

The Revolutionary Age

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The Stranglers of Socialism?

THE international situation, in one phase, is a race between the coming of the peace conference and the completion of a proletarian revolution in Germany. Which comes first will determine largely the character of the peace and the course of events in Germany itself.

Just prior to the revolution, it was a race between armistice and the revolution, between Marshal Foch and Karl Liebknecht. The Revolution and Liebknecht conquered. But it was a conquest that marked simply the first stage of the Revolution; the next necessary conquest, which alone will make the Revolution a real revolution, is the conquest of Capitalism and Imperialism, the establishment of a Socialist proletarian government.

The reactionary press in this country and the reactionary press in Germany are equally against the coming of this new revolution. It is being declared by the American press and repeated in Germany by the reactionary moderates, that in the event of a Socialist proletarian government the United States and the Allies would refuse to negotiate with such a government and perhaps declare war upon it.

In other words, our reactionary press proposes that the United States and the people of the United States should become the stranglers of the Revolution in Germany, the stranglers of Socialism. This is a monstrous proposal, the consummation of which would make the United States the executioner of democracy, usurping the functions of Czarism.

It is a serious proposition. The American press is trying to distort the problem of the coming peace into a problem of action to crush the German proletarian revolution.

In its issue of November 25, the Boston *American* published a Washington dispatch, which said:

"Accepting as true the reports that the radicals under Karl Liebknecht have gained control of the government, it was pointed out today that an understanding between the new German control and the Lenin-Trotsky domination at Petrograd is almost certain. That this would mean very serious complications in the effort to arrange a permanent peace was the general opinion of officials here."

Why? Why should a Socialist proletarian government in Germany complicate the efforts to arrange a permanent peace?

Is it because this Socialist government would propose a reactionary peace, would act against permanent peace? On the contrary: it is only by means of this government, it is only by means of the annihilation of capitalist Imperialism, that permanent peace can be secured. The proletarian revolution in Germany, in accord with the proletarian revolution in Russia, adheres to the program of a real democratic peace. The Bolsheviks and the Russian people have fought and starved and died to assure this peace; and the proletarian revolution in Germany and Russia is a real guaranty of a people's peace, of the coming of permanent peace.

Would a Socialist proletarian government in Germany complicate the peace problems because the Allies could not negotiate with such a government? But why should the Allies refuse to negotiate with a Socialist proletarian government? If this government proposes democratic terms of peace, if this government seeks to make peace secure and permanent, then the proposal that the Allies should refuse to negotiate with this government means that the refusal would be based upon the fact of this government being a Socialist revolutionary government. If the German people decide in favor of a Socialist government, that

is their right; the proposal to crush Socialism, as it is being proposed, would mean that the war to make the world safe for democracy is to become a war to crush Socialism and make the world safe for Imperialism.

If the proposal to refuse negotiations with a Socialist proletarian government in Germany is because of the democratic proposals of peace that this government would make, then the American press declares in so many words that it wants a reactionary peace, and that all its declamation about a permanent peace is contemptible camouflage. Already sinister forces of reaction are proposing an imperialistic peace, are suggesting making peace in the good old way of the past, with indiscriminate annexations and indemnities—and the threat of new wars. These forces of reaction control influential newspapers and influential personages, and their campaign for a reactionary peace and larger armaments is assuming formidable proportions.

The issue, as expressed in a portion of the American press, is an issue of Socialism against Imperialism—and Socialism must conquer!

The *New York Times*, in its December 1 issue, editorially says:

"Again and again, at the meeting of the Central Soldiers' and Workmen's Council at Berlin, Hugo Haase and others warned their comrades that President Wilson 'would only conclude peace with a stable democratic government in which all classes were represented.' Richard Mueller, Chief Executive of the Council, described this assertion 'as an invention of the reactionary press.' Yet, since President Wilson meant what he said about making the world safe for democracy, Mr. Haase is absolutely right and Mr. Mueller is not only wrong, but he knows he is wrong and is whistling to keep his spirits up."

In other words, the *Times* declares that it is the purpose of the Allies not to conclude peace with a Socialist Germany, and intimates that making the world safe for democracy is synonymous with crushing Socialism.

What is the attitude of the government? And what

is the attitude of the American people? The suggestions of the *Times* and of other reactionary newspapers are sinister proposals of Imperialism, a call upon the American people to make sacrifices of blood and treasure to—assure the supremacy of Capitalism and Imperialism in Germany!

The peculiar mental jugglery—and the defense of Imperialism requires the most peculiar, insolent and shameless mental jugglery—by which the *Times* concludes that making the world safe for democracy is synonymous with crushing Socialism, is indicated in the following words:

"The Bolsheviks, whether Russian or German, do not want democracy. They want a Government in which the proletariat, one class, shall rule all other classes; and in Russia they have shown that this rule is not to be a mild one, but one of bloody tyranny. The Bolsheviks, in fact, adopt the same principles as that of the Middle Ages, in which one class ruled all other classes. The only difference is that in the Middle Ages it was the aristocratic class which ruled, and the Bolsheviks propose to substitute the rule of the working classes. The aristocratic class ruled mildly in some places, harshly in others; the proletariat begins, at least, by ruling ferociously everywhere that it gains power. Mr. Mueller is perfectly right and desirably clear on this difference between Bolshevik rule and democratic rule, which last is not the rule of any class, but the rule of the whole people: 'We don't want a democratic republic. We want a socialistic, nay, a proletarian, republic.' Enough has been said. No democracy; democracy is spurned."

This is a rare specimen of logic. The Bolshevik principle of government "is the same principle as that of the Middle Ages, in which one class ruled all other classes." That is a formidable indictment; it evokes visions of a small class of aristocrats, very small in number, who toiled not, neither did they spin, thriving in wealth and luxury by exploiting the mass of the people. That was the Middle Ages—the mass of the people, the workers and producers, denied all share in the government and the enjoyment of the fruits of their labor. But the *Times* proceeds: "The only difference is that in the Middle Ages it was the aristocratic class that ruled, and the Bolsheviks propose to substitute the rule of the working classes." Well, well, well! The "only difference"? But it appears a big and fundamental difference. The aristocratic class was an idle class of robbers and murderers, a very small part of the population, performing no necessary social function; the working class is a producing class, the overwhelming majority of the people, performing the fundamental social function of production—is not a tremendous difference comprised in this? Moreover, the mass of the serfs could not become aristocrats; but the members of the very small class of nobles and non-producing bourgeois in Russia, and we hope soon in Germany, can become members of the working class and participate in the Government by becoming useful producers, workers performing socially necessary functions. The Bolshevik ideal is not "government by one class"—that is Capitalism; but the abolition of all classes, a society in which all persons are comprised in the communistically organized producers.

The development of a Socialist proletarian government in Germany will not complicate peace—unless the purpose of the coming peace is to assure the supremacy of Capitalism and Imperialism.

Self-determination of peoples, in word and in deed! Self-determination for Socialist Russia and for the coming Socialist Germany!

MASS MEETING

German and Russian Revolution

Sunday, December 8, 1918
at 2.30 o'clock

Grand Opera House

Cor. Washington and Dover Sts.
BOSTON, MASS.

SPEAKERS:

JOHN REED

Recently Returned from Russia

LUDWIG LORE

Editor of the "Volkszeitung" German Socialist Daily

LOUIS C. FRAINA

ADMISSION FREE

Auspices, Local Boston, Socialist Party