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THE INVASION OF BREAD

THE anxiety of the Allied governments over the Russian famine is shewn in its true light by the efforts of each group to edge out the other as relief administrator, a term which might be better understood to mean relief interventionist. Where Denekine, Koltchak, Yudenich and Wrangel failed to subject the Soviets to the rule of capital, it is the hope of these statesmanlike gentlemen that famine may succeed, and "they will make their charity pay dividends in the way of anti-Bolshevik propaganda" to the end that a form of government suitable to themselves and contributory to their interests, whatever structural form circumstances may require it to assume, may be established, whereby the exploitation process may be continued and, incidentally, a "bad example" to the international working class may be blotted out.

It is characteristic of all councils where matters of interest to capital are under review by its spokesmen, that while the universal subjection and exploitation of wage-labor is agreed upon, control of the fruits of the exploitation process leads to disagreement between the groups involved, as in the case of the Russian famine, between U. S. A., France and Great Britain. Thus, while the U. S. A. Senate is anxious that its interests should be advanced under the guise of relief organization under Hoover, an astute business man with "experience" and a reputation, Mr. L. George puts forward the excuse against surrendering the interests of British capital to American administration, that the governing factor must be the Soviets themselves, since they control the transport and all the official machinery of the country. At the same time, in France, the home of disappointed Russian creditors and the centre of counter-revolution, the government is declaredly against help of any kind toward relief, "unless the debts of the Czar's government be recognized," and the press is frankly outspoken in the hope that famine conditions will unseat the Soviets. Competitive conditions and the mutual distrust bred thereby give rise to some measure of co-operation, however, and we now have these watchful groups, with a jealous eye on one another, preparing to dispatch expeditions to Russia in the hope that they may find enough misery to enable them to stay there. We had the testimony of Col. Raymond Robins, chief of the American Red Cross in Russia in 1918 that, while in Russia he was officially chief of the American Red Cross he was at the same time a business adventurer with a roving commission directed toward the advancement of American economic interests; sometimes circumstances compelled co-operation with other national groups—British for instance—but the antagonism of American and British interests interfered with such co-operation. Given such a case, illustrating Red Cross operations while the war was still in progress, how deep is the sincerity of these business-like humanitarians now, fastening upon calamity in the hope of turning it to their own advantage, saving its victims for the exploitation they have in preparation?

As to the actual state of affairs in Russia today we need hardly refer to recent stories in the daily press of Russian conditions. Experience has taught the working class, or the observers among them, that where working class matters call for mention the

daily press is "partial and prejudiced" on the side of the master class. Indeed, there is no need to go to Russia for evidence of that, for press reports of every meeting of workers, strike, lockout, utterance or indictment proves it to those who will read and learn. Local news of such happenings and events among working people gives example always of the lying capacity of the press; how then may we rely upon news of the condition of affairs in Russia from such sources? Our experiences in Canada prompt a healthy scepticism.

Disregarding such obvious anti-Soviet propaganda, we have the word of Chicherin, Soviet Commissary for Foreign Affairs, given in "The Manchester Guardian," reproduced from "The Daily Herald."

"The Famine Relief Commission of the Central Executive has recognized a state of famine, in ten provinces, in which severe, continuous drought has either destroyed the harvest entirely or left a yield of only 10 or 15 per cent. of the average. In some localities, however the bad harvest affects certain crops only. The ten provinces have a population of about 18,000,000.

To maintain the rural population on only half the usual rations, excluding cattle, a minimum of 41,000,000 poods of food supplies (660,000 tons) is required from outside, while to feed the town population 300,000 ton is needed. For seeds in the district where the harvest is completely lost 250,000 tons are required before September 15. It cannot yet be determined, until data of the harvest elsewhere is collected, what part of these needs can be supplied by Russia herself. The stricken provinces have no old grain stocks left, and deliveries from other provinces can only be limited at present.

In spite of the great distress, there have nowhere occurred and disorders. With the assistance of the Soviet authorities, people have sought to move from the hardest hit districts to others more prosperous, but this movement nowhere assumes a form menacing public safety and order. In its fight against the famine the Russian Government has the ardent support of citizens of all views."

In the midst of these conditions, "Rosta Wien" reports (from the Central Statistical Bureau) that "there will be an increase in the grain yield this year of fifty million pood (pood, 36 lbs.) in spite of the fact that whole districts are without grain." (Thus, if the daily press propaganda is analyzed, we see that if the Soviet government is to be held responsible for the failure of the crops in one region, it must be credited with success in another).

M. J. Olgin, in "The New Republic," August 17, 1921 says in an article entitled "Agarian Problems in Soviet Russia" "It is well to remember, however, that famine has not been unknown in Russia these last thirty years and that the endurance of the Russian masses is beyond Western comprehension. The Soviet organization, with its quick and decisive method of action, may turn out more capable of facing such a crisis than any other administration. It may be assumed with a degree of certainty that even the present famine will not disrupt the social fabric of new Russia." All of which is of small comfort to the invaders, whose hopes lie in famine destroying the Soviet government.

"The Nation" (New York) August 24, 1921, publishes the following:

"Russia, the land of infant mortality and ignorance is also the land of famines. This is due to the climatic peculiarities. Its huge continental mass is often swept by drying winds. Also the primitive methods of agriculture are to blame. The ground is worked only on the surface, with primitive tools, and thus retains the moisture in a very small measure. Rational irrigation in Russia is practically unknown so that large districts of Russia are covered with standing water and huge plains are left without irrigation. The working of the fields is also irrational. The three-field system, which is common, leaves a third of the ground fallow

each season. Finally everyone who has visited Russia knows how many thousands and tens of thousands of hectares of black earth lie unworked owing to lack of animals and through the will of the population. The former social and political system and also nature are to blame for this. Last of all the foolish policy of deforestation has contributed a great deal, as for example in causing the sinking in the level of the Volga. . . . This year's harvest will exceed that of last year by fifty million poods (835,000 tons) thanks to the extension of the acreage due to measure taken by the Soviet government."

It should be noted that this extra grain over last year's harvest comprises the estimated grain over all Russia, and that mention is made of some areas where there is a surplus as being "the least rich in grain from which bread can be made." It will be readily seen that despite famine conditions the chief task of the Soviets is reconstruction of transportation. Given transportation facilities relief could be carried from plentiful areas to those in distress.

The present need is for relief for the sufferers. The working class throughout the world will lend their aid willingly. Their financial aid will be given where possible and their jealous regard for the welfare of the Soviets must prompt them to watch carefully for "offensive" tactics under the cloak of humanitarian missions headed by representatives of the business elements of France, Great Britain and the U. S. A. In the meantime, contributions may be sent to Dr. J. W. Harimann, treasurer of "Friends of Soviet Russia" and editor of "Soviet Russia," 201 West Thirteenth St., New York.

RESPONSIBILITY.

The doctrine of Determinism would seem, at first glance, to be rather a hopeless one. For this reason there was written a pamphlet, "Does Determinism Destroy Responsibility?" The answer was "no," which, strictly speaking was not altogether comprehensive. It must be remembered that "responsibility" has at least two distinct meanings, the one being "liability to respond" and the other "accountability." According to the determinist all actions are necessitated and compelled, which eliminates responsibility.

But in the sense that man can "respond" to influences, as a ship or an automobile "answers" to the turn of the steering wheel, he is responsible, for he can be educated, advised, restrained, coerced, loved, medically treated or utterly destroyed. The more intelligent or rational a man is, the more responsible he becomes and the more accountable for his actions without "the fear o' Hell," which Burns characterises as "a hangman's whip to hand (hold) the wretch in order."

Man, as "lord of creation" interferes with nature's forces and uses them for his own purposes. When these forces are turned to serve the needs of life we recognise their value to us and our need for further understanding of their laws. Unfolding circumstances compel man toward investigation of natural forces and toward harnessing them for his own purposes. If his objective at any time may be gained without interrupting the natural operation of these forces he lets them alone; if not, he first investigates, then cautiously, and with increased understanding "uses" nature and directs its forces. His responsibility lies toward his fellow men and in this day and age it assumes a class character. Nature is bountiful and the race of men are able to gather the fruits. The problem before us now and the responsibility upon us is to awaken working class responsibility so that those who gather the fruits may partake of them to the exclusion of all idlers. "P."