

Economic Causes of War.

Article No. 11.

EGYPT, which, next to India, is the greatest possession in the British Empire, was taken by force and is held by force. Since the Suez Canal was built in the sixties, Egypt has been the gateway to the trade of the East, and as such it became a tempting bait to England and France. Ismail I., the ruler of that time, becoming entangled in extravagant schemes of development and dissipation, in which he was encouraged by European money lenders, ran up the National Debt to about \$45,000,000. The financial conquest of the country soon led to its military conquest. Ismail, to meet his embarrassments, sold a huge quantity of his shares in the Suez Canal to the British Government, and then at the instigation of British and French usurers, the governments of France and Britain compelled him to accept their financial controllers who took over the management of all Egyptian finances. As a result the Egyptians became discontented with the interference of foreign powers and with the increased taxation. A national movement arose to break the power of the Ruler and to get the power of the government in the hands of the people themselves. We are told this national movement was a mere mutiny of the discontented, just as we have been told about Lenin and Trotsky in Russia, but the historical fact remains that the Arabi Revolution was a complete popular success. The Khedive was deprived of his power and the Government passed to the National Assembly which the Khedive was compelled to summon. So successful was this practically bloodless revolution, that the European money lenders, terror stricken lest the Egyptian Parliament repudiate the debts of their autocratic ruler or fail to weather the financial storm, moved heaven and earth to stir the British and French Governments to stamp out the National Movement by force of arms. The French Government declined to have anything to do with so ghastly a proceeding. The British Government, on the other hand, tempted by the bait of the gateway to India, and lashed by the bondholders' whips from behind, bombarded Alexandria (without declaring war), then landed an army which crushed Egyptian nationalism with blood and iron.

This dastardly act alarmed the conscience of the world and aroused the jealousies of all the European Powers, to allay which the British Government announced that the occupation of Egypt would only be temporary, and would cease when the finances were put in order and a stable government established. This was in 1882, since which time the finances have been put in order, and every effort of the Egyptians to govern themselves has been suppressed.

On December 17th, 1914, Great Britain declared that Turkey had forfeited its rights in Egypt, over which Britain extended a protectorate. The Egyptian people showed their dissatisfaction, and England then declared the protectorate to be only temporary, and that it would cease with the war. Trusting in this promise the Egyptians came to the Allies' aid; Egypt became a base of operations in the East. The Egyptian army served at Sinai in Arabi, at the Suez Canal, in the defeat of the Turkish armies in Syria and Mesopotamia, and warded off the danger of an uprising in the Soudan. After fighting, and numbers dying for the cause of liberty, right, and self-determination, the Egyptians, like those who expect much, were greatly disappointed. When the armistice was signed they asked Britain to keep her word, but (oh, those scraps of paper) she failed to do so. The Prime Minister asked to be allowed to depart for London, but his request was refused. The people then delegated prominent men of all classes and political shades to go to the peace conference. Voting papers for this purpose were circulated, but were confiscated after having received more than 2,000,000 signatures. These papers contained the names of members of Parliament, and provincial and municipal councillors. The necessary passports being refused the delegates, the population rebelled and protested, in answer to which the English authorities arrested the members of the delegation and deported them to Malta, and the country was put under martial law. These repressive measures resulted in strikes, riots, and the destruction of railroad, telegraph lines, etc., but the people, having been previously disarmed, were event-

ually crushed through force of arms. Then, Britain, having obtained secretly the recognition of a British protectorate over Egypt from President Wilson, permitted the deported Egyptians at Malta to proceed to Paris. The delegates endeavored to get an interview with this great man Wilson, but he informed them through his secretary he had not had an opportunity to see them. President Wilson left Paris without hearing the case of the Egyptians, nor did the Peace Conference permit them to state their case. This is the treatment delegates of Egypt, representing a population of 16,000,000, received from the exponent of international right and justice,—this great democrat whose platitudinal phrases of justice, liberty, and the saving of the world for democracy, were repeated in poll-parrot fashion all over the Allied countries, and who will be portrayed in the future as the greatest humbug the world ever saw. All the sentimental slush is of no avail when it conflicts with the financial and economic interests arising from the division of the spoils.

France, of all the European Powers, offered the greatest opposition to British occupation of Egypt, because she had considerable interests there herself, but she is acquiescent now, since this opposition was bought off by Britain supporting her in Morocco.

The stranded Egyptian delegates published a "White Book" of British rule in Egypt telling of the pillaging of villages, the lashing and flogging of men, and the killing of men who defended their wives, but as the reading of this book is not good for humble Britishers, the "Thought Controllers" decided that the book should be kept in the Index Expurgatorius; it is seditious, because it is propaganda for the workers.

This short history of Egypt, where the National Assembly was overthrown, Alexandria bombarded without a declaration of war, with the grand finale at the Peace Conference secretly allowing a British Protectorate over Egypt, shows how much respect Britain has for self-determination, or even for scraps of paper if they clash with her economic interests.

PETER T. LECKIE.

The Near Side of the Rubicon

TWO years ago, by their refusal to recognize, or countenance in any way the Soviet Government, the Allies made a fateful decision. For the preservation of privilege, they deemed it of first importance to crush that visible symbol of proletarian supremacy. And the Allies were right. But, after the fashion of all class tyrannies, to achieve this end they elaborated their own crude methods of force, and having made their choice, and failed, they are now face to face with the consequences of that historical decision. Consequences are becoming ominously clear, even to our public masters.

By means of the blockade, through the intrigues of Churchillian duplicity; through the mediacy of Finnish interests and Estonian need; through the dark by-way of Caucasian diplomacy, Britain strove to destroy the hated Soviet. Conjointly with France and Hungary she attempted to stem the flowing tide of the revolution,—and ruined south-eastern Europe in the process. With the help of France, she builded her hope on Poland. With mandatory schemes, she sought to rear in new strength and cunning the barrier walls of Empire in the Middle East. And on all sides, the failure of force is overwhelmingly patent; on all sides, their hypocrisy and deceit floods back on themselves, in rolling waves of disaster. And in the forefront of this Allied defeat,—and all the brighter, because of the pitiful treachery to all human inspiration and its infinite hope—stands out the indisputable proof of proletarian in-

telligence and proletarian competence to direct the further and higher destinies of society,—an intelligence daily displayed in its understanding of the world welter of capitalist frightfulness; a competence that goes, restrained, but unhesitant amidst the ruthless policies of class aggression.

At the time above-mentioned, Bolhevism was weak, isolated; its aims and aspirations unknown and obscure,—repudiated even by the intelligence of the homeland. Now Bolshevism is established beyond all overthrow. Internally, Russia is practically united against all foreign interference; its Sovietism has become the vanguard of social progress; its aims and objective are known, in spite of the infamy and calumny of the capitalist press; and its recognition is being sought (furtively and treacherously) by all capitalist countries, in order to save themselves from the pit of world panic.

To vanquish a world rival, Britain and France became allies. The rival vanquished, each becomes a claimant for imperialist dominance. But world dominance can only belong to one, and to that one only by the immemorial right of might. For this dominion the chances of France are hopeless. She is broken and bankrupt, holding together internally by force of martial control, and externally by the conditions and financial leniencies of the war alliances. Her only hope is the German indemnity, and the subjugation of Russia, which being interpreted, means, the ruin of Germany and the annihilation of Russia. But that alternative carries with it the immediate collapse of capitalism.

For those reasons, Britain and France cannot agree. Their imperialist needs and ambitions are contradictory, and it is the temporary union of those irreconcilable policies which has brought about

the present economic deadlock in the old world. If France remains obdurate, and continues in her present policies, she must eventually face the pressure—and force—of her quondam allies,—for her an impossibility, because the control of world resources is not in her hands. Per contra, if France compromises her German claims, and Russian credits, and relinquishes, even in part, her imperialist demands, the disorganization and difficulties of her capitalists will be no less complete, and such disorganization cannot fail to find a swift reflex in her population.

Finally, this subordination of French to British imperialist aggression will entail new samples of Anglo-Saxon compromise. For with the breakdown of the Polish defence—the last real barrier against the "red" revolution—not only is Central Europe laid open to Soviet influence, not only will those nations find relief in their desperate straits from a proletarian Russia, but, with Berlin and Paris paralyzed, the one with an impossible peace, the other with an impossible victory, and with Soviet prestige enormously enhanced, and its power and influence positive and ascendant, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, from Danube to Indies, Lenin comes knocking at the gates of London, the very heart of capital. If, under those circumstances capitalist conferences do not give place to sterner action, and negotiation take a definite character and an infinitely more material bearing on the visible circumstances of society, it can only be because the social forces inherent in social production and class appropriation are so ripely developed, that all class resistance to the flood of their inevitability is utterly hopeless.

At any rate, let us be diligent while we may, for beyond all evil, we are standing on the threshold of momentous events.

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