

THE RED FLAG

A Journal of News and Views Devoted to the Working Class.

Published When Circumstances and Finances Permit by The Socialist Party of Canada,

401 Pender Street East, Vancouver, B. C.

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Vancouver, B. C., Saturday, January 11, 1919

The Censorship

Though most people know in a vague manner that a censorship of the press exists in this country, more especially on Labor and Socialist journals, few are aware of the existence of a secret censorship of the mails and that the postal service has become an adjunct of the secret service department. A means of intimidation and of spying on those suspected of holding views, economic, political or social, not in favor of the official circles of Ottawa or with the influential tribe on "Nob Hill."

Let us in some degree, though inadequately, relate the experiences which the head office of this organization is suffering from in this regard.

The official organ of this party has been suppressed and representations to Ottawa are so far without results.

Leaflets mailed have been confiscated and complaints ignored.

Almost every letter which arrives at this office bears unmistakable signs of having been opened, though no censorship mark to that effect is on them.

All such letters are unduly delayed, being some four, five and six weeks in the mails before delivery. Most of such letters contain remittances for dues or for literature, etc.

This action of the postal officials seems specially designed to seriously impede and cripple this party, both as an organization and in its business of supplying its customers throughout the country with literature on economics, history, sociology and on others of the special sciences. Be that as it may it is having that effect.

Moreover, letters and parcels which we have dispatched have failed to reach their destination. The mail of individual members of this party also suffers from the same despicable secret censorship.

Our protests and complaints to heads of departments result only in officially equivocal and evasive replies. The greeting the writer received from the postmaster in Vancouver on making personal representations to him was, "You are a Bolshevik," and that was all that he would vouchsafe of definite character in his replies to questions.

Our only resort now is to make the public acquainted with the fact that this public institution, the postal service, is being used for the purpose of spying into the affairs, private or business, of the public at the behest of an official clique in Ottawa.

Everyone who resents this Ochrana established in our midst should write to the postmaster-general, Ottawa, and to the chief press censor, Ottawa, protesting against the censorship of the press and the secret censorship of the mails. No stamps are required. Just write "O.H.M.S." on the envelope and insist in the letter on a reply.

MUST LET UP TO SECURE INDEMNITY

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6.—The state department let it be known today that it believes economic restrictions against Germany must be relaxed if indemnities are to be paid by that nation.

At the same time the view was expressed that the blockade may be lifted before the peace treaty is actually signed.

An Open Letter

(Continued)

Recent dispatches from Washington are that the Czecho-Slovaks have been recognized by the United States as an independent nation and that they will be given all possible aid in their struggle against Germany. Nothing is said in that declaration about the war between the Czecho-Slovaks and the Russian Soviets. So far the Czecho-Slovaks, with the exception of a few regiments on the western and on the Italian fronts, are mainly fighting Russia.

Every friend of independence of small nations will rejoice in the recognition given the Czecho-Slovaks. But you must admit that this recognition, given at a time when it mainly will tend still more to complicate the Russian situation and serve as an excuse for actual war against Russia, thereby loses much of its altruistic color. And again I cannot refrain from comparing this act with the attitude of the Allies toward the revolutionary Finnish workers. They are actually fighting the Germans. Some of them are actually co-operating with the Allies on the Murman Coast. They represent not only a national aspiration, but an actual popular majority, which was the Government of Finland, and would be today, if it were not for the German occupation in Finland, which is directly and indirectly encouraged by the Allies through the encouragement given to the pro-German "White Guard."

But let us consider the present situation without any regard to its political side. What do you expect to accomplish in Russia? You certainly cannot imagine that the present forces in Vladivostok can accomplish anything in the way of a military occupation of Russia. By sending a few hundred thousand troops more,—and in this respect you will have to depend on the Japanese—you may accomplish as much as an occupation of the region between Vladivostok and Irkutsk—a distance as long as from New York to Utah. But even that is scarcely one-third of the distance from Vladivostok to the Ural mountains, and Irkutsk is still about six thousand miles away from Moscow. And when you have accomplished that, what then? The Baikal tunnels are blown up and without them it will be impossible under even the most favorable conditions to penetrate the vast region of almost insurmountable mountains around the Lake of Baikal, and by the time you get your hundreds of thousands of troops to Siberia the winter will set in and things drag on till next May.

You are coming, of course, on the possibility of a popular uprising of the population in Siberia against the Bolsheviki. But is it really necessary to indulge in such futile hopes, now that you know better? The Allied intervention has been a fact in Siberia for more than a month. Nothing in the way of a popular uprising has taken place.

A dispatch in the daily press reports the joyful reception accorded the Allies in Archangel. It tells that the people came out to meet them and that the Americans parading through the streets were cheered. In accordance with an old tradition the hospitality of the city was offered them by the peasants who brought bread and salt. A high mass was celebrated in thanksgiving of their arrival. But these stories, especially that of the celebrating of the high mass, just as well prove that the joy was all on the side of a small minority, as it is a well-known fact that the Russian workers have lost their interest in high mass. Has there been any intimation of a popular welcome to the Allies in Russia? Every Russian peasant and workman feels that whatever "government" you may succeed in establishing in Russia, in the place of the Soviets, at once will proceed to deprive the Russian peasants of the land and liberties they have acquired.

There can be no more chance for a popular uprising in Russia against the program of the Soviet

Government than there would be a chance in America of a popular uprising of farmers against an increase in the price of corn and milk.

It is true, of course, that the action of the Allies in Russia, encouraging every faction which is against the Soviets, may in the long run produce a state of complete anarchy. Enemies of the Russian Soviet Government do not hesitate to employ the most desperate methods, thereby provoking desperate action on the other side. With what savage joy did not the newspapers receive the reports of the attempt to assassinate Lenin! The wildest anarchist newspapers have nothing on the New York Times, the Tribune, the World, the Globe, and the whole long line of papers, which, as by agreement, now speak of the "Russian tyranny, tempered by assassination." If the capitalist press sees fit to degrade itself to the moral standard of thugs and bandits in their futile rage against the Russian Labor Republic, it is not for me to bewail it. But is there no one among you—"the intellectual leaders"—sane enough to raise your voice against this mad orgy, which, as you well may understand, may in the end prove an unexpected boomerang? The policy of assassination in Russia is led by Boris Savinkov, the minister of war in the Kerensky Cabinet, one of the "pets" of the press. I am not intimating that the Allied representatives in Russia are employing such horrible methods. But in view of the attitude of the Allied press you cannot prevent the Russian people from drawing conclusions of their own. We had recently the ultimatum of the British Government to the Soviets because of an alleged attack against the British representatives. The British Government threatens to hold the Soviet leaders personally responsible for any violence against Allied citizens in Russia. Is it not conceivable that the mind of the Russian masses, victimized by constant attacks upon their liberty, and upon their chosen leaders, may react in the same way?

I do not defend violence on the part of the Russian Soviets. But, pray, have you ever witnessed another instance of revolutionary history, where the revolutionary government was more deliberately provoked to commit violence? And have you ever witnessed another instance where the outside world published more lies and exaggerations about the acts of the revolutionary government—not to speak of the complete unwillingness to understand the exasperating conditions under which the Russian government works?

Carlyle, recording the protests of the French nobility against the policies of the French revolutionaries, remarks that the Revolutionists showed more political tactfulness and constructive ability than the nobility itself ever was able to show. They asked the Sans-culottes to practise the principle of "noblesse oblige" which the nobility itself never had practised towards anyone except those belonging to their own class. Do we not see something similar in the Russian situation today? You in America, who in spite of your tremendous resources of order and stability, cannot prevent mobs in Illinois, in Oklahoma, in Minnesota and in the southern states from committing unspeakable outrages against innocent people—you demand from the Russian people, who have been kept for 300 years in a state of ignorance, who today are living through the most stupendous revolution the world ever witnessed, and who are attacked from every conceivable source you ask them to show more coolness than you are capable of yourself!

The same may be said in regard to the attacks on the Russian people because of their alleged social disorder and anarchy. It took ten years in America to establish a stable government and orderly efficient rule, after you had signed the Declaration of

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