

The Revolt of the Small Peoples

THERE is, apparently, a conspiracy of circumstances against the Peace Conference in Paris,—a conspiracy that brutally insists upon exposing the sinister purposes that skulk behind the splendid words of the Conference.

This conspiracy of circumstances is implacable. The Conference promises to make peace—and then by its reactionary policy it provokes revolutionary war against international Imperialism. It decides to mediate between the various Russian "factions"—and then proves that its real purpose is to crush the Bolsheviki. It promises to conclude a peace of reconciliation and justice—and then, if reports are true, it determines to impose terms of peace in comparison with which the German crime at Brest-Litovsk was a "gentlemen's agreement." It proposes to "end Imperialism" by means of a League of Nation—and then actually organizes a sort of imperialistic trust of five great nations.

But this conspiracy of circumstances is most cruel to the Peace Conference when it comes to the "small nations" or the "small peoples" of the world. Here the conspiracy is positively ferocious in exposing the Peace Conference as being against the progress and liberty of the world.

The war, insisted the apologists of the Allies, was a war to protect the small nations—Belgium and Serbia. Later, according to these same apologists, the war was a war to free all the small peoples of Europe oppressed by Austro-German Imperialism. During the war, the small nations and oppressed peoples bulked large upon the stage of events (marionettes whose wires were pulled by the Imperialism of the Allies.) But, immediately upon the conclusion of the armistice, these small nations and oppressed peoples were shoved contemptuously aside, and the Great Powers arranged things alone. Surely, if the war was a war for the small nations and oppressed peoples, the representatives of these should have been given real consideration, if not a determining voice, in the deliberations of the Peace Conference. But no! They were given the opportunity to make their pleas, and then disposed of. They tried a revolt in January against the dictatorship of the Big Four, but were ruthlessly crushed; and since then they have at the Conference acted as good children, who should be seen but not heard.

After it had served its purpose of manufacturing the popular ideology for an imperialistic war, the magnificent talk about the small nations and oppressed people appeared in its true perspective, as an expression of Imperialism. . . .

But still the Peace Conference issued forth a golden cascade of words concerning the small and oppressed peoples and making the world safe for democracy. Then, in a swift series of revealing events, the conspiracy of circumstances again exposed the Peace Conference as against the progress and liberty of the world—that conspiracy of circumstances which is simply

the implacable requirements of Capitalism and Imperialism.

While the Conference did not actually determine the destiny of the small nations and oppressed peoples of Europe on the basis of their interests, it at least concerned itself with the problem. But the other oppressed peoples of the world?—Corea, India, Egypt, Persia, China, Morocco, Ireland, and the small republics of the Carribeans and Central America (these latter vassals of American Imperialism). Not a word!

The Conference was to make the world free, but not by depriving British, French, Japanese, Italian and American Imperialism of their share in the division of the world. (Indeed, the Conference actually is redividing the world imperialistically in favor of the Big Five.)

Then these small and oppressed peoples acted; and their actions reveal the predatory character of the Peace Conference.

Ireland set up its own Parliament, and appealed to the Conference. But there was "nothing doing."

China appealed to the Conference for the annulment of the treaties Japan forced upon China in 1915 (the infamous demands imposed by bayonet diplomacy) by means of which Japan entrenched its Imperialism in China. The "twenty-one demands" of Japan, characteristic of imperialistic policy, virtually deprived China of its economic and political independence. Making the world safe for democracy requires the abolition of this policy of brigandage (which is equally the policy of the other imperialistic nations), but the Peace Conference has given China no satisfaction.

Persia (which prior to the war was "divided" between the Russian and British Governments, in the interest of their capitalists) has asked the Peace Conference to declare null and void all treaties in contravention of Persian independence. These treaties, which were concluded by Persia with Russia and Great Britain, were declared void by revolutionary Soviet Russia in December, 1917; but Great Britain still clings to them, to promote Imperialism. Persia also asks that the armed forces of foreign powers be withdrawn. But Persia must consider the Peace Conference a gathering of altruistic gentlemen, if she expects to secure independence that way. The Conference believes in altering the *status quo ante* only if it does not harm the Imperialism it represents (or aggrandizes it still more).

At this moment, a revolt is raging in Corea. The Japanese Government, in control of Corea, has pursued a systematic policy of oppression and brutality, of *exterminating* the Corean people, physically and culturally. This country was annexed by Japan in characteristic imperialistic fashion. The people are deprived of all liberty, and they are starving. They insist upon national independence. Japan's answer is to crush the people with artillery and machine guns and

mass executions, while it is pouring more troops in Corea to assure the suppression of the revolutionary movement. And the Peace Conference's answer is—nothing!

At this moment, moreover, revolts are raging in India and Egypt, which are held in national bondage by British Imperialism.

India is in a desperate state. Her men and money were conscripted by Great Britain in the war to protect the small and oppressed peoples. Famine rages in the country. The Hindu people, capable of great self-development, have been denied the opportunity for development, since the policy of Great Britain has been to use India as a means of aggrandizing British industry to the detriment of Hindu industry. The British pro-Consul government in India has decided to spend *one half* of the annual budget for military purposes, at a time when the worst famine in years is raging, prices of food are exorbitant, and 6,000,000 persons died last year from influenza. The economic distress is supplemented by political agitation, due to the government's new laws to severely crush Nationalist propaganda. This is how British Imperialism makes the world safe for democracy and the oppressed peoples—in India! This, while the Peace Conference speaks grandiloquently of the charter of world liberty!

A similar situation prevails in Egypt, where a strong revolutionary Nationalist movement is in action, and where the British Government is using the troops it previously used to "liberate" the oppressed peoples of Europe to conquer and exploit the oppressed peoples of Egypt.

All this infamy, all this oppression and strangulation of the peoples of the world, while the Peace Conference . . . but why dilate upon the organized hypocrisy that speaks in Paris?

No! The liberation of the small and oppressed peoples of the world cannot be accomplished by distinguished diplomats in Paris, the very diplomats who represent the Imperialism that holds these peoples in subjection.

And even should these small and oppressed peoples secure their national independence, it would not amount to much. They would still be the economic and financial vassals of international Imperialism, centralized in the capitalists of Great Britain, France and the United States. These three nations control three-fourths of the available finance-capital of the world, absolutely necessary to a small nation under Capitalism. Political independence for the small and oppressed peoples *under Capitalism and Imperialism* would prove a Barmecides' Feast. Political independence, liberty and equality of nations and of peoples, depends upon *industrial* independence. To insure this, the power of international Imperialism must be broken.

The liberation, real and not fraudulent, of the small and oppressed peoples, is the task of the international proletarian revolution.

American Soviets May Hold Convention

(From the "Western Socialist," Portland Oregon)

THE spontaneous springing up of Councils of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors all over the United States, gives unmistakable evidence of the revolutionary spirit which now permeates the workers of even this country. That, for time, these Councils will have a hard struggle, goes without saying. They have to contend with the opposition of the employing class of course, but now that reactionary labor officials have had time to organize their forces, an opposition even more dangerous to their immediate existence is menacing them. Some of these labor officials realize that these Councils are the fore-runners of the revolution and are deliberately opposing them in every conceivable manner, for that reason. Others, not so farsighted, fail to see in them anything but a menace to the machine which they have so carefully built up and which now controls organized labor. Both of these types of "labor skates" need close watching, not only now, when they are openly opposing progress, but also in the near future, when they may be driven to work secretly. Labor now has an unexcelled opportunity to study these people and should put mental tags on them for future reference. Learn their names and faces and *Remember Them!*

In spite of all and every kind of opposition which they may meet, these Councils have a real, material basis and will continue to exist so long as they function in the interest of the workers or so long as no other organization outstrips them in the performance of that duty. Their mission is the organization and education in revolutionary tactics of all the working class whether in uniform or overalls. More especially should these Councils direct their energies towards educating the

members of craft unions. For this purpose they are indeed well suited. The majority of their delegates are craft union men of the more radical kind, who, meeting now with radicals of every shade under the banner of these Workers' and Soldiers' Councils have an unsurpassed opportunity for organizing a deliberate campaign to educate their brothers.

Along these particular lines the Portland Council is doing good work. In a series of petty skirmishes with the reactionary forces in the Central Labor Council, radicals have steadily gotten the worst of it. However, the conservatives overstepped the mark when they caused the Central Council to vote to refuse to recognize any more communications from the Council of Workers and Soldiers, giving their secretary permission to destroy any such letters unread. Blindly the Central Council has thrown a boomerang which will return and deal it a heavy blow. Its excuse for such undemocratic action is that these communications were wasting too much of its time, sometimes a full hour being spent in debating a motion to file one of

Manifesto Edition

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885 Washington Street, Boston, Mass.

them. That such a simple thing should require so long to settle would certainly indicate that the local soviet has many friends in the Council and also that its enemies are having to use considerable oratory to win their points. Indeed, one radical is quoted as having said on the floor that it was the conservatives who wasted the Council's time by their lengthy and wavering speeches against the soviet's activities. So fearful seem these conservatives that the "Reds" may get ahead of them, that they try to drown them with words. For our part we are glad that the Central Labor Council has gone so unmistakably on record as a reactionary body. It will be all the easier to convince doubters that its officials are doing their best to check the revolution. It is easily seen that even the doubters among the rank and file are, in their hearts, looking forward to the great change, however much they may be disturbed by it.

As far as the activities of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council among the delegates to the Metal Trades Council is concerned, progress is being made. The latter is by the nature of its make up, a more radical body than the Central Council. We understand that last week it adopted the Soviet's suggestion and recommended its affiliated locals to throw open their halls as recreation places for returned men. The local Soviet is in direct communication with similar bodies throughout the country and a convention has been suggested for the near future. The need for such a convention is obvious if only to standardize the various declarations of principles and forms of organization which at present differ considerably though the objects of all these bodies are identical.