

The Revolutionary Age

A Chronicle and Interpretation of Events in Europe.

LOUIS C. FRANA Editor

EADMONN MACALPINE Associate Editor

Contributing Editors

SCOTT NEARING

LUDWIG LORE

JOHN REED

SEN KATAYAMA

N. I. HOURWICH

G. WEINSTEIN

ISSUED EVERY WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY

By Local Boston, Socialist Party
885 Washington St., Boston, Mass.

Saturday, November 30, 1918

Clemency is for the Guilty!

THE "clemency" to Tom Mooney granted by Governor Stephens of California is an insult and a disgrace. It should rally labor to a new determination. In commuting the sentence of Mooney to life imprisonment, Gov. Stephens speaks about "the impossible tenets of the anarchists, whose sympathy for the German cause is well known," and that after the bomb explosion "a number of persons of pronounced anarchistic tendencies were arrested." This is contemptible camouflage. It is an appeal to the lowest passions of the mob, a perversion of the truth, and a gross indecency unworthy of the chief executive of a great state. Why clemency? And what is the clemency comprised in being sentenced to a living death for the rest of one's life? Mooney himself has asked—either acquittal or death! The struggle is a struggle for a new trial, the struggle is whether labor shall allow capital to murder an agitator who threatened the infamous profits of capital. This "clemency" should be a breach through which must pour the indignation of the American people. This "clemency," disgraceful and indecent as it is, is still the direct result of working class pressure. Let the pressure increase until Mooney again becomes free! The Seattle labor unions have adopted the right course in their declaration that the "clemency" of Governor Stephens will not alter their plans for a strike of protest.

They are Still There!

THE other day, Senator King of Utah introduced a resolution proposing recognition by the United States and the Allies of a de facto government of Russia in harmony with Allied aims.

A de facto government means a government that is actually in power. What government is actually in power in Russia? The Soviet Government, indisputably, which has maintained and strengthened itself during the past thirteen months, and whose authority is disputed only by a few counter-revolutionists—and Senator King.

But perhaps by de facto government Senator King means one of the many "governments" organized in Russia behind the screen of alien bayonets. About a dozen of these have organized—and disappeared. The most ambitious and imposing of them all was the Omsk "All-Russian Government." When Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Tchicherin proposed an armistice to the Allies the American press—which always knows the right thing to do even when the government itself is in doubt—declared that the proposal should be made to the Omsk Government. But now this particular government no longer exists, having been overthrown by Admiral Kolchak, who proclaimed himself dictator. The Allies refuse to negotiate with the Soviet Government because it is not a government and lacks stability—in spite of having had power for thirteen months; but it is proposed that the Soviets negotiate with a government so strong, so authoritative, so based upon the will of the people, that one counter-revolutionary adventurer can overthrow it?

Would Senator King recognize the dictatorship of Admiral Kolchak as a de facto government in accord with Allied aims? This would mean to recognize the worst reactionary and infamous elements in Russian life, since Admiral Kolchak is a notorious retainer of the former Czar.

The resolution of Senator King, moreover, recommends joint military aid to overthrow the Bolshevik government and assist the Russian people in establishing an "orderly government."

Order—over whom, by whom, and in the interests of whom? Military assistance—from what "Russian people"? Such as Admiral Kolchak? Alien troops have been in Archangel and Vladivostok for some time; the Russian people as a mass have given no indication of being willing to

assist these troops. In Vladivostok the Allies dispersed the Soviet, and a new election was held: the Bolsheviks won an overwhelming victory. But their administration was dispersed. Is this the sort of assistance that Senator King has in mind? The mass of the Russian people are loyal to the Soviet Government. ... Alien troops are still in Archangel and Vladivostok!

Bakhmetieff—and Money

Upon the overthrow of the Czar, the Milyukov-Guchkov government appointed Boris Bakhmetieff as its ambassador at Washington. He remained ambassador during the government changes, being retained by Kerensky. Upon the assumption of power by the Soviets, Ambassador Boris was dismissed, but he refused to recognize this government and his dismissal; he retained possession of the Russian Embassy in Washington, and of all funds. Since then, Ambassador Bakhmetieff has maintained relations with the United States government and carried on an anti-Soviet propaganda. Apparently, he has unlimited money. This fact suggests a number of questions. What function does Bakhmetieff perform which requires money, since he no longer represents Russia? What check is there upon the expenditure of this money? Where does the money come from? Is this money being granted him by the United States Government direct, or is it coming out of credits to the old Russian government? If the latter, who is to repay this money? What is the purpose of maintaining de facto diplomatic relations with an Ambassador who has been dismissed and represents no one but himself? What is Bakhmetieff doing these days?

All Power to the Soviets!

THE crisis of power is developing in Germany. It is a crisis that cannot be postponed, but must definitely be disposed of, since it goes to the heart of the problems of the Revolution, determining whether Germany shall emerge into a parliamentary democratic republic, as in France, or into a Socialist Republic, as in Russia.

At a meeting of "heads of the various German states" it was decided unanimously that a Constituent Assembly should be held, and held immediately. This bourgeois Federal Conference urged that "unity" be maintained and all separatist movements discouraged in spite of the fact that separatism is a bourgeois movement to avoid a Socialist Republic and annihilate the Revolution, as in Russia. "The proposal for a speedy summoning of the National Assembly meets general approbation," the Conference declared. The bourgeois liberals and the more sinister forces skulking behind their democratic screen, are united in favor of an immediate National Assembly. The Constituent Assembly constitutes the necessary class policy of the capitalist class.

As is natural, the majority Socialists of the Social Democratic Party of Ebert, Scheidemann & Co. are at one with the bourgeois liberals in the demand for a Constituent Assembly, and immediately at that. Their whole policy is a bourgeois policy, mobilizing the masses for the bourgeois reaction. Their concepts of Socialism, their morale and activity are the most dangerous counter-revolutionary force, since they camouflage reaction in the colors of Socialism. Scheidemann and "Vorwaerts" are actively campaigning for the Constituent Assembly, attacking the revolutionary Socialists. Scheidemann's whole "revolutionary" activity seems to be engaged in proving that there are no technical objections to an immediate convocation of the Assembly. A splendid Socialist task! He argues that a Socialist state cannot be established at a time of "disorder"—and this is characteristic, petty bourgeois Socialism conceiving revolution as "disorder" instead of as a dynamic opportunity to establish Socialism. One year ago the Social Democratic Party "purged" itself of "the Marxist scholastic." That was characteristic. Its "Socialism" was and is simply a decoy of the bourgeois liberals to betray the masses. And that Scheidemann is opposed to the Revolution is proven by his declaration of opposition to "a class parliament" such as the Workmen's and Soldiers' Council. In his love for the bourgeois, the Junker, the class of the oppressors of labor whom he yearns to see represented in a "democratic" government. Scheidemann forgets that governments are necessarily class governments, either bourgeois or Socialist, and that the requirement of the moment in Germany is the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat as an instrument for the introduction of Socialism. The assembly means the victory of the bourgeois republic and Capitalism; a "liberal" Capitalism perhaps, but still Capitalism.

The Independent Socialists do not oppose the Assembly, but they oppose its immediate convocation. Faithful to their moderate policy, they want certain reforms to be introduced which the Assembly would be compelled to ratify as accomplished facts. Hugo Haase's attitude is comprised in the declaration that "the most vital interests of the proletariat demand that the ground gained by the revolution must first be fortified securely while the proletariat still has the power to do so." But Haase wants the Assembly to convene,—with the proviso that it must not convene before the prisoners of war return and can vote! This is petty, hesitant, wavering between the government and the Councils, between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois Assembly.

The revolutionary Socialists of the Spartacus Group, on the contrary, are categorically opposed to the Assembly, since it is an instrument of bourgeois democracy and necessarily counter-revolutionary. Their program is the dictatorship of the Socialist proletariat, the annihilation of the democracy of Capitalism as a necessary preliminary to the coming of the communist democracy of Socialism.

The issue is fundamental, and not technical. It is the issue comprised in the problem of whether power should be vested in Socialism or in Capitalism—that is the issue, in spite of wavering, hesitation and compromise. Should the program of the Spartacus Group meet defeat, it would mean the defeat of the German revolution as a proletarian and Socialist revolution. This issue of the crisis and problem of power will come to a head at the Congress of Councils which convenes December 16.

Accordingly, the revolutionary problem of the moment in Germany is "All power to the Councils!" as it was "All power to the Soviets!" in Russia. The program is identical, the crisis of power in Germany the same as that crisis which produced the proletarian revolution in Russia.

What is comprised in the slogan, All power to the Councils, or Soviets, of Workmen?

All power to the Soviets is the necessary demand of the proletarian revolution, its accomplishment alone would mean the success of the Revolution.

The Soviets, or Councils, are class organizations, characteristic of the proletarian revolution. They are mass organization of the proletariat, the dynamic expression of the proletariat in action. A Workmen's Soviet bases itself directly upon the workers in the factories, the working class its constituency. Each factory, each shop, each mill and other industrial establishments elect delegates proportionately to the Soviet, making the Soviet the executive organ of the organized producers.

The Soviet, or Council of Workmen, first developed in its present form during the Russian Revolution of 1905, and acquired definite character during the Revolution of 1917. But the germinal forms of the institution are older, an instinctive expression of the revolutionary proletariat. During the French Revolution, when the masses acted against the hesitancy and treachery of the bourgeois National Assembly, the masses developed as their instruments of revolutionary action, particularly in Paris, the "sections" and the Commune. These were mass organizations of the workers, not based upon factories because of insufficient industrial development, but comparable in purpose to the Soviet, since they were mass organizations unified by a class policy against the bourgeoisie and the state. The Paris Commune of 1871 was a further development, since besides being an instrument of revolutionary action, it constituted itself an instrument of revolutionary government, dispensing with the bourgeois state, its parliamentary forms and bureaucratic machinery. The instinctive action of the proletariat during a revolution is to form its own class organizations independent of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state.

When the masses break loose in revolutionary action, they must organize,—unless they break apart and are dispersed. The old organizations and the old machinery are fetters upon the masses, activity, not comprehensive enough, and the masses often must act against these organizations; out of these needs develops the characteristic organization of the proletarian revolution—the Soviet. A despatch the other day indicated the revolutionary significance of the Soviet in Germany: "It seems that the uncurbed agitation for Soviets among soldiers and sailors behind the actual front developed the revolutionary spirit that finally broke loose in the overthrow of William Hohenzollern."

But if the revolution is a real proletarian revol-