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The Russian Soviet Republic Speaks to President Wilson

Note of Soviet Commissaire of Foreign Affairs, transmitted October 24, 1918.

Mr President:

Your message of January 4th to the Congress of the United States of North America, in the sixth point, you spoke of your profound sympathy for Russia, which was then conducting, single handed, negotiations with the mighty German Imperialism. Your program, you declared, demands the evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and most co-operation of the other nations of the world obtaining for her unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her political development and national policy, and assure a sincere welcome into the society of free nations for institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. And you added that the "treatment accorded to Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of her good-will, of their comprehension of her needs distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy."

The desperate struggle which we were waging at Brest-Litovsk against German Imperialism apparently only intensified your sympathy for Soviet Russia, for you sent greetings to the Congress of the Soviets (March, 1918), which under the threat of a German offensive ratified the Brest peace of violence,—greetings and assurances that Soviet Russia might count upon American help.

Six months have passed since then, and the Russian people have had sufficient time to get actual tests of your Government's and your Allies' good-will, of their comprehension of the needs of the Russian people, of their intelligent unselfish sympathy. This attitude of your Government and of your Allies was shown first of all in the conspiracy, which was organized on Russian territory with the financial assistance of your French Allies and with the diplomatic co-operation of your Government as well—the conspiracy of the Czecho-Slovaks to whom your Government is furnishing every kind of assistance.

For some time attempts had been made to create a pretext for a war between Russia and the United States of North America by spreading false stories to the effect that German war prisoners had seized the Siberian railway, but your own officers and after Colonel Robbins, head of your Red Cross Mission, had been convinced that these allegations were utterly false. The Czecho-Slovak conspiracy was organized under the slogan that unless these misled, unfortunate people be protected, they would be surrendered to Germany and Austria; but you may find, among other sources, from the open letter of Captain Sadoul, of the French Military Mission, how founded this charge is. The Czecho-Slovaks would have left Russia in the beginning of the year, had the French Government provided ships for them. For several months we waited in vain that your Allies would provide the opportunity for the Czecho-Slovaks to leave. Evidently, these Governments have much preferred the presence of the Czecho-Slovaks in Russia—the results show for what object their departure for France and their participation in the fighting on the French frontier. The best proof of the real object of the Czecho-Slovak rebellion is the fact that although in control of the Siberian railway, the Czecho-Slovaks have not taken advantage of this to leave Russia, but by the order of the White Government, whose directions they follow, remained in Russia to become the mainstay of the Russian counter-revolution. Their counter-revolutionary mutiny which made impossible the transportation of grain and petroleum on the Volga, which the Russian workers and peasants from the stores of grain and other materials and condemned them to starvation,—this was the first experience the workers and peasants of Russia with your

Government and with your Allies after your promises at the beginning of the year. And then came another experience; an attack on North Russia by Allied troops, including American troops, their invasion of Russian territory without any cause and without a declaration of war, the occupation of Russian cities and villages, executions of Soviet officials and other acts of violence against the peaceful population of Russia.

You have promised, Mr. President, to co-operate with Russia in order to obtain for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her political development and her national policy. Actually this co-operation took the form of an attempt of the Czecho-Slovak troops and later, in Archangel, Murmansk and the Far East, of your own and your Allies' troops, to force the Russian people to submit to the rule of the oppressing and exploiting classes, whose dominion was overthrown by the workers and peasants of Russia in November, 1917. The revival of the Russian counter-revolution, which had already become a corpse, attempts to restore by force its bloody domination over the Russian people—such was the experience of the Russian people, instead of co-operation for the unembarrassed expression of their will which you promised them, Mr. President, in your declarations.

You have also, Mr. President, promised to the Russian people to assist them in their struggle for independence. Actually this is what has occurred: while the Russian people were fighting on the Southern front against the counter-revolution, which betrayed them to German Imperialism and was threatening their independence, while they were using all their energy to organize the defense of their territory against Germany on their Western frontiers, they were forced to move their troops to the East to oppose the Czecho-Slovaks who were bringing them slavery and oppression, and to the North—against your Allies and your own troops which had invaded their territory, and against the counter-revolution by these troops.

Mr. President, the acid test of the relations between the United States and Russia gave quite different results from those that might have been expected from your message to the Congress. But we have reason not to be altogether dissatisfied with even these results, since the outrages of the counter-revolution in the East and North have shown the workers and peasants of Russia the aims of the Russian counter-revolution, and of its foreign supporters, thereby creating among the Russian people an iron will to defend their liberty and the conquests of the revolution, to defend the land that it has given to the peasants and the factories that it has given to the workers. The fall of Kazan, Symbrsk, Syzran and Samara should make clear to you, Mr. President, what were the consequences for us of the actions which followed your promises of January 4. Our trials helped us to create a strongly united and disciplined Red Army, which is daily growing stronger and more powerful and which is learning to defend the Revolution. The attitude toward us, which was actually displayed by your Government and by your Allies, could not destroy us; on the contrary, we are now stronger than we were a few months ago, and your present proposal of international negotiations for a general peace finds us alive and strong and in a position to give in the name of Russia our consent to join the negotiations. In your note to Germany you demand the evacuation of occupied territories as a condition which must precede the armistice during which peace negotiations shall begin. We are ready, Mr. President, to conclude an armistice on these conditions, and we ask you to notify us when you, Mr. President, and your Allies intend to remove troops from Murmansk, Archangel and Siberia. You refuse to conclude an armistice, unless Germany will stop outrages, pillaging, etc., during the evacuation of occupied terri-

torics. We allow ourselves, therefore, to draw the conclusion that you and your Allies will order the Czecho-Slovaks to return the part of our gold reserve fund which they seized in Kazan, that you will forbid them to continue as heretofore their acts of pillaging and outrages against the workers and peasants during their forced departure (for we will encourage their speedy departure, without waiting for your order).

With regard to other peace terms, namely, that the Governments which would conclude peace must express the will of their people, you are aware that our Government fully satisfies this condition. Our Government expresses the will of the Councils of Workmen's, Peasants' and Red Army Deputies, representing at least eighty per cent. of the Russian people. This cannot, Mr. President, be said about your Government. But for the sake of humanity and peace we do not demand, as a prerequisite of general peace negotiations, that all nations participating in the negotiations shall be represented by Councils of People's Commissaries elected at a Congress of Councils of Workmen's, Peasants' and Soldiers' Delegates. We know that this form of Government will soon be the general form, and that precisely a general peace, when nations will no more be threatened with defeat, will leave them free to put an end to the system and the cliques that forced upon mankind this universal slaughter, and which will, in spite of themselves, surely lead the tortured peoples to create Soviet Governments, which give exact expression to their will.

Agreeing to participate at present in negotiations with even such Governments as do not yet express the will of the people, we should like on our part to find out from you, Mr. President, in detail what is your conception of the League of Nations, which you propose as the crowning work of peace. You demand the independence of Poland, Serbia, Belgium and freedom for the peoples of Austria-Hungary. You probably mean by this that the masses of the people must everywhere first become the masters of their own fate in order to unite afterward in a league of free nations. But strangely enough, we do not find among your demands the liberation of Ireland, Egypt or India, nor even the liberation of the Philippines, and we would be very sorry if these peoples should be denied the opportunity to participate together with us, through their freely elected representatives, in the organization of the League of Nations.

We would also, Mr. President, very much like to know, before the negotiations, with regard to the formation of a League of Nations, have begun, what is your conception of the solution of many economic questions which are essential for the cause of future peace. You do not mention the war expenditures—this unbearable burden, which the masses would have to carry, unless the League of Nations should renounce payments on the loans to the capitalists of all countries. You know as well as we, Mr. President, that this war is the outcome of the policies of all capitalistic nations, that the governments of all countries were continually piling up armaments, that the ruling groups of all civilized nations pursued a policy of annexations, and that it would, therefore, be extremely unjust if the masses, having paid for these policies with millions of lives and with economic ruin, should yet pay to those who are really responsible for the war a tribute for their policies which resulted in all these countless miseries. We propose, therefore, Mr. President, the annulment of the war loans as the basis of the League of Nations. As to the restoration of the countries that were laid waste by the war, we believe it is only just that all nations should aid for this purpose unfortunate Belgium, Poland and Serbia, and however poor and ruined Russia seems to be, she is ready on her part to do everything she can to help these victims of the war, and she expects that

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