

The Revolutionary Age

A Chronicle and Interpretation of Events in Europe.

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MOONEY, STRIKES, AND THE A. F. of L.

THE bureaucracy of the American Federation of Labor is not in favor of strikes as a protest against the pending execution of Thomas J. Mooney. "Officers of the Federation," says a press report, "are doing all in their power to effect executive clemency for Mooney because they believe there is a reasonable doubt of his guilt." . . . "Those who are declaring for strikes in sympathy with Mooney," says Frank Morrison, secretary of the A. F. of L., "are infected with I. W. W.-ism." Executive clemency! Instead of fighting, labor pleads; instead of demanding, labor begs. Labor, as stultified by the A. F. of L., is a humble beggar at the gates of Capitalism. Labor can demand, labor can take, if labor uses its industrial power as an instrument of action. Instead—executive clemency! This is paltering. The Mooney case was a splendid means of arousing the revolutionary initiative and energy of the proletariat; but all action was limited to the courts, to petitions, to pleas for executive clemency! Labor should have spoken, should speak, in the clear accents of industrial action. Get the men and women out of the plants, march into the streets, get out the men and women from other plants, develop the political mass action of the industrial proletariat—that is the answer to oppression, to injustice, to legal terrorism. Capitalism recognizes might alone—speak in the words of ~~say~~ *industrial might men and women of the working class!*

THEY ARE STILL THERE!

IT IS clear that there should be no intervention in Russia—yet Allied troops are reported marching on Kiev. It is clear that intervention in Russia has proven a disastrous fiasco—yet alien troops are still in Archangel and Vladivostok! Here and there liberal American opinion protests against the criminal proposals of intervention in Russia. In its November 16th issue, "The New Republic" says:

"Now that Germany is beaten and prostrate the most immediate need of the Allied nations is a new policy towards Russia. The existing policy of armed intervention was originally justified as an answer to German penetration in Russia and as an attempt with Russian assistance to restore the eastern front. These explanations are ceasing to have any meaning. German influence is no longer penetrating Russia. Russian revolutionary influence is penetrating Germany. Intervention did not succeed in restoring the eastern front, because it met with Russian resistance rather than with Russian help. If under such circumstances the Allied troops remain in Russia it can only be for one purpose—a purpose similar to that which kept German troops in the Ukraine, Lithuania and the Baltic provinces. It will mean that the Allied governments have decided to overthrow the Soviet Government in Russia and establish in Russia a government more to their liking. . . . The military collapse of Germany, accompanied as it has been by a political revolution, has strengthened Bolshevism in Russia. . . . Bolshevism did not thrive, as so many people in this country erroneously imagine, on the friendship of Germany. It thrived on the hostility of Germany. Just before the final downfall, the German government drove the Bolshevik representative out of the country, because it feared him as an instigator of revolutionary agitation. Bolshevism will not be weakened by the fall of the government with which it signed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. But it will obtain a substantial increase in prestige as a consequence of the advent of the revolutionary proletariat in Austria-Hungary and Germany."

This is an excellent, if conservative, summary of the situation. It is conclusive proof that the

Allies have no business in Russia, unless it is counter-revolutionary business. But—alien troops are still in Archangel and Vladivostok!

DEVELOPING ALLIANCES

THE press reports that the new German and the Russian Soviet governments have concluded an alliance. This is contradicted by the story that the German government has asked the Soviet to cease its agitation in favor of new revolutionary action in Germany against the government. This is closer to the facts. The Ebert-Haase government, being a bourgeois-"Socialist" government, acting to prevent a proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship, would necessarily reject an alliance with Soviet Russia, except under very special conditions; its natural allies are the bourgeois governments of Great Britain, France and Italy, who are equally prepared to act against a proletarian revolution. This is proven by the frequency with which "Socialist" Chancellor Ebert invokes the Allies as a means of preventing definite revolutionary action. There probably is a Russo-German alliance, but it is an alliance between the Russian Bolsheviks and the German Bolsheviks; and should the revolutionary proletariat conquer all power in Germany and Austria, the alliance would become official. That this alliance is being prepared, in accord with international proletarian solidarity, is undoubtedly a fact, as it is equally a fact that a broader alliance between all the revolutionary Socialists of Europe is being prepared. This is not in the news, of course, but that is not necessary. Should the revolutionary proletariat conquer definitely in Germany and Austria, a Socialist United States of Russia, Germany and Austria would emerge, with Lenin probably as its first President.

Division of Power

THE march of events in Germany is being accelerated. Events are moving much more rapidly than the news recently indicated, but in accord with Lenin's prophecy of one year ago—that the German revolution would be slow, very slow in starting, but once started, it would move with the speed of a locomotive.

This acceleration is being accomplished by a number of factors, material and moral. The full disaster of the war is being realized with mingled shudder and rage at the system that produced it; the completion of the terms of the armistice projects the terrors of a bourgeois peace; soldiers and civilians approaching each other, the soldiers again thinking in terms of the proletarian class struggle and the civilians fraternizing with the soldiers; the disintegration of industry by the war imposes the necessity of a Socialist reconstruction, unless the workers are willing to accept the status of helots in the days to come; and hunger, that hunger which tears at the vitals and quickens the mind, that formerly "magnificently organized hunger" tolerated, if grumblingly, because of the hypnotism of military glory, is now the stark terrible thing that acts as the dynamite of revolutions,—all this, and more, is creating a revolutionary psychology and proletarian action that are transforming the revolutionary crisis into the Social Revolution. This transformation is being accelerated by the clear, definite and uncompromising activity and policy of revolutionary Socialism as represented by the Spartacus Socialists. The German proletariat is being mobilized and organized by the education and discipline of revolutionary experience.

The issue in this great struggle, the issue that is developing the antagonisms of the Revolution, is the issue comprised in the problem of power. Shall power be vested in the liberal bourgeois democracy, in the Provisional Government; or shall power be vested in the revolutionary proletarian democracy, in the Councils of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates? And the slogan of the revolutionary Socialists, "All power to the Councils!"—is becoming ascendant.

The actual revolutionary power in Germany resides in the Councils, the organs of the revolutionary masses. But realization of this is not instant. Immediately after a revolution a "twilight zone" emerges; the masses are dazed by events, bewildered by the brilliance of their accomplishments, feeling that perhaps it may not all be true, unaware of their decisive power, not yet clear on the course to pursue and the new action required, developing their action for the final conquest of power. The Provisional government of Ebert, Haase & Co. is a product of this "twilight zone." But the power of this government rests on nothing more substantial than the immaturity and indecision of the revolutionary

masses. The masses move, and the government totters; the masses act, and the government collapses.

The government of Ebert, Haase & Co., under pressure of the masses and the Councils, has compromised again and again. Its assumption of the designation, "People's Commissaires" (after the Russian Soviet "Council of People's Commissaires") was an empty gesture, meant nothing and solved nothing, since only a government exclusively of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils can be a government of the People's Commissaires. After having assumed plenary authority, the Provisional Government divides authority with the Councils; after having decided to convene the Constituent Assembly, the government, again under pressure of the Councils, postpones the matter indefinitely. The authority of the Councils issues directly out of the revolutionary masses; the authority of "the government of a democratic republic" can issue only out of the Constituent Assembly; accordingly, the Provisional Government's temporizing on the Assembly marks a serious decline in its prestige.

And now comes a still more serious compromise, presaging the end of the Provisional Government,—the acceptance of an "agreement" with the Councils of Workmen and Soldiers by which power is divided between the two. This marks a decline of the Provisional Government and a corresponding increase in the power of the Councils.

The series of events culminating in this agreement was swift and drastic. Marines and workmen at Kiel and Hamburg, whether by means of actual revolt or demonstration is not clear, repudiated the Provisional Government as counter-revolutionary. This coincided with the resignation of the reactionary "Socialist" Scheidemann from the government—presaging the repudiation of the whole Social-Democratic Party of Ebert, Scheidemann & Co. Then the Executive Committee of the Councils in Berlin voted against the summoning of a Constituent Assembly and demanded a Congress of Councils, a decision that was made under pressure of the Spartacus Group and a challenge to the bourgeois democracy, which clamors for the immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly. The Executive Committee of the Councils in Berlin declared that the "People's Commissaires" are merely the executive organ of the Councils' Executive and subject to its advice. At Kiel and Dusseldorf the Spartacus Socialists usurped all authority, placing it in the Councils, and declaring a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat; the Soldiers' and Workmen's Councils in the lower Rhenish province, including those at Solingen and Remscheid, accepted the Spartacus program of proletarian dictatorship; the Council at Brunswick unanimously declared against a Constituent Assembly and in favor of a Soviet Government; the Bremen Council expressed its complete accord with the Bolsheviks and urged an alliance with the Russian Soviets; and at a Spartacus meeting in Berlin Liebknecht was acclaimed, the Russian Bolshevik policy accented, and moderate Socialists refused a hearing.

The bourgeois-"Socialist" government of Ebert, Haase & Co. tried by dicker and compromise to prevent a crisis. The result was the "agreement" by which it accepted division of authority with the Soviets, the agreement providing:

"First—All political power is to be in the hands of the German Socialist Republic and the Soldiers' and Workmen's Council.

"Second—Their aim is to defend and develop what has been achieved by the revolution and to suppress all counter-revolutionary activity.

"Third—Pending the election of representatives of the Soldiers' and Workmen's Councils to an executive council of the German Republic, the Executive Council in Berlin is to exercise its functions.

"Fourth—The appointment and dismissal of all members of the various legislative bodies of the Republic and, until the final Constitution is established, of Prussia, are to be made by the Central Executive Council, which also has the right of control.

"Fifth—Before the Cabinet appoints assistant ministers the Executive Council must be consulted.

"Sixth—A convention of delegates drawn from the Soldiers' and Workmen's Councils is to be summoned as soon as possible."

This is not the overthrow of the Provisional Government; it is not all power to the Councils, not a dictatorship of the proletariat. The agreement represents a compromise equally by the government and by the Councils, a division of power which decides nothing, but which does accomplish one important thing: develops new an-