

The Defeat of Germany and the Bolshevik Peril

By Nicholas I. Hourwich

WHO, indeed, defeated Germany? Who crushed the apparently invincible and iron might of her military machine, millions strong and tested in battles innumerable? Who drove Germany out of the ranks of the participants in the capitalist slaughter of the peoples, thereby ending the war? And, finally, who, in place of the military war, let loose or inspired the social-revolutionary war now raging in Germany, and which threatens to rage in other nations of the world?

Answers to these questions have been frequently made. But all these answers were given by "interested" parties, biased in their opinions, and each one of whom tried to secure to itself the credit for the defeat of Germany.

The Allies have ascribed this victory to themselves and their war chief, the French General Foch. According to the Allied version, General Foch was the real "revolutionary hero" responsible for raising the banner of the revolutionary uprising in Germany! True, the behavior of the "victorious" Allies and their armies in Germany was not in harmony with that version, since they used and still use all their resources to crush the Revolution in Germany. . . . But who, pray, except a few "tedious pedants," considers these small defections from the claims and the ideals of the Allies?

On the other hand, the Bolsheviki and their adherents have since the beginning assumed the credit for the revolutionary up-flare that smashed the German military machine by loosening into action the inert masses upon whose acquiescence that machine built its power.

Which of these claims is in accord with the facts? Who, then, defeated Germany?

In the newspapers the other day there was a statement by a witness whose testimony in this instance can be considered as disinterested and truthful, and which cannot be suspected. This witness is none other than General Hoffman, the head of the German delegation at Brest-Litovsk, who translated the oily words of the Austro-German diplomats into the brutal language of the sword; that General Hoffman who used the military power of Germany to crush helpless Russia, and was satisfied that he had. . . . As the representative of a conquered country, General Hoffman is naturally not particularly interested in whom to ascribe the cause of the defeat—to the Allies or to the Bolsheviki. Who secures the honor of Germany's defeat is of slight, if any, importance to him. Moreover, as a representative of the German bourgeois-aristocratic military caste, General Hoffman's inclination would undoubtedly be to ascribe the defeat to an opponent

"equal" to him and his class—and "his country;" to ascribe it the political and social system, to the opinions and principles, of the Allies (with whom he has a natural affinity, in fact), rather than to the modern "sans culottes"—the Bolsheviki. Indeed, according to the conceptions of the caste represented by General Hoffman, to be vanquished by an opponent "equal" to himself is less humiliating than being vanquished by an opponent occupying a "lower" social plane. Then this General Hoffman was a star actor in the campaign to defeat and crush the Bolsheviki. . . .

And yet it is General Hoffman who was compelled to admit the victory of the Bolsheviki. In an interview with Ben Hecht, the correspondent of the New York Globe and the Chicago Daily News, General Hoffman said:

"Germany was not beaten on the western front. Neither Marshal Foch nor Field Marshal Haig nor General Pershing defeated the German armies. Germany was defeated by an upstart named Lenin.

"You ask me what I consider lost the war for Germany. My answer is Bolshevism. I will tell you the exact moment that marked the beginning of the end. It was when General Ludendorff telephoned me at the headquarters on the eastern front from France to sign peace—peace with any Russian able to write his name.

"But immediately upon signing with the Bolsheviki we discovered that we had been conquered by them instead of having conquered them. Our victorious army became rotten with Bolshevism. Our military machine became the printing press of Bolshevik propaganda. We did not dare to send a corps of the German Bolsheviki to the western front. What is worse: thousands of Bolsheviki entered Germany. It was Lenin and the Bolshevik propaganda that defeated Germany, undermined our morale and stirred up the quack Socialists in the country." (My italics.)

Replying to the rather naive question of the correspondent as to whether the German military machine was harmed by Scheidemann's "Socialistic propaganda," General Hoffman answered:

"No! Scheidemann was all right. Russian agents did it and German fanatics like Liebknecht."

That the admissions of General Hoffman are not prompted by a secret sympathy for the Bolsheviki can best be judged by his "recipe" for German salvation, proposed to the American correspondent:

"Exterminate Bolshevism with an iron hand and much more energetically than Herr Noske is doing."

Nevertheless, General Hoffman was forced to confess that the Bolsheviki have crushed the German military machine.

Bourgeois society will not admit officially the truth of General Hoffman's confession; but it knows that it is true. General Hoffman admits in words that Bolshevism was the menace; bourgeois society, in France, England, Italy and the United States admits it in deeds.

The war produced Bolshevism as a mass movement; and this mass movement is producing the war against capital.

If the likening of Bolshevism to an "epidemic disease" implies a disease among the workers, there is another disease among the propertied classes, and that is Bolsheviphobia. The "red-Bolshevik" menace pursued the German military machine—"the conquerors of Bolshevik Russia;" it is now pursuing the American moneybags, who are stricken with terror. Legislators, meek "priests of God" and newspaper scribes are all bending their frightened imagination upon this problem. The word Bolshevism, recently strange and foreign to the American, now appears constantly in the newspapers as an American problem.

In its fit of "Bolsheviphobia," our bourgeois society seeks the "medicine" to end the red menace. It is highly significant that all the "medicines"—whether prepared in an elaborate political laboratory or by the provincial wiseacre—resemble remarkably the legislative measures, of evil memory, of the Czar's regime. Apparently the United States intends "to begin where Russia left off." . . .

Consider the proposals. Here is a bill against "anarchists," unanimously approved by the Senate Judicial Committee. This bill, under threat of imprisonment and \$5,000 fine, forbids the display of flags or the distribution of printed or written works "symbolizing or propagating the overthrow, by force or violence or by physical injury to personal property or by general cessation of industry, of the government of the United States or all governments." Does not this resemble the legislative measures of the Czar? . . .

The issue is clear. Bolshevism penetrated Germany on its way to penetrate other nations. In spite of the statements of the moderate Socialists, who still believes that bourgeois society "has not yet exhausted its revolutionary mission," we are witnessing the coming end of bourgeois society and bourgeois democracy. It is moving with the speed of an express train toward, if not Czarist autocracy, then capitalist autocracy of the worst sort. And, apparently, judging by deeds, there is no difference between Czarism and the bourgeois "democracy" of Imperialism.

The Soviets on the Invitation to Prince's Island

THE Allies recently invited the Bolsheviki to a Conference at Prince's Island (now abandoned). Below we give Tchitcherin's first note on the subject, which is a radio message to Worewski, the Soviet ambassador in Sweden:

A Paris wireless informs us that the Great Powers have the intention of inviting all the governments who exercise any actual power in Russia to a conference on Prince's Island in the Sea of Marmora and specify certain conditions of a military nature as a prerequisite to such a conference. This report is so improbable that we expressly request you to give us some information on the subject.

We have not received any official notice in this matter, and as our only information so far has been through the press we must regard it as a rumor without foundation. If, which we consider improbable, this rumor should be confirmed, we will consider carefully what position we shall take towards it. For the moment, however, we request you to give us all possible information on the matter.

The selection of a solitary island, far from all the political centers of Europe, could only have been inspired by the intention of surrounding the conference with secrecy or at the most giving it only artificial and partial publicity, since the Entente Powers would completely control the avenues of public information. A conference of this kind can by no means satisfy the Russian people or the class conscious masses of the other countries. We desire nothing so much as to "express in the most open and candid manner," as the Paris message phrases it, our wishes and conceptions about the situation in Russia, but Prince's Island is the most inappropriate place for that and we do not see how in this way the true publicity, which we consider vitally necessary, can be secured.

The subject of the conference itself seems obscure

to us. A territorial agreement between various governments (here the telegram has been mutilated) could be successfully reached at a conference of their representatives, and that all the more, if third powers participate. But in Russia the situation is much more complicated. You have no doubt learned that the Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviki have proposed an alliance with us for the purpose of jointly fighting against Koltchak. . . . The fight which the mass of the people of Siberia wage, is directed against the most extreme reactionaries and the monarchists, and as long as the latter have the upper hand, with the aid of the Entente, the fight will continue.

Where the power of the Soviets is established quiet is complete and the civil war no longer exists. Where, however, foreign bayonets support the rule of the reactionary elements civil war is unavoidable. If the Entente Powers desire an adjustment, the only means whereby it can be accomplished is by their abstention from interference in this internal struggle and this is what we ourselves desire. A decision for arbitration by third powers (mutilated). To break off the fight is an impossibility, since this fight is directed against the most extreme reactionaries and monarchists. The proposal for mediation is rather peculiar coming from those governments which participate in the fight against us and whose armies are occupying parts of our country.

Just as peculiar are the military conditions, which, according to the Paris wireless, are a prerequisite to the conference. The proposal for a cessation of hostilities, which was not made when we were in a difficult position, now comes at the moment when the forces of reaction are retreating more and more rapidly.

At present the rule of the Krasnovs in on the verge

of collapse and its fate is sealed as soon as the aid, which first the Germans and later the Entente powers extended to them, is withdrawn. The capital city of Dntov has been taken. In Siberia the revolt of the workers and poor peasants increases from day to day, and the position of the reactionaries was shaken immediately a part of the Czecho-Slovaks departed.

The demand for the withdrawal of troops from the territories, whose autonomy is being planned by President Wilson's fourteen points seems not only obscure to us, but also apt to become a source of new conflicts, which would appear to be in opposition to the wishes of the Entente.

Although the Ukrainian Soviets have supported themselves by their own forces in the fight against the directorate, it is known to us that the directorate spread the false report that the troops of the Russian Soviet Republic have flooded the Ukraine. The demand in question could therefore become a new weapon against the Ukrainian Soviet Government; the same could also be the case in several other territories.

All these measures stated in the Paris message are therefore in complete opposition with the aims which the same message attributes to its originators. Therefore we beg of you to inform us what are the exact facts of the case with this supposed decision of the Entente Powers, the statement of which seems so peculiar to us.

If it is possible for you to examine the documents relating to this conference, do so carefully, then let us know whether in your opinion the Entente has annexationist designs upon Archangel, Siberia, Baku, Askabad, Rostov on the Don, in short upon all those territories where their support has thus far made possible the maintenance of reactionary rule. Our acceptance of the military proposals of the Entente would mean the firm establishment of this reactionary rule.