other countries."

"In addition Germany loses large quantities of her own land, which considering her industry, is of tremendous importance to her. France gets, for instance, Alsace Lorraine, from which Germany received 40 per cent of all her iron. In addition France gets for 15 years the Saar valley, which is very rich in coal. Through this loss Germany is deprived of almost her entire coal and iron supplies, which is, of course, a most terrible blow to German industry."

"The Allies occupy altogether the whole left bank of the Rhine for 15 years. The treaty decides, further, that the Allies will

be able to continue the occupation if Germany has not fulfilled her obligations before the expiration of the option. It can be said now that Germany will not be able to fulfill any such obligations as these, and thus they will have an opportunity to continue their occupation of the Saar district and the further plundering of Germany. But the robbery is not ended even with these stipulations. Germany must in addition pay all losses which the war has caused to private individuals in France and Belgium. This bill will be presented to Germany before May 21st, 1921, and will undoubtedly amount to a few billions."

Kerschenzev elucidates in *Izvestia* the points in the peace treaty which concern the colonial policy dictated by the Allies.

"This fourth part of the peace treaty calls itself 'Germany's right and interests outside Europe': In reality it means the violation of Germany's interests in non-European states. It is the will of the peace congress that Germany shall be the only country in the world that may not possess any colonial territories on the other side of the ocean."

"This robbery of Germany has been accomplished so that the former German colonies and concessions will be given to the winners."

"In the projected 'League of Nations' special rules are set forth in regard to the administration of the colonies and territories no longer under the influence of those states which administered them before. A little further on the provisions of the League project speak plainly about the guardianship of these people, making a sharp distinction between those who are able to govern themselves and experienced in this regard, (England with her bloody experience in India and Egypt; France who learned to use the system of terror in her Moroccan and Madagascar expeditions), and the others. All colonial districts that cannot prove themselves possessed of these abilities and of such experiences, will be put under the guardianship of these countries."

"The plans of the Allies in regard to China is a clear illustration of how they intend to administer the colonies put under their guardianship. They have promised to hand the administration of the German colonies of China—naturally without asking the opinion of either the inhabitants of the colonies, or of China,—over to a consolidation of America's, England's, France's, and Japan's bankers, for China's economic development, which means quite simply the economic exploitation for the benefit of these bankers. This bank consolidation will be under the control of the respective governments, which means that it will be according to the will of their capitalists. The American edition of this new division of China contains this surprisingly hypocritical phrase that this plan is highly satisfactory to the Chinese. And why? Because it would make it possible for China to emancipate herself from foreign political influence. And still more: 'It removes every attempt at plots upon China's independence.'"

"China is placed under foreign capital and they call it 'emancipation from foreign influence!'"

"The Versailles treaty introduces a regime of barbarous exploitation and oppression, not only for the conquered

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