

Countering the Counter Revolution

DIPLOMACY goes softly through the bewildering tangle of class confusions, measuring, testing, gauging the temper and spirit of the times, balancing and calculating the conflicting powers of progress and reaction, watching with the deep cunning of man, waiting with the infinite patience of the wild for the psychological moment when, in its ethic of frightfulness, it may set ignorance against his brother discontent. And all at the behest of a master class, soulless with the soullessness of economic power, hesitating at nothing to preserve its property right in social necessities.

When Imperialism first found itself checked by Sovietism, it hurled its forces in terrible fury against this emblem of social liberty. And diplomacy, true to its nature and origin, fulfilled its mission perfectly, in so far as its purblind masters would permit. Thus Kolchak and his atrocities were curtailed off from the world; it drew a veil over the doings—or rather misdoings—of Denikin and Wrangel; it excelled itself on the matter of the Allied alliance with Von Goltz; and vindicated its own ethic in the "white" regime of Mannerheim and Churchill. Negotiations see-sawed in conformity with the movements of the field forces. When counter revolution advanced, negotiations lapsed; when revolution triumphed, negotiations were eagerly revived. Because, **at no matter what cost**, Bolshevism must be outfought, or outmanoeuvred. From every point of the compass comes the same sordid story, the same black duplicity, varying in cunning and stagnation, constant in objective and force. Yet Sovietism emerged from the ordeal, not seathless or idyllic, but clear of mind and straight of purpose, flushed with a new consciousness of power, passionate with a new meaning of life.

And now, again, is the scene changed.

Even as the first flood of military aggression battered against Soviet Russia in vain, so now has diplomacy recoiled before the gathering necessities of social development. The triumph of the workers' Soviet—that first faint harbinger of the civilized commune—marks the beginning of a new epoch in world development. And the failure of diplomacy to effect a patchwork truce between the irreconcilables (capital and Sovietism) marks the close of the first chapter in the new era. For with the fall of Poland—or even but a threat to its nationalism—Sovietism has definitely entered the field for world dominion.

But while Russia is thus a rival with capital for world dominion, it is not the old capitalist rivalry of economic supremacy. It is, on the contrary, the rivalry of Socialist society, of communism against class. We have, therefore, openly and unmistakably entered the field of class war, and the eventful times of the immediate future will involve the world in a struggle, the gathering forces of which it feels and fears, but whose significance, as yet, it wots not of.

Undoubtedly, Britain is the world power of today. Therefore must the Empire, whereon the sun never sets, be flung to the forefront of the struggle, and as the confines of that empire are world wide, so will the struggle be world wide. Lloyd George is now threatening Ireland with force. But the wily "Davie" is bluffing. He knows (and we know) that the struggle in Ireland is not of class. And he knows also that although Ireland is the gateway to the Atlantic trade routes, it is in the East that the clash must come. And there will the accounting be. Because Bolshevism, dominant in the West, inevitably threatens the East, and if the British Empire is shorn of its Eastern possessions, it will crumble away like a cloud in high summer.

The riches of India, the oil of Persia and Baku, the "mandates" of the Great War, and the desperate necessity of controlling the food-producing countries will force the struggle out of the murky

shadows, or diplomatic duplicity into the open day, will change the current of social movement from imperialist expediency into the wider channel of social necessity.

From which it follows that while the common objective of property right will tend to unite capitalist countries against Sovietism and its works, the conflicting Imperialist necessities and aggressions of the individual powers will tend,—in an exactly opposite direction—to divide their councils and thwart their efforts, even against the common foe. This mutual suspicion and distrust will weaken their forces, make their shifty policies more vacillating, increase internal unrest, and drift the working masses, more clearly, more consciously, and therefore more determinedly towards the left.

The certainty that class conditions will continue and increase in intensity, will augment and deepen the desperate economic plight of the proletariat, will consolidate their efforts, and everywhere strengthen their resistance to the crushing power of political domination. Out of their miserable necessity, in sheer defence of their very existence, the workers will be forced in a definite direction, will be compelled to take a positive stand, and from those actions, whatever they may be, will proceed a new consciousness of the meaning of the struggle. With that revelation will come the knowledge of what and where to strike to emancipate themselves from slavery.

Surely the climax has come. The capitalist class is now facing its Waterloo. It cannot trade, because, at the same time that capitalist concentration has eliminated competition, it has also eliminated the world market. In their confused bungling and juggling with imperialist necessity, the capitalists have forgotten (if they ever knew) the supreme function of social organization—the essential, i.e., the economic welfare of the total society. In capitalist society, without the world market, the dispossessed producers must starve—and will starve—until the movement of the social forces once more vindicate their supremacy over man and his transient contrivances.

The dominant issue is not empire, but revolution. The entire world is divided into two camps, and they clash, sharp as steel, on the fundamental issue of social control. Each side is gathering its forces together, with stern intent, and conscious purpose, and till that issue is settled—and it can only be settled in one way, there will be, there can be, neither social peace nor social prosperity, nor the rectitude of social sanity.

The Communist Party in Russia

By Arvid Hansen.

IN all countries there are at present in the workers' movement "Putschists"—people who think, or say they think, that knowledge, study, preparation, are worth nothing, while action, immediate action, is everything. Look at Russia, they say, a people of illiterates, who really put over their revolution, instead of talking about it. It is not education, it is action that is demanded.

Reasoning of this kind may look very attractive at first blush. The only hitch is that it is not the illiterates who made the revolution, but, on the contrary, the most educated, most intellectual portion of the working class, those who not only could read and write, but also think, people who had acquired a firm Socialist education and understanding, and who had already shown themselves to be the possessors of an organizing talent great enough to enable them to do away with illiteracy in the near future.

The Communist Party in Russia is not a very numerous party. It counts not more than half a mil-

lion members, but it is a party that has no members on paper, a party of active units who are not only masters of the language alphabet, but also of the alphabet of revolution. Only through a united organization can the party control the situation.

In the larger cities, there are higher educational institutions for the training of Communists, schools in which instruction is given in history, particularly in the history of revolutions, in social economy, and social politics. Without a certain education, and without having passed through a practical test, no one is admitted to the Communist Party. Voluntary courses in the Communist Party programme are now to be found in most of the schools in Russia. The young candidates to the party are sent out as state employes on the most varying errands, and are tested through a period of three months; only after passing the test can they enter the party. They are then sent as party members all over Russia, as commissars in order to exercise control over the administration. In every single school, every single hospital, every single railroad train, etc., etc., you will find at least one Communist. The Communists have better opportunities than others for advancing and are more certain of getting decent bread. But in return, they must devote their lives to Communism. It is one of their privileges also to be sent to the firing line, to the most dangerous positions, when the Soviet Republic is threatened by any enemy. During the combined offensive of Yudenitch and Denikin, 20,000 Communists were sent to the front at once from their work in the institutions, and it was 300 young officers in training with revolutionary inspiration from the Moscow War School, who prevented the Yudenitch vanguard from cutting off the railway line between Petrograd and Moscow. Very severe demands are made on the absolute unselfishness, zeal and idealism of the Communists. Even a slight transgression of the party programme destroys one's future. A crime of selfishness, such as speculation or embezzlement, if perpetrated by a Communist, is punished inexorably by death, at least in the more serious cases.—"Soviet Russia," Aug 28, 1920.

*From the German noun "Putsch" an unsuccessful and premature attempt at revolution.

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