The Revolutionary Age

A Chronicle and Interpretation of International Events

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A Warning

RANK A. VANDERLIP, president of the National City Bank, has long been considered as one of the few men from the capitalist ranks who has an intelligent grasp of the world situation. He has just returned from Europe and unlike the others of his class who have been recently on the other side of the water he has no tales of atrocities, nationalization of women, mass terrors, or other bugaboos. But he has quite a lot to say about the real situation in Europe. Apparently he has kept his eyes and ears open and has not allowed his prejudices to bias his judgement.

He comes back to tell of Europe seething with revolt and he warns that unless food, clothing and shelter is provided without delay revolution will engulf the whole world. Mr. Vanderlip sees the forces at work, he has no illusions about democracy, or any of the other fine phrases. He sees the masses starving, he sees the governments playing chess with the people of the earth and he also sees that the chessmen are loaded with dynamite.

"Europe must get work if it is to be saved, but it must be helped even to start to work" he says and goes on to assure his auditors that he is not exaggerating the gravity of the situation. He replies to the attitude taken by many that "things will straighten out in the long run": "I would answer that hungry stomachs will not wait for 'things to straighten out in the long run."

However, although Mr. Vanderlip sees pretty clearly he does not, and can not in view of his position, see that things have gone beyond the stage where the masses cannot be put off with anything less than the whole product of their toil.

The masses are beginning to realize that the cause of their misery lies in the capitalist system of society and as this realization grows the determination strengthens to sweep away this cursed system and on its ruins to build the new state of the Cooperative Commonwealth.

No palliatives will avail now; the peoples are awakening to the realities of the situation, and insisting in ever swelling numbers that the future of humanity must never again rest with the system that has bathed the earth in blood for nearly five years and is even now marshalling its forces in such a manner that the next generation will inevitably face an even greater catastrophe, if capitalism is allowed to continue in power.

They Are Still There!

W 1711 every recurring crisis in the labor movement of the Allied countries a statement is issued by one or other of the "Big Four" that the policy towards Russia is undergoing a change, that the troops are to be withrawn, that the Allies are exercised over events in that country and that they aim only to accomplish the greatest good for the greatest number of the Russian people. As the crisis is weathered the powers that be forget all about Russia and the prostitute press resumes its startling announcements about the defeat of the Bolsheviki.

Now comes the story that Lenin has sued for an armistice with Kolchak, that Petrograd is in flames, Moscow is being evacuated, and Bolshevism is biting the dust of defeat. Along with the dispatch which is dated at Helsingfors, is printed a resume of events leading up to this desirable state of affairs. It appears that the British troops have played a considerable part, the Italians also receive favorable mention, as do the French and Americans. All these countries have endeavored to give the impression from time to time that they were on the ve of leaving Russia and now it comes up again that they are actively engaged against the workers and peasants of Russia. Why? Ostens-

ibly in the interests of Admiral Kolchak's "Government," which is admittedly a dictatorship of the same pattern as the late Czar's regime, and the restoration of "order" in Russia. In reality these workers, in the uniforms of their various masters, are fighting the workers and peasants of Russia in the interests of Capitalism. Every bullet fired into the ranks of Russia's proletarian army is a shot aimed at the heart of the working class the world over.

No matter how the tide of battle rolls in far off Russia, one fact is certain—Bolshevism cannot be defeated. It is here to stay. After their heroic fight for nearly two years the Russian workers may suffer overwhelming defeat but the hour of their defeat will be the hour of their victory and the victory of the world's oppressed. Consciously of unconsciously the hopes of the workers are centered on Russia. Every man that senses in any way his class affiliations looks towards Russia and the number that turn their gaze east-ward is daily increasing. With the announcement that Russia has been crushed to earth the reaction will come—the feeling of loss will awaken the consciousness of millions. But the end is yet a long way off, the Russian workers are not yet defeated. . . .

The Helsingfors dispatch is merely a sign of the growing boldness of the reactionary forces, a try out of the temper of the Allied workers. Kolchak is to be the victor, the Allies are not to appear on the scene in the star role. A Russian is to bring about the downfall of the Russians! For this reason the Allies have been centering their main efforts on supplying Kolchak with food, arms and ammunition, and occasionally without any vulgar ostentation—a shipload of troops. Kolchak is to be victor, Bolshevism is to suffer defeat at the heads of a real Russian, the Allies will recognize Russia and all will be well—for Capitalism. It is time for Labor to again assert itself, it is time for a movement in the ranks of the Allied workers.

Alien troops are still at Archangel and Vladivos-tok. . . .

Labor in England

THE report that "thousands of discharged soldiers and sailors out of employment, armed with stones and other missiles, marched upon the House of Commons" gives some inkling of the measure of the situation in England. The further news that when the police stopped the marchers they re-formed and proceeded towards Buckingham Palace shows the temper of the people.

The march towards the parliament building, though in these days of world revolution significant enough, is not unusual. Many unemployed demonstrations have taken a similar line of march, as have all other parades expressive of popular discontent. But the turn towards Buckingham Palace is more unusual. The average English subject is in the habit of thinking of the king as apart from the government and rarely is he connected with any disapproval of conditions. He is looked upon as the figurhead of the empire and is considered to be removed from the actual function of governing. That is his safe-guard.

On the continent the king, kaiser or czar has always been looked upon as the actual government and the people immediately connected him with their distress. On the continent the kings, kaisers and czars have been swept into the discard for this very reason and once the masses get to the point of dethroning a monarch they make a clean sweap and throw the government out also. It is easier to overthrow a monarch than a parliament. A monarch is more removed from the people and in their eyes more autocratic.

Parliaments have the fiction of being representative of the people and can apparently be ousted by balloting. But a monarch is an authocrat, immediately the people connect him with their distress. It may be that the English soldiers and sailors marched towards Bucking-bam Palace because when they were diverted from the Houses of Parliament they wanted to march somewhere, but it may be that they turned in that direction because they are beginning to think of other forms of government. If the English workers once forget that the king is a figurehead, if they get the idea that the ballot does not record their wishes then things will happen quickly in the British Empire.

The "triple alliance" is turning its attention more and more to the political questions of conscription, the withdrawal of the troops from Russia, the release of the conscientious objectors, and the lifting of the blockade against Germany; and the purely industrial questions of wages and hours are consequently sinking into the background. The leaders of the "triple alliance" are men of the conservative labor union type, a few liberal-patriot opportunists of the Henderson type, and here and there a radical like Robert Smilie. These "leaders," with the exception of the Smilies, will always act for the government and against the rank and file, but already they have curbed the wishes

of the workers on more than one occasion and signs are not wanting that a revolt against this type of leadership is brewing. The more political become the demands, the harder it will be for the Thomases to thwart the will of the workers. In the economic field compromises, carefully worded promises, doles, etc., can be made to avert trouble, but when demands become political, compromises are not so effective, in fact, they are more likely to become so many additional irritants.

If British labor is in earnest about the withdrawal of the troops from Russia, the recognition of Kolchak and supplying him with munitions to destroy the Russian workers will not satisfy the demand, even though the British soldiers actually do leave Russia. While the demand that the German blockade be lifted shows that the workers are giving thought to world affairs.

The decision of the police union to present an ultimatum to the government and in the event of refusal to declare a strike all over the country is significant. If the government continues its present policy and the strike is actually declared it may well prove the match which will explode the powder.

To say the least, the situation is not as black as the headlines about Russia would seem to indicate. From all accounts Lloyd-George will have something else to do in the immediate future than help to "frame-up" the revolutionary workers of Russia. The situation from the labor aspect alone is critical; when the unemployed soldiers and sailors are taken into consideration together with the fact that police who have just taken a strike vote are not likely to be violently antagonistic to striking miners, railwaymen and dockers, the critical aspect of the labor situation becomes the critical aspect of a revolutionary situation.

Polish Freedom

ONE of the ideals for which the Allies were figure ing and upon which they now insist in the Peace Terms is the "freedom of small and subject peoples." It is upon this principle that they have restored nation-hood to the Poles. Poland is now recognized by all the civilized powers as a nation and her emessaries are received in Paris on questions affecting her interests. She is recognized as a nation fit to take her place among the others, her government subscribes to the principles of Capitalism.

Now comes the word that pogroms are in full swing in this newly liberated land. Hundreds of Jews are arrested and thrown into jail or shot down in batches without even the pretense of a trial, their homes are sacked and the women and children beaten and driven out to meet death by starvation. A dispatch to The New York Times from Paris reports:

"The Poles armed a mob and instigated an attack on the Jews on April 18. At the same time fighting rows going on with the Bolsheviki. Two hundred Jews were massacred, many of them women, while at service in a synagogue. Many children under twelve years old and men between 60 and 72 years were billed. Every Jewish home in Vilna was pillaged, and then more than 5,000 Jews were driven off to Lida, many being killed or dying of suffering on the way. Of those allowed to remain in Vilna, many, including Rabbi Rubinstein, were flogged and put in prison because they refused to sign a statement accusing the Bolsheviki of being responsible for the massacre."

The same dispatch reports that Paderewski has left for Paris to "plead for greater power and territory for the new state of Poland." No intimation is given that the Allies will refuse to receive him because of the massacres. Yet the Allies have refused to recognize the Russian Soviet Government because "it does not represent the majority of the Russian people and maintains itself by force."

Why is Poland thus favored when it is obvious that the Allies are very particular regarding the actions of the nations they recognize—at least the smaller and less powerful nations? The answer is given in the Times dispatch: "At the same time fighting was going on with the Bolsheviki."

The Poles are to be given "freedom" because they are acting as the assassins of freedom. The fact that they are massacring the Jews is deplorable, but it must be overlooked in view of the fact that they are also attempting to massacre the Bolsheviki! At all costs the Bolsheviki must be put down in order that the world may be made safe for democracy. Poland has accepted the tenents of Capitalism and is willing to act as the hired thug of the bigger interests and just as in our own democracy the actions of strikebreakers which in other circumstances would be in violation of the law are forgotten and forgiven in view of the great service rendered to the community as a whole in beating down labor, so Poland is to be forgiven because she can be used against the Russian workers and peasants.

Large protest meetings have been held against the