

do not place the blame for this privation at the door of the Soviet Government, well realizing that it is due to the deliberate interference in the affairs of the Russian people by hostile groups, and that a remedy for this privation is not a weakening but a strengthening of the Soviet power. They fully realized—and their experience in such instances where counter-revolutionary forces temporarily succeeded in overthrowing Soviet institutions clearly demonstrated it—that an overthrow of the Soviet rule, if possible at all, would lead to the establishment of a tyrannical, reactionary, bloody autocracy.

The remarkable improvement in the internal situation of Soviet Russia appears from the negotiations which the members of the former Constituent Assembly have begun with the Soviet Government. Representatives of the former Constituent Assembly, as Tchernov, Rakitnikov, Sivaitzki, Volski, Boureyov, Tchernenkoy, Antonov, all of whom are also members of the Central Committee of the Social Revolutionary party, recently arrived in Moscow to participate in a conference with the Soviet Government with the view of giving support to our Republic. This conference has led to an understanding whereby these well-known Social Revolutionists and former bitter opponents have ceased their opposition and declared themselves with great emphasis against the Entente intervention in Russia.

An improvement of the Soviet Government's relations with the elements formerly hostile to it in Russian society is also indicated by the change in the attitude of the Mensheviks, whose conference has likewise protested against the Entente intervention.

The army of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic has been successfully organized and numbers today over a million men. A system of universal military training has been inaugurated which steadily supplies the army with reinforcements, with the view of creating a force numbering by the end of the current year three million men. The forces of the Government are led partly by officers of the former Russian armies who have proved their allegiance to the Soviet Government, and partly by officers developed from the rank and file by the military educational institutions established by my Government. The Commissariat of War has been successful in establishing and maintaining a strict discipline within the ranks of the army—discipline not based on fear of punishment or on docile submission, but on the ardent conviction of the workers from whose ranks the army is recruited that it is their privilege as well as their duty to defend their social achievements against encroachments from any source. This same conviction of the necessity of the defence of our revolutionary achievements has made it possible for us, in spite of all economic obstacles, efficiently to organize the production of military supplies.

The Soviet Government inherited a legacy of utter financial disruption created by four years of war and a year of revolution. This state of affairs, and also the necessity of coordinating the financial system of Russia with the new industrial and economic system represented by my Government, necessitated a complete reorganization of the financial institutions on the basis of common property rights. This reorganization, which aims at exchanging the money system for a system representing labor value, is still in the state of formation. Regardless thereof the Soviet Government, in as far as financial relations with and obligations to other countries are concerned, is prepared to offer modes of financial transactions suitable for the financial systems of other countries.

The period up till the establishment of the Soviet Government also badly disrupted the machinery for production and distribution. The Soviet Government inaugurated a system of public control and ownership of industries. It has actually taken over many important branches of industry, and has established the control of the Supreme Council of National Economy over all industries. Great handicaps have been faced because of the obstructionist methods of our opponents, confusion unavoidably coincident with the gigantic reorganization of the industrial life. In spite of these great handicaps, various branches of industry have been reestablished, even with an increase of productive efficiency. Many branches of industry, however, lack of raw material and machinery, and because of the general lack of machinery. The needs of such industries offer a wide field for business transactions with Russia by other countries.

The state of railway communications at the outset of the Soviet regime was very unsatisfactory. The demands, first of the demobilization of the old army and later of military operations against counter-revolutionary attacks, taxed the capacity of our railways and left little opportunity for reconstruction work in this field. The Soviet Government during the past year nevertheless has managed to build and complete the building of about 2,000 versts of new railways. It has also paid great attention to the construction of other means of communication, such as canals, roads, etc., and is at the present time planning work along these lines on a large scale, which will also offer great opportunities for foreign trade.

The people of Russia, kept for hundreds of years away from sources of popular education, have made it one of the main tasks of my Government to reorganize the school system with a view to the greatest possible achievements in the field of popular education. In

this respect extensive work has been carried on throughout Russia during the past year. Tens of thousands of new primary schools, vocational schools, workers' universities, and lecture courses, especially courses offering agricultural instruction, have been established and maintained at great expense on the part of the Soviet Government, and the field of the educational activities has been extended to include the making of the treasures of the arts and sciences as easily accessible to the people as possible.

All these efforts, incomplete as they still are; however, have given the Russian people sufficient evidence of the earnestness of the desire and of the ability of the Soviet Government to fill the needs of the population, and they have largely contributed to the abatement of opposition. Inasmuch as opposition has ceased in the form of active resistance to the Soviet Government, it has become possible to assuage extraordinary measures such as censorship, martial law, etc.

Much prejudice has been created against the Soviet Government by this circulation of false reports about the nature of the institutions and the measures undertaken by Soviet Russia. One of the most frequent allegations has been that the rule of the Soviets is one of violence and murder. In this connection I want to call your attention to the following passages in the note sent to the President of the United States on the 24th of December, 1918, by Maxim Litvinoff, on behalf of the Soviet Government in Russia.

The chief aim of the Soviets is to secure for the toiling majority of Russian people economic liberty, without which political liberty is of no avail to them. For eight months the Soviets endeavored to realize their aims by peaceful methods without resorting to violence, adhering to the abolition of capital punishment, which abolition had been part of their programme. It was only when their adversaries, the minority of the Russian people, took to terroristic acts against popular members of the Government and invoked the help of foreign troops, that the laboring masses were driven to acts of exasperation and gave vent to their wrath and bitter feelings against their former oppressors. For Allied invasion of Russian territory not only compelled the Soviets against their own will to militarize the country anew, and to divert their energies and resources so necessary to the economic reconstruction of Russia, exhausted by four years of war, to the defence of the country, but also cut off the vital source of foodstuffs and raw material, exposing the population to most terrible privation bordering on starvation.

I wish to emphasize that the so-called red terror, which is so grossly exaggerated, is not the direct outcome and result of Allied intervention. The Russian workers and peasants fail to understand how foreign countries, which never dreamed of interfering with Russian affairs when Czarist barbarism and militarism ruled supreme, and which even supported that regime, feel justified in intervening in Russia now when the working people themselves, after decades of strenuous struggling and countless sacrifices, succeeded in taking the power and destiny of their country into their own hands, aiming at nothing but their own happiness and international brotherhood, constituting no menace to other nations.

In another passage of the same note Mr. Litvinoff states as follows:

The best means for the termination of violence in Russia would be to reach a settlement which would include the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Russia, and the cessation of direct or indirect assistance to such groups in Russia as still indulge in futile hopes of an armed revolt against the workers' Government, but who even themselves would not think of such a possibility if they could not reckon on assistance from abroad.

The great work of social reconstruction inaugurated by the Soviet Government as the executors of the people's will has been hampered by the necessity of military defense against opponents of our Republic, and by the economic isolation of Soviet Russia which has been one of the weapons of their attacks; together with deliberate disrupting of our means of communication with important food centres, as well as destruction of food stores; and all this has greatly increased the sufferings of our people. By tremendous efforts and by efficient consolidation of all economic means at its disposal, my Government has been able to stave off the worst features of this situation. The fact that economic disruption together with starvation and lack of all the bare necessities of life prevails as poignantly, and more so, in such parts of the former Russian Empire as have been for some time in the hands of the opponents of our Republic and have contact with the outside world, clearly testifies that the Soviet rule is much more capable of insuring means of existence to the people than any pretenders to the power in Russia.

In view of all the above-stated, I venture to say that the Soviet Government has given all such proofs of stability, permanence, popular support, and constructive ability as ever have been required