

Russian peasants and workers that deserted the Allies, but the Allies, yes, and I fear the working classes in the Allied countries, who deserted the Russian peasants and workers in the hour of their distress.

Now, what was the policy of the Soviet government of Russia after the Brest-Litovsk treaty? I submit that it was a policy which aimed at maintaining the strictest neutrality between the two great fighting camps. Yet the governments of Germany and the Allies did everything to make the maintenance of neutrality impossible, because they looked upon the Russian workers and peasants either as objects for economic exploitation or as cannon fodder to be used by them. The Soviet Government was forced to give up the Black Sea fleet to Germany (as a matter of fact a great part of the fleet was blown up to prevent its falling into German hands) and was forced to accept the principle of individual exchange of war prisoners, whereby hundreds of thousands of Russian workers and peasants were left to work in Germany in slavery under the Kaiser. And why had the ultimatums, which were showered upon the Soviet government from Berlin, to be accepted? They had to be accepted because the Russian army had been ruined. And why was it ruined? Because the Allies had tried, all through the spring and summer of 1917, to force the Russian workers and peasants to fight for the objects which were disclosed by the Bolsheviki in the secret treaties. Whenever the Russian people, either through the Soviet or through the more progressive members of the Provisional Government, asked the Allies to define their war aims, they were met by platitudes about liberty and justice. Meanwhile the peasants and workers were starving and had no prospect before them but endless war for the undefined aims of foreign governments. Was it likely that a 12-million army could be kept together under those conditions? Was it possible for the Bolshevik government, deserted by the Allies, to do anything else but sign the Brest-Litovsk peace and bow to every ultimatum which the tyrants in Berlin chose to send them? The Allied governments all through last winter acted as if they feared the Soviet Government of the Russian Workers and Peasants a great deal more than they feared the Imperialist Government of Germany.

But in spite of its isolation the Soviet Government, in the spring of this year, commenced a program of social reconstruction. In order to succeed in this sphere it was necessary to receive help from economically more advanced countries. The railways were in a state of collapse; technical appliances

were needed to repair the locomotives and waggon. The mines were flooded and broken down. Instructors and engineers were required to undertake the difficult task of restoring their working capacity. Agricultural machinery was required to help the peasant to till the soil, which, as a result of the war, had in large areas fallen out of cultivation. The Soviet Government asked the governments of Europe to help in this great task. To each of the countries of the great alliances an offer was made to treat with Russia, to supply her with those material and technical needs, in return for which the Soviet Government offered certain raw materials of export and certain railway and mining concessions. These concessions, of course, were to be kept under strict public control, so as to ensure that, while the foreign capitalists should have a fair return for their undertakings, the workers and peasants should not be subjected to the exploitation which they had experienced under Czarism. The offer was made to Germany and negotiations proceeded all summer in Berlin.

It was also made to the United States through the medium of one of the most sympathetic American representatives in Moscow, who personally took the proposals with him to America. But what was the attitude of the official diplomatic representatives of the Allies? They buried themselves in the provincial town of Vologda, refused to come to Moscow and one of their number last April made a cynical statement to the press that the governments of the Allies could not recognize a government, which was not either in fact or in law a representative of the "true" Russia. More than this; the Allied ambassadors became in Vologda the centre of every counter-revolutionary intrigue in the country and when the Soviet Government, seeing what was going on, courteously requested them to come to Moscow, the seat of the government, to which they were supposed to be accredited, otherwise it could not be held responsible for their safety, they left the territories of the Republic on the ground that they had been insulted!! The Soviet Government insisted on putting them under control if they remained in Vologda, in order to prevent counter-revolutionary elements in the country from getting at them. To what extent this action was justified may be seen from the following facts. On the basis of documents discovered on the premises of the Czechoslovak National Council in Moscow in July, the fact was established that at the end of February this year an agreement was reached between certain British and French mili-