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Greetings to Communists Abroad

A Letter From N. LENIN

News from abroad is scarce and scanty. The blockade by the wild beasts of Imperialism is strangling us, and all the forces of the most powerful nations of the world are used against us for the re-establishment of the exploiters. The fierce hatred which the capitalists of Russia and of the entire world feel towards the Soviet Republic is camouflaged by high-sounding phrases about the "real democracy."

The fraternity of exploiters is true to its own traditions: it represents bourgeois democracy to be the "democracy," and it includes all the Philtines, including Messrs. Adler, Kautzky, and the majority of the leaders of the "independent social-democratic party" of Germany, which is independent of the revolutionary proletariat, but dependent on petty bourgeois prejudices.

The scarcer the news from abroad, the greater is our joy in Russia at the universal and gigantic successes of Communism among the workers of all lands, and at the severance by the masses of all ties with the treacherous leaders, who, from Scheidemann down to Kautzky, have gone over to the bourgeoisie.

All we know of the Italian Socialist Party is—that the Congress has decided by an overwhelming majority to adhere to the Third International, and to adopt the program of the proletarian dictatorship. Thus, the Italian Socialist Party has actually become Communist, although, unfortunately, it has retained the old name. We send out a hearty welcome to the Italian workers and their party.

All we know about France is—that Paris alone has already two Communist papers: "The International," edited by Raymond Pericat, and "Le Nom Défendu," edited by Georges Anquetille. Several proletarian organizations have joined the Third International. Evidently the working masses are on the side of Communism and the Soviet Power.

As to the German Communists, we have learnt that a number of towns possess Communist newspapers, most of which bear the title "The Red Flag." The Berlin "Red Flag" has an illegal existence, and is having a heroic contest with the butchers Scheidemann and Noske, who are rendering flunky service to the bourgeoisie by their acts, as do the independents by their words and by their propaganda of petty ideas.

We are full of admiration and enthusiasm for the heroic stand made by the Berlin "Red Flag," which shows that there are honest and sincere Socialists in Germany who remain firm, and refuse to be cowed, in spite of persecution and the foul murder of their best leaders. Communist workers in Germany are carrying on a heroic struggle worthy to be called really "revolutionary." At last the German proletariat has given birth to forces to whom the words "proletarian revolution" have become a reality.

We send our greetings to the German Communists!

The Scheidemanns, and Kautzky, the Renners and Friedrich Adlers, have shown themselves base traitors and betrayers of Socialism, and partisans of the bourgeoisie. They all signed the Basel manifesto in 1912 on the impending Imperialist war. They all talked, then of the "proletarian revolution," and all proved to be in reality nothing but small-bourgeois democrats, knights of bourgeois-republican and bourgeois-democratic illusions and helpers of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

The fierce persecution of the German Communists has made them more determined. If, at the present time, they are to a certain extent disunited, this only bears witness to the broadness and the mass character of their movement, and to the growth of Communism in the very heart of the working masses. Disunion is inevitable in a movement which is being so fiercely persecuted by the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and its lackeys, Scheidemann-Noske, and which is compelled to organize "illegally."

It is also only natural that a movement which is growing so rapidly in the midst of persecution should engender sharp dissensions. There is nothing alarming in this; those are only growing pains.

Let the Scheidemanns and Kautzky express malicious joy in the "Vorwaerts" and the "Freiheit" at dissensions among the Communists. These heroes of a decomposing small bourgeoisie are reduced to covering up their own rottenness by sneers at the Communists. Only the deliberately blind can refuse to recognize the real truth about the situation in Germany, which is the shameful betrayal of the proletarian revolution by the Scheidemanns and Kautzky, who have sided with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

Heinrich Laufenberg, in his admirable pamphlet "Between the First and Second Revolution," has proved and substantiated this fact with remarkable clearness of judgement. Dissensions amongst the followers of Scheidemann and Kautzky are the dissensions of decomposing and dying parties which possess leaders without followers, generals without armies.

The masses are leaving the Scheidemanns, and are going over to the Kautzky, because of the Left wing of the latter. This is evident from the perusal of any report of the mass meeting. The Left wing combines the unimaginative, cowardly old prejudices of the small, paltry, petty bourgeoisie regarding parliamentary democracy, with the Communist recognition of the proletarian revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the Soviet Power.

It is only under the pressure of the masses that the worthless leaders of the "Independents" pay lip service to all this, for in reality they remain small-bourgeois democrats of the type of Louis Blanc and other foolish persons of 1848, whom Marx so mercilessly branded and ridiculed.

All these dissensions are quite irreconcilable. There can be no peace between proletarian world revolutionaries and the small bourgeoisie, which, like its proto-type of 1848, worships bourgeois democracy, oblivious of the latter's bourgeois character. These two cannot work together. Haase and Kautzky, Friedrich Adler and Otto Bauer, may twist and turn, they may fill reams of paper and deliver no end of speeches, but the fact remains that, in reality, they are incapable of understanding the dictatorship of proletariat and the Soviet Power, and that they are nothing but small-bourgeois democrats, "Socialists" à la Louis Blanc and Ledru Rollain. In fact they are, in the best case, tools in the hand of the bourgeoisie, and in the worst—its conscious lackeys.

The "Independents," the followers of Kautzky and the Austrian Social-Democrats, are a seemingly a united party, but in reality a large proportion of the members disagree with the leaders on everything which is essential. These members will engage in the proletarian, revolutionary struggle for Soviet power as soon as a new crisis arises, but the leaders will remain then, as now, counter-revolutionaries. Verbally, it is not difficult to sit between two stools, and Hilferding in Germany, and Friedrich Adler in Austria, are proving themselves past masters in this art.

However, in the thick of the revolutionary struggle, people who try to reconcile the irreconcilable will be like so many soap-bubbles. The "Socialist" heroes of 1848 proved themselves to be such, and the same may be said of their brothers—the Mensheviks and social-revolutionaries in Russia in 1917-19, and of the Knights of the Berne yellow Second International.

The dissensions of the Communists are of a different nature, and it is only the wantonly blind who cannot see the fundamental difference. Those are the dissensions among the representatives of a mass movement of a remarkably quick growth. Those are dissensions which have a common, solid, fundamental basis: the recognition of the proletarian dictatorship and Soviet power.

On such a basis dissensions have no terror; they are growing pains and not senile decay. Bolshevism has also experienced dissensions of this kind and splits in the Party on account of them, but when the decisive moment came for the conquest of power and the establishment of a Soviet republic, Bolshevism became united. It attracted all the best elements of Socialist thought, nearest to it in conception, and gathered around itself the entire vanguard of the proletariat and a gigantic majority of the workers.

The same thing will happen to the German Communists.

(From "Workers' Drednought.")

(To be continued.)

Greetings to American Communists

FROM THE AMSTERDAM SUB-BUREAU OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

Amsterdam, March 20th.

Comrades:

We have learned with utmost indignation how ruthlessly the ruling class of America is persecuting you. The brutality with which it strikes at the best workers for the cause, flogs and tortures, imprisons and deports hundreds of brave men and women, fills our hearts with the same bitter feeling of being powerless to assist you against your cruel oppressors, as we so often experienced when, in former days, the sad stories reached us of the suffering of the Russian revolutionaries.

But at the same time, the heroic way in which you are bearing up under the blow, fills us with admiration and with confidence in the future of the American working class. We know you are as yet only a vanguard; we know how American capitalism, by combining the brutality of the former Russian autocracy with the hypocrisy that is the proper gift of the Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie, has succeeded till now in misleading the masses of the workers.

But we also know that persecutions have always been in the great epochs of the proletarian class-struggle "the seed of the church." So it was with Chartism, so after the promulgation of the anti-socialist law in Germany under the rule of Bismarck; so in Russia after the terrible reaction of the years 1907-1910. Socialism always arose triumphant out of all persecutions. And so will Communism in our own days. Far from striking fear in the hearts of the fighters pledged to the revolution, the White Terror in America will arouse in thousands of workers a new consciousness of the realities of the class war, and the true nature of bourgeois democracy. It will turn the thought of thousands and thousands to the principles of Communism and make them realize that there is neither freedom, nor justice, nor any hope of a better life for the masses as

long as the capitalist class owns and controls the machinery of production.

The Social Revolution is making great strides in Europe; the light that has arisen in Russia floods the West; the ideas of the mass-struggle, the Soviet-system, and the dictatorship of the proletariat as means of realizing the reorganization of production on Communist lines gain daily in strength and sweep onward like an irresistible flood. In the whole of Central Europe capitalism is waiting for its deathblow; in the Latin countries,—France, Italy and Spain,—it is considerably weakened, being undermined by economical and political difficulties. Till now Anglo-American Capitalism stands almost unshaken, powerful and strong. Great Britain still relies on her colonial empire; she hopes to be able to avert the revolution by affording to the masses some slight betterment of their lot by lightening their chains a little through the exploitation of hundreds of millions of their brethren of the colored races. Well, we think these hopes will soon be disappointed. Revolt already raises its head in Egypt and in the Indies. As for the United States, the employing classes hope to retain their power by widening the chasm between a small aristocracy of labor, led by treacherous leaders, and the masses of the workers. They hope to retain it by fooling and bying the minority, by coercing and victimizing the vanguard of the masses.

It is the glorious task of the American Communism to carry on, on broader lines the task that the I. W. W. first took in hand, to lead the masses to the assault of capitalism; to become the nucleus, the heart and the brain, of a strong and determined working-class movement.

The arising of such a movement is of the utmost importance for International Communism and for the cause of the Social Revolution. We all know that the world revolution cannot triumph,

as long as Anglo-American capitalism remains in power, and we have reason to believe that the decisive struggle between capitalism and Communism will be waged on the American continent. Nothing short of the fall of American capitalism will mean the end of that gigantic historical drama of which the world war seems to have been the prologue. The rulling classes of America know this, and that is why they crush Communism before it has deeply struck root into the American soil. But you, comrades, will not let them commit this crime; you will not let them destroy your organization or compel you to desert it; you will find ways and means to shift your methods of action, you will place your organization beyond the reach of your enemies and carry on, undaunted, the agitation amongst the masses. You will rally these to the flag of Communism, that is of world-wide, uncompromising class-war. And when the economic crisis that is spreading over the world, reaches your country,—when the revolutionary storm, kept back neither by mountain ranges nor broad oceans, rages over the American continent,—when millions of starving workers no longer, like in former times, cry out for bread, but fight for power, then you will lead the way to the general attack on the capitalist system. Your persecutions, your martyrdom to-day, your heroic struggle against fearful odds, all of this will design you for leaders of the masses just as the fortitude and determination of the Russian Bolsheviks designed them to take the lead in the revolutionary struggle of 1917.

Yours for the International Revolution

The Executive Committee of the Amsterdam Sub-Bureau of The Communist International,

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