

he was employed as the American representative of the great Demidow Steels Works of Russia. He combines therefore a knowledge of business affairs with an impeccable record as a Socialist and revolutionist, a combination that will make him an ideal representative of Revolutionary Russia during the trying and difficult time of international economic reconstruction that lies before us. In the American movement, too, Comrade Martens has won, during his brief stay in this country, many friends and admirers among those who made his acquaintance. He was well known here in Russian circles and has been associated for some time with the Socialist Publication Society, the publishers of the "Class Struggle." Unless indications are more than deceptive, Comrade Martens will be successful in the work that he has undertaken. Already the representatives of a number of large and prominent American establishments have made overtures to him. For, in spite of their hatred for the social ideal that the Russian government represents, they realize that Russia is an exceedingly wealthy nation, rich in resources that have, up to the present, been little more than superficially touched. It is true, they would have preferred to enter upon business relations with a government that would show a little more "business understanding" and sympathy with the needs and views of international capital—but then, beggars can't be choosers. And American capital has discovered to its grief that the kind of "negotiations" that were used in the past, hold out little promise of success.

But, after all, the most important work to be done by the Russian embassy in this country will be the inauguration of an active campaign against the whole complicated system of slander and lies that has been created against the Soviets. Or, perhaps, it would be more in keeping with the facts to say, continue, for Comrade Santeri Nuorteva, who will in the future act as the Director of the Bureau of Information of the Embassy, has already for more than a year done valuable and splendid work in this direction.

The class-conscious workingmen and women have given to Comrade Martens, as the representative of the Russian proletarian revolution, a greeting, the memory of which will live in our minds as one of the most inspiring incidents of these inspiring times. To them Comrade Martens is not only the spokesman of the revolutionary proletariat movement of Russia. As the highest aim of the Russian revolution has been the world-revolution, so they see in Comrade Martens the spokesman, the ambassador of the working class of the world.

L.

Mass Strikes

In considering the period of strikes into which the American proletariat—and the proletariat of other nations—has emerged, it is important to remember that the coming of the war occurred during a time of great industrial disturbances. Strikes of great magnitude had shaken Capitalism to its basis—class antagonisms on the industrial field were being sharpened while they were officially being modified in politics; new strikes were developing; everywhere there was potential action against Capitalism. Then war was declared; and the strikes ceased, proletarian energy being directed into the channels of war instead of the class struggle.

But the war, while breaking short this phase of industrial unrest, introduced a new phase—more conscious and definitely revolutionary. The miserable collapse of bourgeois society; the agony of the war; the victorious proletarian revolution in Russia and the developing proletarian revolution in Germany—all these have loosed the initiative and energy of the proletariat. The epoch of strikes into which we have merged is, on the one hand, a consequence of the revolutionary stimuli of Russia and of Germany; and, on the other, of the problems of economic reconstruction which press down upon Capitalism.

In the United States, there is no program of "reconstruction." The Capitalist Class, accustomed to a docile proletariat, are not worrying much about the problem; and, moreover, their unprecedented prosperity during the war has developed a fatalistic attitude among them. President Wilson, shortly before his departure for France in December, "put up" the problems of reconstruction to Congress; but Congress did absolutely nothing, was bankrupt and impotent. Soldiers are being demobilized who cannot get jobs; workers are being thrown out of jobs; the employers are trying to lower wages to pre-war standards—and all this is producing protest and strikes.

Outstanding among the recent strikes are the strikes in Seattle and Butte. In Seattle, the strike was forced upon the conservative union officials by an upsurge of the spirit of action in the workers; it developed into a general strike—the first of its kind in recent American labor history; it developed revolutionary sentiments, in the proposals of the strike committee to assume municipal functions while the general strike was on. The strike was crushed by the betrayal of the conservative union officials and by the display of military force by the municipal government.