

need no instruction. Unlike the Scheidemanns in Germany and out of Germany, Trotzky could never bring himself to believe that the German ruling class could ever be reformed. Trotzky went to Brest-Litovsk in the hope that his extraordinary step, and inevitable unmasking of the true character of the German designs on Russia and the Russian Revolution, would bring the German working class upon its feet so as to frustrate these designs by forcing a general democratic peace. And for a time it looked as if he were going to succeed. The German and Austrian workingmen began to wake up. It is not beyond the range of possibility that had the German and Austrian workers not been betrayed by their own leaders they would have awakened from the long lethargic sleep which has lain upon them like a dead weight, paralyzing their strength and freedom of movement, and in the process some things might have happened which would have turned Trotzky's "foolhardy adventure" into the greatest stroke of statesmanship of modern times.

Unfortunately, while Trotzky's faith in the revolutionary character of the masses of the German proletariat proved not quite well founded, his estimate of the character of Messrs. Scheidemann & Co. proved but too true. It will be remembered that the Bolsheviks refused to participate in the projected Stockholm Peace Conference, in the belief that even at an International Socialist Peace Conference, Scheidemann & Co. would only be doing the dirty work of their governments. In this estimate of the character of Scheidemann & Co., Trotzky was not mistaken. No sooner did the German and Austrian workers show signs of revolt than the Scheidemanns in Germany and Austria stepped into the breach and saved the day for their governments, betraying the workers in the most shameful manner into the hands of the German militarists and imperialists.

This base betrayal sealed the fate of the Russian Revolution, in so far at least as it was staked on the success of the Brest-Litovsk manoeuvre. There was nothing left for Trotzky to do but to liquidate what has now become an "adventure" as best he could. It was evident that Russia was going to be dismembered in all manner of ways; by direct annexations, by veiled annexa-

tions and by the creation of all sorts of imaginary "nations" and independent "states" from the Arctic Ocean to the Black and Caspian Seas and from the Vistula to the Ural Mountains and beyond. And it was equally evident that the Russian Revolution as dreamed by Trotzky and his associates was doomed. It was a question merely of what could be saved from the wreckage. In order to save anything it was necessary that the honor of the Revolution should remain unsoiled—that it should not dishonor itself by putting its stamp of approval on a peace which was humiliating beyond measure both to Russia and to the Revolution. Hence, the expedient of the "declared" peace; the throwing away by Russia of her arms and refusing to fight further, while also refusing to sign a formal peace.

To some, Trotzky's refusal to sign a peace treaty while in fact making a separate peace may have seemed like a mere subterfuge on his part—an attempt to escape the consequences of his former declarations that he would not conclude a separate peace. To others again this may have looked like a mere pose, a magnificent gesture by a man fond of theatrical posing. To those, however, who have followed the tortuous course of the Brest-Litovsky negotiations there was deep meaning in this apparently purely "academic" distinction between a signed and an unsigned peace. By submitting to the conqueror the Russian Revolution was bending its knee before German Militarism. But as long as it did not formally renounce its principles by agreeing to the peace imposed upon it, its backbone remained unbroken, and it could hope, by some turn of good fortune to be brought to its feet again. Also: it was a final appeal to the manhood and latent revolutionary spirit of the German proletariat.

What the German Government thought of Trotzky's signature to a parchment sealing the terms of the surrender is proven by its subsequent conduct. It evidently believed that the sealing of that parchment would seal the doom of the Russian Revolution. In this view Trotzky concurred. Hence his refusal to sign a peace treaty. As another Bolshevik leader, Karl Radek put it: "The Russian revolutionists are not *slave traders*; they cannot, therefore, sell the workers of Poland, Lithuania and Cour-