

The Revolutionary Age

A Chronicle and Interpretation of International Events

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The Soviet Representative

THE Russian Socialist Federated Republic of Soviets has designated L. C. A. K. Martens as its representative in the United States. Comrade Martens, who has been affiliated with the Bolsheviks since 1903, is instructed to arrange trade relations with the United States. At the moment when all forces are against the Soviet Republic, when it was declared that Russia was in complete chaos and that the Bolshevik Government was about to collapse, this appointment of Comrade Martens comes as an affirmation of the stability and the power of the Soviet Republic (since emphasized by the proclamation of a dictatorship of the revolutionary proletariat in Hungary.) The Soviet Republic could not have made a better choice than Comrade Martens for this particular position. His functions are political and commercial, not propagandist; and this imposes upon him the necessity of complete independence from any movement or any factions in the Socialist party. But if he participates in party affairs, it must be with the left wing. Fraternal and cordial greetings to our first representative from Socialist Soviet Russia!

Liberating Egypt

ACCORDING to Winston Churchill, British Secretary of War, the whole of Egypt is in a state of insurrection. Railway traffic, according to reports, is largely suspended because of revolutionary uprisings, and the movement for national independence is assuming formidable proportions. The facts of the insurrection are used by Secretary Churchill to argue in favor of the bill retaining an army of 900,000 soldiers in the service. In other words, the Egyptian movement for national independence is to be crushed by the military power of a government that went to war to "liberate" the small nations! Egypt has been demoralized politically by British Imperialism, which has prevented the development of normal economic conditions and a mature national status, making the Egyptians serfs. Every attempt of Egypt to bring about a national revival has been crushed by British Imperialism; and now that the people there are preparing to use revolution, the soldiers that fought "to make the world safe for democracy" are to make Egypt safe for British Imperialism. The small nations are the victims of international Imperialism, where they are not themselves imperialistic, as are Belgium and Holland. The destiny of the small and subject peoples of the world is interwoven with the revolutionary struggle of the international proletariat.

Cries That Pass Away

THE cries of protest that developed recently against the terribly unjust policy of the army courts-martial have largely passed away; now and then they flare up again, only to become gently stilled. The accusations were to the effect that unjust trials were granted soldiers and that extraordinarily severe sentences were imposed for the most trivial offenses. A Senator declared that judicial procedure in the United States Army was more severe than in the old German Army or the Army of the Czar; and the New York World spoke bitingly of "the thing called military justice." Ample proof was produced of these facts of military injustice. But what did they expect? Militarism is militarism; and in a country that jails men and women for ten and twenty years for expressing their ideas, that deports agitators, that during the war proved itself the most reactionary country in the world—in such a country dominated by a brutal imperialistic Capitalism, did they expect other conditions to prevail in

the army? Moreover, the attack upon the army courts-martial did not develop as a campaign against militarism but for militarism, in order to perfect the army and make it more loyal by cutting out the most flagrant abuses. Senator Chamberlain, the head and front of the militaristic and imperialistic forces in the Senate, was a central factor in the campaign. That clearly indicates its character. That the campaign has ended is due to the fact that it had no real basis, and that with the acute development of the Bolshevik menace, it was dangerous to expose military abuses. Capitalism is class conscious, come what may.

Bankruptcy

THE proclamation of a proletarian dictatorship in Hungary, of a Soviet Republic, has terrified the Peace Conference at Paris, and shaken international Imperialism. The menace of a revolutionary war,—of the international proletarian revolution,—is revealing the Peace Conference's utter impotence and complete bankruptcy.

The Peace Conference has been in session four months. It met to liquidate the war, to arrange peace; and at its sessions events imposed upon it the task of preventing the collapse of capitalist society and crushing the proletarian revolution. But failure was the portion of the Conference. The distinguished statesman, hampered by the implacable demands of Capitalism, were compelled to pursue an imperialistic policy. They dickered over territory; they formulated plans to crush Germany as an industrial and political power; they let loose wars of small nations against small nations; they spent most of their time, not in solving gigantic tasks, but in arranging quarrels and using verbal calumny to whiten the ugliness and decrepitude of their proposals.

The United States, through President Wilson, tried to infuse a larger vision into the Conference. This it could afford, since the United States has no territorial or directly imperialistic appetites in Europe. But the European powers could not; they were directly concerned in territory, in immediate imperialistic projects; and their acts, instead of preventing the collapse of Capitalism and crushing the proletarian revolution, accelerated the momentum of these two terrors of bourgeois society.

What did the Conference accomplish? It decided that the organization of a League of Nations was of first importance; and it organized a League. But, slaves of the implacable requirements of Capitalism, the distinguished gentlemen of the Conference organized an imperialistic alliance of the five great powers camouflaged as a League of Nations—a League against the nations and the peoples of the world. The stress placed upon the League of Nations, even the camouflaged version, was an admission of the fact that the bourgeois order has broken down, is verging on complete collapse; and that something must be done to prevent this—to the bourgeois—terrible calamity. But Capitalism cannot prevent its own collapse; it may try, but it writhes like a wild beast in the attempt and accelerates disaster. The League of Nations, developing out of the bankruptcy of Capitalism and trying to liquidate this bankruptcy, has revealed clearly that bourgeois society and its representatives are bankrupt.

Then the Conference set itself the task not only of preventing proletarian revolution in Germany—and Europe—but of repressing the proletarian Soviet Republic of Russia. But in this again—bankruptcy. The Conference revealed itself as completely incompetent to formulate any policy concerning Soviet Russia. It discussed and it proposed, it hesitated and fulminated; but it could decide upon one measure only, the invitation to the "Russian factions" to meet in Conference at Prinkipo; but where this invitation was considered by the sly bourgeois gentlemen as embarrassing the Soviet Republic, it increased the prestige of the proletarian government, and marked another defeat for the Allies. The Conference abandoned Prinkipo; there were many rumors and threats of more drastic action—and then all these "plans" were skewed awry by the proclamation of a Soviet Republic in Hungary,—proclaimed while the world of Capitalism was still chuckling at the "crushing" of the Spartacans in Germany.

The Peace Conference is bankrupt. Capitalism is bankrupt, and the Peace Conference is the representative of Capitalism. It represents a decrepit social system, that is rapidly becoming a stinking carrion. This system provoked the war, and cannot solve the problems of the war on the basis of Capitalism. It may tinker, it may patch, it may "adjust," but the system of Capitalism is doomed.

Revolutionary events in Europe—and their inevitable repercussion in Italy, France and Great Britain—are isolating the Peace Conference. It represents nothing but an old system and old prejudices, which totter as the masses move. Power and destiny are in the hands of the international revolutionary proletariat, of revolutionary communist Socialism.

Next!

THE fear that weighs upon the world of Capitalism and the diplomats in Paris is: Who next? The proclamation of a Soviet Republic in Hungary is to them not a fact, but a symbol—a symbol of the onward sweep of the proletarian revolution, which may break loose in other nations.

Through this symbol looms Soviet Russia,—gigantic, mysterious and implacable. Despised by the world of Capitalism, intrigued against and villified, isolated in the spaces of its own territory, attacked by the soldiers of the Allies—Soviet Russia, through the flaming energy of its proletariat and Socialism, has conquered in spite of all. The Allies, their Capitalism and Imperialism, are no longer a menace to Soviet Russia: it is now Soviet Russia that menaces the Allies through its own gigantic strength and the threat of the international proletarian revolution.

Slowly but surely, with the relentless onward sweep of destiny, Soviet Russia has organized its revolutionary conquests. Industry is on a normal basis—the workers of Hungary are securing the food from proletarian Russia denied them by the capitalistic Allies. The proletariat and poorest peasantry are in control, their initiative and energy loosened and organized by their own state. Economic and social changes, an up-flare of emotional and spiritual energy are characteristic of the *milieu* in Soviet Russia, where the new communist society is being constructed. And out of this has emerged a powerful army—not a hireling army of the oppressors, but a revolutionary army of the oppressed masses, prepared to defend the conquests of the revolution, prepared to co-operate with the revolutionary proletariat of the world.

This revolutionary army of Soviet Russia is expelling the alien invaders and the counter-revolution. It is threatening to clear Siberia of alien troops. It is pressing the Allies back at Archangel. It is clearing the Baltic Provinces of the invaders, giving opportunity to the masses to organize their own Soviet Republic. It is co-operating with the Ukrainian Soviet army, which has conquered the bourgeois dictatorship and menaces the French at Odessa. And this revolutionary army of Soviet Russia, massed at the frontier, is prepared to march into Hungary or Poland or Germany to co-operate with the revolutionary masses in any war that may be necessary against international Imperialism and for the proletarian revolution.

The situation in Germany is critical and crucial. The conquest of power by the revolutionary proletariat in Germany will assure the world revolution. The recent butchery of the Spartacans by the Government of "Socialist" assassins has not crushed the revolutionary masses; on the contrary, the masses have been aroused, the Ebert-Scheidemann government depending more and more upon the worst elements of the old regime; it is being isolated, and the workers are rallying to the Soviets. The Soviets of Workers and Soldiers are to hold a national conference in April, where they will be confronted with the problem of either decreeing all power to the Soviets, or of being annihilated and yielding power to the reaction. The Spartacan communists are preparing a new revolution prior to the convening of the Soviet congress, in order to face it with the accomplished fact of a proletarian revolution—precisely as did the Bolsheviks in Russia on November 7, 1917. And on the German frontier is a Bolshevik army prepared to link its might with the revolutionary proletariat of Germany.

Starvation and the horrors of the war, the tremendous problems of reconstruction, and the general collapse of bourgeois society, are accelerating the proletarian revolution in eastern and central Europe. And the distinguished diplomats in Paris, trying to prevent the proletarian revolution, are hastening it by their imperialistic policy.

Among the Allies, they are speaking of a German plot to use Bolshevism to secure an "easy peace," of the fact that the ruling class of Hungary is behind the proclamation of a Soviet Republic. But since when does a ruling class cut its own throat? The Soviet Government in Budapest has decreed the confiscation of the banks, of the large estates, and the socialization of industry: is this the act of a ruling class? But if it is camouflage, Soviet Russia will tear it to pieces. In Germany, when the proletariat conquers, there will be a complete overthrow of Capitalism, and the ruling class realizes this, hence their implacable hostility to Bolshevism and their overtures to form an alliance with the Allies against Bolshevik Russia, which the Allies stupidly rejected.

It is the proletarian revolution in action. From Hungary, it will spread, it must spread. Germany, Rumania, Poland, Serbia—who will be next? Out of the collapse of world civilization is coming a new civilization, the human civilization of Socialism. The international proletariat is not frightened at the revolutionary events in Europe; these events are its inspiration.