

In the measure that the Brest peace despite its robber character was of positive significance to Soviet Russia, in that it ended the great war, Soviet Russia did not extort it by its own power, the workers of Germany did not extort it; the pressure of the Entente army in the West created the Brest peace.

Even if the victorious imperialism of the Entente now concludes a still worse robber's peace, as long as this peace permits Soviet Russia the possibility of existence the main breach will be in the capitalist state system since this peace will be a result of the opposition which Soviet Russia leads with its own forces and with the aid of the world proletariat.

But why should Soviet Russia, which cannot be destroyed by the sword, conclude a compromise peace with the Entente? Why should it not want to wait, with weapons in its hands, until the time when the crumbling Entente capitalism has made such progress that it must hold out an honest peace to Soviet Russia?

The answer to this question is simple. During the World War, which the criminal policy of all imperialist states protracted, a swift catastrophe for world capitalism could be counted on, and the establishment of the power of the workers in many countries where the slaughter permitted them no other solution. At the conclusion of the Brest peace the Soviet Government considered the breathing space allowed by this peace a very short one; either the world revolution would soon come and save Soviet Russia or else it (Soviet Russia) would soon collapse in the unequal struggle, as we thought then. This conception expressed the situation at that time.

The collapses of German imperialism, the inability of the Allies to crush Soviet Russia by military means, and at the same time the fact that the World War came to an end; that the crisis of demobilization was overcome; that the world revolution affects the capitalist world not as an explosion but as a breaking up, and accordingly as a lengthy process,—completely changes the situation and conditions of foreign policy for the Soviet Government.

On the one hand we cannot count on a speedy, mechanical liberation; on an instantaneous mass movement that would drive Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Wilson and everybody connected with them to the wall; and on the other hand, we cannot be convinced with mathematical certainty that the process of capitalism collapsing is making progress rapidly enough to ease Soviet Russia's conditions.

But as it is a lengthy process to be

reckoned with, the question for Soviet Russia is not that of seeking and finding a *modus vivendi* for the states that are still capitalist. If tomorrow the proletarian revolution conquers in Germany or in France the situation of Soviet Russia will be better, because two proletarian states, as an economic and military force, can exercise a greater pressure on the capitalist world; but it will despite this have an interest in concluding peace with the States which are still capitalist so as to begin economic reconstruction.

Soviet Russia will not permit itself to be beaten and we are certain that if the Entente States do not hold out an acceptable peace it will starve and struggle still more and they will be forced later to offer a better peace. The exhaustion of a country with Russia's resources by a blockade demands a period of time which the imperialist curs of the Entente countries will not survive.

But it is clear that if Soviet Russia must struggle much longer it cannot begin economic reconstruction. The war requires that its lessened productive forces be placed in the service of making munitions, its best forces be applied to war manufacture, its ruined railroads devoted to the transport of troops.

The necessity of war demands that the power of attack be centralized in the hands of the state executive, threatens the Soviet system and what is more important, threatens to devour the best elements of the working class. The Soviet Government has accomplished a superhuman task to oppose all this. What it has done in its cultural work, despite all difficulty, already astonishes even honest bourgeois opponents (read Goode's reports in the *Manchester Guardian*) and in two or three years Soviet Russia will add over a hundred thousand new educational organizations and new cultural forces.

How seriously the leaders regard the danger attending reconstruction, the danger of the bureaucracy in a new form, is shown very clearly by the minutes of the debates at the March convention of the Bolsheviks in 1919, which have now been published. But war is war, a gruesome destroyer, and if war can be ended by sacrifice it must be concluded.

Certainly it is indeed bad that the Russian people must allot excellent concessions to English, American and French capitalists, for it could make better use of these concessions itself than to pay tribute. But so long as it must carry on the war not only can it not work its

claims but it must throw its miners into the fury of battle.

Consider the matter in this way: If it were a question of economic, Socialist reconstruction or war against world capitalism, which sets limits to Socialist reconstruction, the correct decision would be war. But matters do not stand so. The question which is to be decided is either Socialist reconstruction within the limits of a temporary compromise or war without economic reconstruction.

As early as the spring of 1918 the question of an economic compromise faced the Soviet Government. When Colonel Raymond Robins, unofficial American representative in Russia, left Moscow for Washington on May 2, 1918, he took with him a concrete proposal of the Soviet Government containing the conditions of economic concessions. At the same time Bronski, assistant to the People's Commissar for Commerce and Industry, submitted in his first meeting with the representatives of the German Government practical proposals for the co-operation of the Soviet Government with German capital. Like proposals were communicated to Bruce Lockhart, the English representative to the British Government.

It may be granted that at that time, in the midst of the word war, there was ground for hope that a revolutionary explosion might do away with the necessity for such concessions, but the principal thing is that the policy of granting these concessions had already been arrived at.

As long as the proletariat in all of the most important States has not won; as long as they are not in a position to use all the productive forces in the world for reconstruction; as long as capitalist states exist beside proletarian ones; so long will it be necessary for proletarian countries to make compromises; so long will there be in those countries neither a pure Socialism nor a pure capitalism, but, territorially separated from each other, they will have to make concessions in their own spheres of state authority.

The extent of these concessions, which must be made to capitalism, will depend upon the power of the respective proletarian states. That concessions must be made can be contested by no one who does not at the same time show the means by which the opponents of this policy can achieve immediate victory for the proletariat in all countries.