

# The Bureau of Misinformation

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION.

RUSSIAN DEPARTMENT.

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A MINENT American journalist some time ago expressed his belief that the American Bureau on Public Information, headed by the rather well-known Mr. Creel, was established, and is functioning, for the purpose of "immortalizing" the name of President Wilson. This statement has a certain amount of foundation, in fact. The Committee on Public Information never loses a chance to write in glowing terms of this or that "wise" step taken by President Wilson and his government. But it generally executes this in such a spirit of ignorance and so clumsily that even an American journalist used to all sorts of vicissitudes in life, while reading the official utterances of the Bureau experiences a surfeited feeling, to such an extent does that syrupy-sweet odor of the court-kitchen emanate therefrom! It is a well-established fact that court scribes very often demonstrate overzealousness. The officials working in the Committee on Public Information suffer from this sin.

Of course if the bureau merely concerned itself with immortalizing President Wilson, if it devoted its energies exclusively in this direction, little harm would result from it. But the Committee on Public Information puts a wider interpretation on its tasks: it aims to inform the public, not only about the domestic and foreign policy of the United States, but it attempts to disseminate information concerning world events: it definitely strives to influence the public opinion of the country, and, having at its service a centralized apparatus created by war, it carefully selects and arranges the information, thereby giving it a coloring most advantageous to the Committee's wishes.

The "fame" attained quite recently by the Bureau on Public Information, through the publication of forged documents purporting to discredit the Russian Soviet Government, is still green in the memory.

Creel and Sisson, the directors of this Bureau, reply got "in Dutch," but, as some "kind-hearted" people said at the time, "of course they did not know at the documents published by them were forged; their guilt, if any, consists in being too light-headed, too trusting, too careless. . . ."

But being 'too trusting' and 'light-headed' has nothing to do with the case. The publication of the 'famous' documents came about as an integral part of the slanderous campaign which has, up till the present moment, been waged, in America against the Rus-

sian Soviet Republic. The Committee on Public Information played merely the part of an official body firing the first shot, and, of course, as far as the methods and means used by it, as well as by the rest of the foes of the Russian Republic, are concerned, this body is not over-fastidious.

That this is precisely the case is being confirmed by the "activity" of the special "Russian Department," recently established as a branch of the Committee on Public Information. In a circular letter sent out by this department to Russian societies in America it states that the "purpose of the organization is the distribution among the Russian people, through the agency of their own newspapers, organizations and societies of official governmental information and news having an especial interest for them." A commendable purpose, indeed, and rather a useful one, at the first glance. Enlightening Russian citizens in America is a worthy task. But the trouble is that this task has been undertaken by a Bureau of a Government which, as a matter of fact, conducts hostile operations against Soviet Russia. And, naturally, the major part of the information which it deems necessary to bring to the attention of the Russian citizens in America is calculated to arouse enmity among these citizens towards the proletarian revolution and the Soviet Government.

This would not, in itself, be so bad. The Russian workmen and peasants in America are capable of carefully scrutinizing the material furnished by this "anxious" Information Bureau. They know the value of this material; they know too well that the mercenary scribes and officials of a Government that has sent its troops to Russia for the purpose of destroying the Soviets, have absolutely nothing favorable to say of Bolshevik Russia.

One could have ignored the task of obscuring the mind in which the "Russian Department" of the Information Bureau is busily engaged, had not this official institution resorted to obviously criminal means in its "educational" activity.

To substantiate our charge we give below a translation of a letter sent by the manager of the "Russian Department" of the Information Bureau,—J. Polonsky,—to a certain doctor in Chicago:

## "Liebknecht Autocracy"

making is concerned. Both have the autocratic spirit, and it is difficult to see how an American can approve of either."

The contemptible chauvinism of this reply merely furnishes another instance of the methods to which Capitalism and its apologists are driven by the march of events. When the war was on, Liebknecht was the one heroic figure in Germany, Schiedemann was anathema. In America the men who, like Debs, took the Liebknecht stand were denounced as Scheidemanns, and those who assumed the craven attitude of Scheidemann, such as Spargo, Walling, Benson, Simons, Russell, et al, were hailed as the spiritual kin of Liebknecht. Now that the people of the Central Empires have awakened to the enormity of the crime of international capital, and are endeavoring, in their efforts to abolish Capitalism, to atone for their error in being a party to that crime, the Scheidemanns of Germany are attempting to hold them in check and perpetuate Capitalism, dressed in the gaudy finery of bourgeois democracy, amid the plaudits of the bourgeoisie everywhere.

Only the voices of the Liebknechts cry: "Revolt! Revolt! You have swept away the old Feudal autocracy, sweep away also bourgeoisie democracy, and on the ruins of the old system raise the new structure of industrial democracy."

And against the Liebknechts the bourgeoisie now hurl their calumnies. The pretense of admiration for his old stand is discarded in the denunciation of his

Dear Doctor,—In a few days I shall send out a circular letter in which I solicit literary participation in our Bureau. Since that circular letter was also intended for you, I am taking the opportunity of writing you this letter, in order to explain the nature of our general request. My task is to explain events among the Russians in America. It is my duty to distribute articles to the Russian and American press, pointing out that it is the express desire of the Russians to uphold the policy of the American Government. For the present, I would kindly ask you to write an article for our Bureau in which you should express approximately the aspirations of the entire Russian colony, or the major part of it, to the effect that President Wilson's policy towards the Bolsheviks has been just, and that the whole Russian colony in America has faith in the President as the true representative of its interests and is capable of defending its rights in a proper manner at the Peace Conference. Should such an article prove of any special interest it will be forwarded to the American press with which we have connections.

In accordance with the established rule of our Bureau, as well as of any other bureau, an article is mailed without the author's signature, having only the signature of the official name of our Bureau affixed.

Dr. Rosset has spoken very highly about you, as a person who would be always willing to assist in educational work, and, therefore, I hope you will lend your assistance.

Very truly yours,

Committee on Public Information,

Russian Department,

(signed) Joseph Polonsky,

Manager.

This document tells its own tale. The Committee on Public Information authorizes a certain doctor to state in the name of the Russian colony in America that the latter approves the President's policy towards Soviet Russia, and that the colony intrusts to him the defense of her interests at the Peace Conference. In other words, the Committee on Public Information most impudently spurs an individual to fraudulent action.

Fine "educational" activity—is it not?

THE following is from the editorial page of the New York "Globe" for December 17:

"Editor Globe:—It is with profound interest that I read your editorial on the repentance of Germany in yesterday's issue of The Globe and therefore would like to ask the following questions: If the present rulers of Germany—namely, the fake Socialists Ebert, Scheidemann & Co.—are mere substitutes for the Hohenzollern, why don't you undertake an energetic propaganda in your highly intellectual editorials in favor of the Spartacus group, headed by Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who always opposed the Hohenzollern? If the fake Socialists helped to furnish weapons for murderers by spreading the lie that Germany was attacked, why don't you welcome the true exponents of democracy who spent years in jail because they tried to expose that shameful lie?"

"A. W. SEIDEN."

"Liebknecht is deserving of honor for courageously refusing to bow the knee to the lie that Germany was attacked. He is to be acquitted of complicity in the crime of the murderous militarists. But although not participant in the crime committed, he advertises purpose to commit one in the future. He proposes wage war on the democratic peoples if they do not opt Bolshevism. He wants no peaceful world. He is as much a militarist, although with a different motive, as the crown prince. 'Submit to me, or I conquer you,' said the kaiser to the old Russia. 'Submit to me and Lenine or we will attack you' says Liebknecht. The doctrines of the kaiser Socialists Liebknecht come to the same thing so far as war-

present actions—actions the logical outcome of his former position.

Surely the "Globe" speaks truly, more truly than, perhaps, it knows, when it says: "He wants no peaceful world."

The Liebknechts want "no peaceful world" wherein men toil for others' gain, where hunger nips the vitals of the little children that others may waste the earth's substance, where women sell their bodies for their masters' gold, where misery stalks that luxury may flourish, where fetid slums stink to the skies that palaces may house the few, where grinding labor crushes the masses that the classes may live in idleness. Surely they want no such peaceful world, and the dumb millions want it not either.

For months in Russia, Lenin, forced into hiding, cried with the same voice to the stumbling masses: "Revolt! Revolt!" and they rose, timidly, half-fearful of themselves, only to be beaten back. But still the cry ever sounded: "Revolt! Revolt! Rise, throw off your shackles! Rise, you are all powerful if you know your strength! Rise, you are the masters of the world!" And finally the masses, stumbling no longer, rose in their might, sweeping away the last vestiges of the old order, and ushering in the new era on the thunder of their voices. The echo of that thunder is to-day shaking Germany. Mingling with the echo are new voices, faint and indistinct, as yet, but growing louder and clearer with each passing phase, until they too will sweep away the age of misery and in turn hear the echo of their triumphant cries wafted back from farther fields.