

ENGLISH SECTION

The Call of the Russian Revolution

By Zilda Kahan-Coates

With the present issue of VIA LIBRE we are starting an English Section for our numerous English speaking readers. The first is a most valuable article bearing upon the meaning of the Russian Revolution, reprinted from the leading socialist paper in the United States — *The New York Call*.

We expect in time to be able to improve this section with direct contributions. But in the meantime, we shall give special attention to furnishing our English readers with select socialist literature.

When the first revolution broke out in Russia in March, 1917, it was hailed by the so-called progressive and democratic forces of western Europe as a great, beneficent event. True, they said—and even Socialists said this—the revolution was somewhat untimely; the war of liberation, the war to free all the small nationalities oppressed by Germany and Austria was for the moment even more important than gaining freedom from Czarism, and should have been fought to a successful conclusion first.

Nevertheless, as every one was convinced that the revolution simply signified the downthrow of Czarist absolutism, in order to establish upon its ruins the absolutism of the bourgeois, whether in the form of a constitutional monarchy or bourgeois republic, the world—the bourgeois world—and its Socialist patriotic and democratic hangers-on regarded the revolution with equanimity on the whole. After all, the Czarist regime was so corrupt that even the great war to end war could not be carried on successfully. With the government directly in the hands of the bourgeois, however, war and imperialism could be pursued much more vigorously, while the Socialist patriots and those to whom Socialism and revolution were but ideals of the far-distant future, also thought that, with the bourgeois regime firmly and comfortably established the Russian Socialists would be able to settle down, like their Western brethren, to the not too strenuous but interesting, slow and steady propagation of ideals.

But all these idealists, together with the Russian and Western bourgeois, reckoned without the hosts of the Russian peasants and workers, who, having suffered for ages under the yoke of absolutism, landlordism and, more recently, capitalism; who, worn out by the terrible privations endured in the war and its mismanagement both at the front and the rear, were not prepared to lay down their lives again merely to strengthen

one set of masters as against the other. It was evidently pure class instinct which led the imperialist Milinkoff, who had always striven "not to be in opposition to his majesty (the Czar), but to lead his majesty's opposition", to declare in the Duma before the first revolution that if victory should mean revolution he would rather the country were defeated.

Naturally! Even though circumstances might thrust upon him the role of a leader in a mild bourgeois revolution, once such a dangerous element is let loose there is no knowing where it might not lead to. There is no knowing what the horny-handed sons of toil might not get it into their heads to do if once they are allowed to break out! And so, indeed, it turned out!

November 7, 1917, the world was startled by news of a new outbreak of revolution in Russia. The Kerenski government had been playing about, fiddling, while Russia was almost literally burning. The workers and peasants demanded peace and bread; the revolutionary government gave them—a renewal of war and the death penalty (which in the first flash of the revolution had been abolished). The Bolsheviks did not carry out their revolution by force; it was the masses who forced them to interpret their intense desire not to allow the fruits of revolution to turn into Dead Sea fruit. The Bolshevik revolution was a real mass revolution—a revolution demanded by the will and the life interests of the workers, soldiers and the poverty-stricken peasants. Left to themselves, the masses might have broken out into a series of sporadic revolts which would have been repressed by the Kerenski revolutionary government with blood and iron in the time-honored fashion. But led by men and a party of convinced Marxian Socialists, with a clear knowledge of the roots and consequences of the class struggle, with an understanding of history and

a thoroughly grasped knowledge of the last great attempt at the establishment of a working-class republic—namely, the Paris Commune of 1870—the second Russian revolution became a splendidly organized attempt at the establishment of a real workers' republic.

The Bolshevik coup of November 7 shook the world as it had never been shaken before. It became the starting point of a new era. Small wonder that there were shrieks of dismay from the bourgeois governments of the whole world and cries of disapproval from Socialists imbued through and through with bourgeois morality and modes of thought. Pacifists opportunists, to whom the very word "revolution" is anathema, repudiate the Bolshevik use of force to crush their enemies. (Would these good souls have had the Bolsheviks fold their arms and allow themselves to be slaughtered by internal and external White bands, we wonder?) They deplore, moreover, the abolition of the bourgeois parliament and forms of democracy. They do not see that the change from a society based on the exploitation of one class by another to that of a society based on the co-operative work of all its members requires machinery of a quite different nature. The bourgeois parliamentary system has to be smashed, not because we are against democracy, but because such a form of democracy is unsuitable for a working class republic. The parliamentary machine, with its electoral rights based on residential qualification and its electoral divisions, was an excellently slow-going machine, exactly suitable to the needs of the dominating class. With money, the press, the schools and pulpits at the disposal of the bourgeoisie, with the possibility of nursing constituencies for years by charitable and other means, the workers can be consoled with the appearance of power without ever having a chance to taste its substance.

(To be continued)

CAREYERIA de Fco. L. HUEZO
La preferida del turismo y las gentes de buen gusto—Surtido completo en objetos de Carey.—MONEY EXCHANGE.
Calle del Comercio - Puntarenas - Apartado No. 122

Botica Nacional

Paseo de la Vaca

Depósito permanente y exclusivo del famoso VERMICIDA INFANTIL: Salvador de millares de niños atacados del terrible mal de lombrices.

OCTAVIO SABORIO, PROP. IETRIOA