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## Communist Revolution in Germany?

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GERMANY is in the midst of a severe crisis. When the market value of the mark sinks from 444,000 to 1,100,000 per dollar in one week, we get something like a mental picture of the chaos that reigns in industrial Germany today. Prices keep step with the most breath-taking jumps the mark may take but lag far behind, due in no negligible degree to the earnest effort of the Social-Democracy and the labor union bureaucracy to remove every unpleasantness from the path of German capital. Hunger, starvation, disease and desperation follow apace. Bread riots are the natural consequence.

So unspeakable is the misery in Germany's industrial centres today, that even the most callous onlooker appreciates that violence must and will be the inevitable outcome. Misery has reached the point when life loses its value, and open rebellion seems preferable to fatalistic resignation. No one knows this better than the capitalist press. And sensing the storm in the air, it is already preparing public opinion to meet it and its consequences, with righteous holiness and virtuous disapproval by making the communists of Germany—and, of course, Russia—responsible for the "German revolution" that, in their eyes, is as good as an accomplished fact.

At the end of last week every capitalist and every socialist newspaper in America and in Europe featured on its first page the news that the Communist Party of Germany was preparing for a revolutionary outbreak on Sunday afternoon July 29. A credulous world already saw rivers of blood, a holocaust of murder and rape, and a Soviet government in Germany on Monday morning. As a matter of fact, even the not too apparent intelligence of these newswriters and correspondents might have perceived—and probably was not entirely unaware of the fact—that the C. P. of Germany was trying with all its power to prevent an outbreak at this time.

It called open air demonstrations, it is true, to protest against the spread of Fascism in Germany. But not with a view to violent uprisings. The fact that it turned these demonstrations into indoor meetings when it saw the German Nationalists and Socialists were placing the stamp of open rebellion upon them, shows how far from revolt was its actual purpose.

The Communists in Germany are preparing for the overthrow of the German government of reactionaries and weaklings. But they are intelligent enough to know that he who permits the enemy to choose time and place for an encounter puts himself at a hopeless disadvantage. Certainly the present moment offers the revolutionary working-class anything but a favorable position. Germany has neither raw materials nor products, neither money nor credit.

For the French and the Belgians, a proletarian uprising would be the signal for still more extensive military occupation. Revolution would mean a food-blockade, and the revolutionary leaders would be held responsible for the hunger and starvation that the united capitalists and socialist coalitionists have brought down upon the nation. The peasants

in Germany are not, as they were in Russia at the time of the Russian Revolution, poor, downtrodden, miserable slaves. They are, and have been for years, the profiteers of the present chaotic conditions, and will fight like tigers for their restoration.

Furthermore, it is an open secret that Poland, that vassal of French imperialism, created for the sole purpose of cutting off Russia from German assistance, and serving today, with equal efficiency, to prevent the Russian Soviet Government from coming to the aid of a revolutionary Germany, stands armed to the teeth, ready to plunge into the Baltic border states and to march upon Danzig as soon as France gives the signal. And above all, it should not be forgotten that a revolution, should it break out in Germany today, would bear not the international character of the Russian uprising, but would be tainted with a nationalism fostered by Entente brutalities. The force of its onslaught would be directed against the enemies without, rather than against the capitalists at home. Too long the latter have been playing the role of fellow-sufferers. Too large a part of the working class has forgotten that the German capitalist is its enemy.

The Social-Democracy, with its miserable policy of civil peace with the German bourgeoisie, created a situation that makes a revolution at this time a dangerous undertaking. It has nurtured a spirit of nationalism that has befuddled all class issues. By its policy of concession after concession to France and Belgium, it has reduced Germany to a nation of beggars; has broken its morale and its self-respect. And so long as the Social-Democracy maintains its influence over a large portion of the German working-class, a revolutionary uprising in Germany would mean new betrayal and new compromise with capitalism, and would end inevitably in a debacle that would leave the proletariat, for years to come, to take up the fight for its liberation.

The Social-Democracy is rapidly losing ground. The left elements of the Independent Social-Democracy, that joined the S. D. P. less than a year ago, in hopes of galvanizing it into revolutionary action, have never been completely assimilated.

They are the ferment of an active opposition that is threatening to split asunder this mighty bulwark of proletarian counter-revolution. Wherever the United Front propaganda of the communist forces became effective, and socialist and communist workingmen went into the fight for better conditions shoulder to shoulder, a new understanding of communism and communist motives resulted. The superstitions and traditions, the slanders and false accusations that the socialist press had built up before the eyes of its readers, to conceal the true face of the revolutionary proletariat, faded away. True understanding and real comradeship grew up instead.

In important industrial centers, and even in entire provinces, the united front is an actual fact, in spite of the dictates of the Central Executive Committee of the United Social-Democratic Party. In Saxony, where a Left-Socialist government is in power, this co-operation has borne wonderful fruit. In the parliament Right-Social-Democrats are launching bitter attacks against their party-comrades of the left. The official U. S.-D. P. speakers

call cabinet ministers "Bolshevists;" the Left-Social Democrats reply that there is only one difference between certain Social-Democrats and the bourgeois Democrats—the latter are less reactionary. The disintegration of the U. S.-D. P. is growing apace.

This is a process that will require time for its completion. To disturb it now by consciously and determinedly calling the working-class out upon the streets, would be suicidal. None know this better than the German and the Russian communist leaders. No one knows better than they that an ill-advised uprising may loose a storm of reaction that may not only wipe the communist movement of Germany off the map for years to come, but may precipitate a new world war that will engulf Soviet Russia.

Revolutions are not made. They arise out of intolerable economic conditions, created by a ruthless ruling class. It is not impossible that in Germany, in spite of the honest endeavors of communists to prevent it, a revolution may break out, because the suffering of the nation has reached a breaking point. Should this be the case, the communists of Germany and their comrades the world over will step into their rightful places as the advance guard of the militant proletariat, to direct this mighty flood of revolt into the channels of class conscious working-class political action, that it may sweep down with irresistible power all the forces of reaction, capitalism and weak kneed counter-revolution, in its path.

—Voice of Labor (Chicago), Aug. 11, 1923.

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BEFORE 1914, the exploitation of the two mightiest mining areas of the continent, Lorraine and the Ruhr, ensured the predominance in Europe of the German bourgeoisie.

In order to break this dominion, the victorious Entente had to destroy its foundations. The Versailles Treaty therefore provided for the separation of the ores of Lorraine from Germany, and their incorporation in France, while the Ruhr coal was left to Germany.

But even the most solemn agreements, written in the blood of millions of poor propertyless victims, and protected by armies comprising millions of soldiers, cannot hold good if they contravene economic realities. The Treaty of Versailles, like many other treaties, is nothing more than a scrap of paper, because it attempts to break up the natural unity of the Rhine valley.

The German metal industries are as little able to do without the ore of Lorraine as the French metal industries of Lorraine are able to dispense with the Ruhr coal. The mutual economic dependence of the two areas is inalienable. The Rhine flowing between them must again become what it was before, a connecting line. It is only possible to properly utilize the huge riches of the Rhine valley when the owners work in the closest relationship with one another.

What form will these close relations take? Three possibilities may be considered:

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