

The German Revolution

The Revolution in Germany is only incidentally a revolution against the Kaiser. It is a revolution against Capitalism and Imperialism, a revolution against that system of industrial and financial brigandage of which the Kaiser was simply the autocrat—symbol and the braggart expression.

The capitalist press has for four and a half years fooled the world into believing that Germany was what it was because of the Kaiser and the Junkers. This is an error of the first magnitude. The autocracy in Germany was not a Junker autocracy, it was primarily an autocracy of industry and finance, of capitalist Imperialism. The autocracy persisted in Germany because Capitalism and Imperialism found it profitable to use the autocracy as an instrument for conquest and against Socialism. The industrial and financial Kaisers united with Kaiser Wilhelm in plots of plunder and aggression. Kaiserism would have been overwhelmed if it had not converted itself into an instrument of Capitalism and Imperialism in Germany.

During the war, the magnates of industry and finance enthusiastically supported the war and were the most aggressive of all in proposing annexations. The National Liberal Party three years ago presented a memorandum to the government urging the annexation of Belgium and Northern France; and the National Liberal Party is the party of big capital financed by the steel barons. It was the capitalist and the financier who formulated plans for the economic subjugation of Russia, and the world; it was the capitalist the financier who plunged Germany into disaster; and it is the capitalist and the financier who must be overthrown, and pay the penalty of their crimes.

Capitalist Imperialism, of which German Imperialism was the complete and final expression, thrives upon aggression, upon conquest, upon increasing its own economic opportunity by limiting the economic

opportunity of other nations; and it is this Imperialism that is being annihilated in Germany, as it was annihilated in Russia.

The simple abdication of the Kaiser would alter nothing; his system—the unity of autocracy with imperialistic finance—would still retain control, still oppress the proletariat, clash with other Imperialisms, produce new wars.

This unity of autocracy and Imperialism in Germany, of autocrat and capitalist, is proven by the fact that the Revolution, once in action, immediately develops into a revolution against Capitalism. The abdication of the Kaiser becomes simply an incident, comparatively trivial and unimportant. As in Russia the downfall of the Czar was the signal of the new revolutionary struggle against the Czar of industry and finance, so in Germany the abdication of the Kaiser flares up into the revolutionary struggle against the Kaisers of finance and industry.

That the German Revolution is a developing proletarian revolution is evident in the general organization of Councils (Soviets) of Workmen, Soldiers and Peasants as instruments of revolutionary action, and the arising demand that all government power should be vested in these Councils. This development characterized the proletarian revolution in Russia.

Out of the terror and agony of the war, and out of defeat, is coming the revolution against Imperialism in Germany.

It is this revolution that was the chief factor in the coming of peace—Bolshevism that conquered.

The break came first in Bulgaria, where Bolshevism was rampant, compelling Czar Ferdinand to make a counter-revolutionary peace in a desperate attempt to save his throne. But he went into oblivion, then his son, and now Bulgaria is a republic.

Then Bolshevism flared up in Austria-Hungary, demoralized the army, organized Councils of Workmen

and Soldiers. A provisional government was organized, after declaring the monarchy abolished, and peace negotiations started.

Six weeks ago, it was admitted generally that the German army was still intact, could still fight on; today, Germany is making peace—why? Because Bolshevism and the Revolution decreed the end of the war. Without this revolutionary activity, the troops of the Central Powers could not have maintained a victorious offensive, but they could still have maintained a victorious defensive for some time to come.

The ideological impulse of Bolshevism, uniting with the terrible agony and mass misery, flared up into the Revolution. The great event that the Bolsheviks, that the Russian workers and Peasants, had struggled and starved and died for came into being. And as German Imperialism naturally acted against Soviet Russia, German revolutionary Socialism acts together with Soviet Russia.

Some weeks ago, upon the appearance of the crisis in Germany, the Soviet Government offered and pledged help to the German workers in their revolution. Lenin, from a sick bed, wrote a letter to the Central Executive Committee, saying: "The crisis in Germany shows either a revolution begun or a revolution inevitable in the near future. Placing Scheidemann & Co. in the government will simply hasten the revolutionary explosion. We had decided to have an army of a million men by spring, but we shall now need three million."

The situation in Germany, in Europe, is still fluid, events rapidly follow each other, still in process of development. The task of the revolution in Germany is to become definitely a proletarian revolution, to conquer all power for the Socialist proletariat.

Only a definite proletarian revolution in Germany can make a clean sweep of the old reactionary system, and assure the coming of universal Socialism.

Against Intervention in Russia

To Citizen Romain Rolland:

At the hour when Republicans of the whole world, celebrating the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, pay homage to the French Revolution and declare their indestructible faith in an early realization of a life of brotherhood, the Telegraphs inform us that the governments of the Entente Allies have resolved to crush the Russian Revolution.

Awakened through the fight against the dispossessed classes, a hostile aristocracy, against a bourgeoisie anxious above all to reconquer their privileges and their capital, more than half strangled through German Imperialism, the power of the Soviets is in danger of annihilation to-day through the offensive begun by the Entente.

Senseless are those who do not see that this armed intervention—persistently demanded for some time by certain Russian circles which have lost all political influence—will have the result of awakening the indignation of the invaded nation. Irrespective of what is being said, and without showing any partisanship for the Soviets, the fact is that this intervention is against the entire Russian people, against their will for peace, and their ideal of social justice. The day will come, when through the uprising of this nation, which is still capable of great things, the invaders who have violated it, will be expelled. That day, Frenchmen and Germans, Austrians and English, will all equally be the object of hatred in Russia.

The free men of Europe, those who through the turmoil have conserved their opinions honestly, and who know, or at least guess the immense value to humanity of the Communist experiment which is being tried out by the Russian proletariat, will they allow the accomplishment of this detestable injustice?

What is the Bolshevik Revolution? What did it want? What has it done up to to-day? What will it be able to realize to-morrow? Is it worth being defended? The documents which I am sending you will contribute, I feel sure, to make known the truth. I happen to be in a position nearer than anybody else, to the events which have taken place in Russia during the past nine months. I have taken daily, short notes of my impressions. They were written in a hurry—necessarily incomplete, sketchy, and often contradict-

ory. I send you enclosed a copy of the notes which I could find, that is nearly all those which I have sent to France.

I am not a Bolshevik.

I know the great mistakes that have been committed by the Maximalists.

But I also know that before signing the treaty of Brest, the Commissaries of the people did not cease to solicit the Allies for military help which would have permitted the Bolsheviks to resist the abominable demands of the Central Empires, and have saved them from having to submit to a shameful peace of which they knew the dangers.

I also know that since Brest, Trotzky and Lenin have multiplied their efforts to induce the powers of the Entente to collaborate loyally in the economic and military reorganization of Russia.

Finally, I know that these desperate appeals to the Allies, contrary to their best interests, have been opposed by a non possumus—disdainful indifference.

Forgetting the teachings of history, and erring to the point of believing that the dismembered parts of Russia would continue the war abandoned by Russia, they have created the Ukraine, to the great benefit of Austria and Germany; they have pushed with all their might the separatist tendencies of Finland, Poland, Lithuania and the Caucasus, and with a Rumanian army they have fought the Russian army. These states as soon as created, have fallen into the arms of our enemies, as it was easy for me to predict, while the Russian government, although weakened, lost in the conferences of Brest, a great part of its authority and prestige. In the Interior where the Allies have played the game of counter-revolution, they have aggravated the general disorder and precipitated the disorganization of this unfortunate country.

Before Brest, their indifference made Russia defenceless against the ignoble appetites of the Pan-Germans. After Brest, the hostility of the Allies is bound to push this nation, which does not want to die, into the camp of the enemy of yesterday who knows admirably well how to take advantage of our numerous errors. The Conservatives approached with enthusiasm the Austro-German governments from

which they rightly expect the restoration of the old regime. The parties of the extreme Left, with a heavy heart, have to consent to this provisional reconciliation which necessarily must bring about their destruction, but which prolonging their agony, maintains their hope for existence.

In spite of the modifications imposed by the censor you will find in the pages which I send you, abundant proof of what I say here.

These notes have been sent from Petrograd and from Moscow. Given to the care of the official Courier who left for France weekly, they have been addressed regularly to Albert Thomas, Jean Longuet, Ernest Laffont. Many of them have also been sent to other friends, to the Deputy Pressman, to Pierre Hamp, Henri Barbusse, etc. Some of them must have been intercepted or gone astray. The majority reached their destination. I can see this from their answers dated as late as March. Since then communication by mail with the West has become extremely precarious.

Among these notes you will not find a single line which could form an official reproach as an indiscretion against an officer and member of the French Military Mission in Russia. As a matter of fact they contain nothing but the personal observations of a French citizen interested in observing the facts only as an impartial, open-minded witness. They are extracts of my conversations with leaders of Bolshevism and of the Opposition, which I could not pass by in silence.

I have a deep conviction that in giving you these documents, I am strictly doing my duty as a Socialist and a Frenchman. In doing this I have faith that you will not abuse my confidence.

I pray you to run through these notes and to communicate them to political men, to the philosophers and to the thinkers of France who in your opinion will be interested in reading them. Men such as Aulard, Gabriel Seailles, Maeterlinck and many others who after they know the truth, will be capable of enlightening our dear country. They will know how to prevent the sons of the great French Revolution from

(Continued on page four)