

# AN OPEN LETTER TO AMERICAN LIBERALS

With a Note on Recent Documents

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By **SANTERI NUORTEVA**

Representative of the Finnish Workers' Republic

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# An Open Letter To American Liberals

By SANTERI NUORTEVA

Representative of the Finnish Workers' Republic.

**T**HE letter that follows has been sent to a number of prominent American liberals with whom Comrade Nuorteva, as official representative of the People's Republic of Finland, has repeatedly had occasion to discuss the general situation in Russia and in Finland.

They have shown interest in and appreciation of the importance and difficulty of the problems which the peoples of the countries in question were called upon to solve.

Comrade Nuorteva addressed these gentlemen not purely and solely as a personal matter, but as exponents and representatives of a group that has preserved and embodies the best American traditions, without having become contaminated by the sordidness of machine politics—the liberals of America.

They must accept the responsibility that goes with their station as well as with their historical antecedents—either protest against what they cannot justify or become responsible as fully as if they had themselves done that which they failed to oppose.

Sir :

So it did happen after all. America, the "sponsor of the new freedom," America, the "founder of world democracy," is in Russia to-day, together with the Japanese, British, French and Italians, Colonel Semenoff, General Horvath and other Russian reactionaries, to destroy the Bolshevist revolution. That is what the intervention amounts to, all reassurances notwithstanding.

I don't know that I have any business to write to you about Russia. I don't know that you have any time or interest to spare to consider the world drama which is being played in the far East. I don't know whether your patriotic efforts at bringing about class harmony in America will leave you time enough to see how your government and other governments are trying their utmost to prove to the world in Russia that conflicting class interests never can be conciliated.

Yet, somehow, I cannot refrain from writing you these lines. The greatest crime the history of the world ever has witnessed is being perpetrated against the Russian people—under the guise of "helping Russia,"—a crime as much blacker than that of the German imperialists, as is a stab in the back from a man pretending to be a friend more repugnant than a blow in the face from a confessed enemy. The Germans were at least frank in their indecency. They never pretended "helping Russia." And in Germany even the despicable Scheidemanns had enough moral stamina to raise their voices in the German Reichstag against the brigand terms imposed upon Russia by the Brest-Litovsk "peace" treaty. German papers printed vigorous criticism of Germany's policy in Russia. Here nobody dares to say anything,—least of all you, the so-called liberals, who have been trying to persuade us, the "dogmatic Socialists," that class interests are not the paramount issue in the world war and that there is some guarantee to the democracy of the world in the idealistic aims of great individuals.

What are you doing in Russia, sir? I am saying *you*, because *as long as you have not raised your voice in protest, you are responsible for it along with all the others.*

Why did you go to Russia, and what do you expect to get out of it? You went there to "help the Czecho-Slovaks," of course! That is what the diplomatic declarations said. To help the Czecho-Slovaks to get out of Russia to fight on the western front. But aside from the fact that these declarations speak of the westward movement of the Czecho-Slovaks,—and nobody certainly imagines that the Czecho-Slovaks can go to the western front by moving westward from Siberia—you will remember that the intervention plans regarding Russia were laid long before the editors of the American papers learned how to spell the name of Czecho-Slovaks, or before they knew whether the Czecho-Slovaks were inhabitants of Africa or Australia.

Some time ago I saw a plan of Russian intervention, which was submitted to the State Department by some great defenders of American business and democracy. It was submitted last March, and it openly spoke of the necessity of finding a pretext for intervention in Russia. Very frankly it contemplated the possibility of inducing somebody to invite an Allied intervention. The Cadet Party was expected to do the inviting—but even the Cadets did not dare openly to invite foreign intervention in Russia. The statement purporting to come from the Cadet Party, inviting Allied intervention, was fabricated in Paris by former Russian ambassadors and other adventurers who represented nobody but themselves. Even Kerensky could not be induced to plead for an armed intervention in Russia, and now he, who was your hero two months ago, is ostracised by "respectable society." And so the interventionists had to resort to political trickery, which would be comical if its consequences were not so tragic. "The population on the Murman coast" has invited you to take Archangel! The population on the Murman coast, forsooth! Some illiterate Lapp fishermen and a handful of intellectuals—truly true representatives of Russia! Later the interventionists succeeded in bringing to Archangel old man Tchaikovsky and a few other members of the dissolved Constitutional Assembly, which forthwith was proclaimed as the "legitimate government" of Russia in the declaration issued by Allied representatives at Archangel. But in Vladivostok not even that much could have been accomplished, as far

as the local population is concerned. In the face of an Allied armed occupation, Vladivostok in the municipal elections gave an overwhelming majority to the Bolsheviks. The workers struck in protest against Allied occupation in Vladivostok, and your papers triumphantly declare,—after having said for many days that the strike would not materialize, as most of the workers would not strike,—that the strike is a fizzle, *as the Allies have been successful in replacing the strikers with Chinese workingmen*. “Fighting for democracy”—by arraying coolie labor against Russia! “Not interfering in internal affairs of Russia,”—yet arraying one group of people against another!

What are you doing in Russia, sir? Don't you think that people have eyes to see and ears to hear with? Who invited you to Vladivostok? Was it Colonel Semenoff, a discredited Czar official, and General Horvath, a notorious swindler and adventurer at the head of a few thousand troops composed of Chinese riff-raff, saloon keepers, gamblers and other adventurers of the “wild east,” who valiantly rose “in defense of civilization” because the workers' rule in Siberia was putting an end to the unspeakable social conditions in the towns of the far “wild east”?

If your purpose is to get the Czecho-Slovaks out of Russia so that they may fight Germany, why don't you send them to Finland to fight the Germans there? Why are you not similarly interested in aiding the Finnish workers, who are now in Russia, in an attack upon the German masters of Finland? The British Government gave assurances a few days ago to the Finnish pro-German White Guard Government that it would not encourage “any groups or factions in Finland.” Did this declaration mean, if anything, that the British Government under no circumstances would encourage the anti-German workers of Finland to fight against their masters? But when in Southern Russia the Cossack General Krassnoff, armed and supported by German troops, makes an attack against the Soviet Russia, his activities are being hailed in the press as a part of the “work of liberation in Russia.” How can you explain that paradox? We are told over and over again that this is a war for democracy and against German militarism, yet it seems that in Finland the blackest reaction,

and German reaction at that, is being encouraged and the democratic anti-German masses discouraged, while in Russia the workers' republic, which is anti-German and democratic, is attacked, and any one is encouraged who is against the Soviets, whether he be an anarchist, a monarchist, a reactionary pro-German junker or a so-called liberal.

All this is of course clear and understandable if you judge it from the point of view of the philosophy of the class struggle. Socialism is a greater enemy to the existing order than German militarism. But you will not admit that, or at least you have not openly admitted it. But if you do not admit it, then the policy you advocate in Russia is the most chaotic, irresponsible and ridiculous the world ever saw.

The truth about Russia does not reach us to-day; you do not realize what the Soviets are accomplishing. When the work of the Soviet Government does become known it will most likely result in bitter criticism of interference. But the present policy of making criticism punishable cannot last forever. The war will end; and then will come a time when uncensored speech once more is a fact. There will be years and centuries of human life after the war is over, during which the historian will be permitted to judge the events of to-day without the prejudice of passion and without the will to distort, due to economic interests.

*What, then, will be the verdict on your present Russian policy?*

Even now many facts are becoming known which cannot be explained away. We have been told that the antipathy of the Allied nations toward the Soviet Government is due to its "subservience to German occupation" and to the "betrayal at Brest-Litovsk." But do you know, sir, or do you not, that some time before the ratification of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty by the Soviet Government, the Government of the People's Commissars showed concrete willingness to continue the war against Germany and wanted to know to what extent it could expect co-operation from the Allies in the task of the reorganization of the Russian army? How will you explain the absence of an answer to this proposition of the Soviet Government? Do you know that last

winter, just before the German advance in Russia, Trotzky earnestly requested co-operation in taking away big guns from the Russian front so that they should not fall into the hands of the Germans? In spite of Trotzky's efforts the Germans took the guns and transported them to the western front. About the same time the Russian Government requested aid in the form of a few hundred British naval officers to take charge of the Black Sea Fleet so that a plot engineered by Russian reactionary officers aiming to deliver the Black Sea Fleet to the Germans should not materialize. They were not successful in obtaining the requested help and a large part of the Black Sea Fleet was delivered to the Germans by Russian reactionaries. And the crowning madness of all this is that the press accused the Bolsheviki of having delivered those guns and that fleet to the Germans!

I have knowledge of scores of similar incidents which all prove that the Soviet Government was extremely eager to co-operate with the Allies in every possible way against Germany, but without success.

Why?!?

In order to be as fair as possible and to give the benefit of the doubt to the Allied representatives I shall admit as a possible reason for their action that they never expected the Soviet Government to stay. The above related incident regarding the guns on the eastern front took place at a time when the Allied representatives, misled by Russian counter-revolutionists, were sure that the Soviet Government would be overthrown in a few days. They apparently hoped that a new eastern front could be established by the Cadets, which would require the presence and use of the big guns. But if that was the reason for their otherwise inexplicable action in the matter, it only shows their utter lack of understanding of the real relations between the political forces in Russia. The same will be the historic verdict in all other cases where there was no attempt made to use the Soviets against Germany.

Another excuse may also be advanced. Starting out with the theory that the Bolsheviki were paid agents of Germany, the



Allies naturally suspected every approach on the part of the Bolsheviks as an "effort to obtain information for the German army"! But even that is no excuse at all. For more than a year the press has been shouting that Lenin and Trotsky are paid agents of Germany—but *never has a shred of real evidence* been offered in this respect. Certain "documents," I understand, were printed in "Le Petit Parisien." The actual fact, however, is that these so-called documents are *proven forgeries*, which were in the hands of the bitterest enemies of the Bolsheviks during the Kerensky regime, and could not be used because of their obvious forgery and falseness.

On the other hand there are innumerable proofs of a willingness to co-operate with elements whose only "merit" is their opposition to the Soviets but who otherwise are openly co-operating with the Germans. Much in this respect has been shown in the attitude toward the Finnish White Guard, toward the pro-German Ukrainian bourgeoisie and toward the Milyukov faction, which is co-operating with Germany and now has squarely declared itself for the restoration of monarchy in Russia. Much more could be shown if all the facts were known. I have already referred to the assurances given by the British Government to the White Guard Government of Finland, who have sold themselves body and soul to the Germans—that the British Government never would support any rebellious faction in Finland against the present Government.

How in the name of common sense can you then expect that any sane person, who is acquainted with the facts as they are, could for a moment believe that the main reason for intervention in Russia is to recreate opposition to Germany? The story about the Germans in Siberia, who are fighting the Czecho-Slovaks, is altogether a product of hysteria or a deliberate misrepresentation. Last April, at the request of Trotsky, Allied representatives went all through Siberia to confirm rumors circulated already at that time about armed German prisoners in Siberia acting on behalf of the German government. The Allied representatives did not find anything of that kind, and their findings must be known to the Allied Governments.

Why all this talk about the necessity of liberating the valiant Czecho-Slovaks and permitting them to proceed to the western front? The facts about their case are that the Soviet Government was doing all in its power to allow the Czecho-Slovaks to get away from Russia. Trotzky offered them passage by way of Archangel. For some reason that offer was not accepted. The stories about their having been attacked in Siberia while on their way to Vladivostok may be easily interpreted otherwise than as an attempt to prevent their leaving Russia. The eastward moving Czecho-Slovaks of course obstructed the transportation of food-stuffs along the Siberian railroad to Russia. It is easy to understand that the necessity of feeding Russia came in conflict with the desire of the Czecho-Slovaks for unhindered passage. Yet I am sure that whatever difficulties arose in that respect, they could have been straightened out between the Soviets and the Czecho-Slovaks, if they had been left to settle it themselves. It is obvious that the local population was incited against the Czecho-Slovaks by Germans as well as by Russian reactionaries, who saw in the conflict between the Czecho-Slovaks and the Soviets a potential nucleus of an interventionist adventure.

And so we have been compelled to witness a tragedy, which the historian of the future will regard as one of the most pathetic events in the history of revolutions. The Czecho-Slovaks,—themselves rebels,—most of them originally in sympathy with the Russian revolution, most of them Socialists, desiring to establish their international independence by revolutionary means,—are being used by those who promised them national independence, and who profess adherence to the principle of self-determination of nations, as the hangmen of the Russian Revolutionists. Never has a rebellious people, striving for independence, been asked to pay a more horrible price. If the present plan of reactionaries in Russia is to materialize for the moment, if the Czecho-Slovaks meet with success in putting down the Russian revolution and in establishing there a bloody reactionary monarchy, and if they as the Judas-pay for this work are to receive the independence of Bohemia, can't you see that future generations will haunt that "independent Bohemia," built on the corpses

of the greatest revolution in the world, down to the deepest hell as betrayers and traitors to liberty and progress? But still more possible is another outcome. Either the Czecho-Slovaks will successfully perform the work they are asked to do to-day, and, having re-established reactionary monarchy in Russia, will find reaction and monarchism strengthened in Austria as well—and never will get the price anticipated by them, or—they will not be successful in their plan and will be cast aside just as you are ready to cast aside Kerensky to-day.

Recent dispatches from Washington state 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 to-day, 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 counting, of course, on the possibility of a popular uprising of the population in Siberia against the Bolsheviks. 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 if by agreement, now speak of the "Russian tyranny, tempered by assassination." If the capitalist press sees fit to-day 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 to-day? 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 to-day are living through the most stupendous revolution the world ever has 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 for you in America to establish a stable government and orderly efficient rule, after you had signed the Declaration of Independence. At that your revolution was mainly a political one, involving the change from one Government to another, without any considerable changes in the social structure. Your revolution occurred at a time when the social problems confronting you were a mere bagatelle compared with those that the Russian people are asked to solve. Your revolution took place among a homogeneous nation of three millions, who had behind them a century of self-government and experience at individual as well as co-operative action. You were allowed to settle your problems not only without any interference from the outside after you had accomplished your immediate aims, but you received real help and encouragement from other nations. Even then it took you ten years to bring about social order. And now you are angry and impatient at the Russian workers and peasants, because they

lack the strength to perform in a year a task a thousandfold more difficult than that which you could not perform in less than ten years, and under immensely more favorable circumstances.

Where is your reputed fairness, you Americans? Where is your sense of fair play?

Russia, a country of 180 millions of people, belonging to about 40 different nationalities, representing every conceivable stage of economic evolution, starting with savage Samoyeds on the Arctic coast of Siberia, and nomadic tribes of Trans-Caspia, up to the educated intellectuals of Russia, a country where the natural economic progress has been deliberately hampered by 300 years of abominable autocratic rule, which necessitates to-day a relatively longer step in the way of social reorganization than any country has been asked to take at once, a country where the so-called intellectual classes, to their eternal disgrace, are deliberately sabotaging the serious efforts of the working people to restore order and progress, a country where the Government, although consciously supported by a greater percentage of the people than is the case in any other country in the world, is attacked by all reactionaries the whole world over, a Government which is not being helped, but whose actions are deliberately interfered with in every instance,—this country, in spite of all this, has been able within less than a year to bring about more order than there has been in Russia for the past three years. But instead of expressing even the faintest commendation of the almost supernatural organizing ability of the Soviets, you, without protest, allow your papers deliberately to withhold all news favorable to the Russian workers and to circulate deliberate lies tending to bring the Russian workers into disgrace and to justify attacks on their Government. If the Soviet Government had received even a small part of the encouragement and help which you are to-day willing to give any Russian adventurer who promises you to deliver Russia into your hands, or even if you would have let Russia alone and had not encouraged the Russian reactionaries in their fight against the Soviets, Russia to-day would be a shining example of an orderly society and an everlasting proof of the constructive ability of the laboring masses.

Russian, Swedish, and even British newspapers received in this country contain highly interesting reports of the constructive work which is being done by the Soviets. In the face of tremendous obstacles they have been able quite satisfactorily, considering the circumstances, to organize the Russian agriculture on the basis of the new conditions. They have conducted a tremendous educational work all around Russia. They have rehabilitated the means of communication. Every fair observer admits that in those parts of Russia, where the Soviets work unhampered by the German autocracy and the various brands of counter-revolutionists, the life has rapidly returned into normal channels.

Some time ago I sent you a copy of a speech held by Premier Lenin at the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. This speech, which has been commended by the New Republic, convincingly proves that the Russian Soviet statesmen seriously and in a conservative and responsible manner are solving the great problems of economic rehabilitation in Russia, and that they are eager to bring about an acceptable "modus vivendi" in their economic international relations. It may interest you to know, if you have not had this information before, that even on the question of repudiation of debt, which is perhaps one of the greatest obstacles to an understanding with the Allies, the Russian Soviet Government was willing to compromise with the Allies. The decision to repudiate the foreign debt was held up by Lenin and Trotzky for almost a month, while they waited for some response from the Allies in regard to co-operation. No response was ever received.

But, is it not true, that it is *that very thing which the reactionaries of the world fear more than anything else?* The Russian workers' revolution *must* go down in defeat. There *must* be chaos—because if there were not, it would be a bad example to the workers of the rest of the world. Otherwise your papers could not say that Socialism has been weighed and found wanting.

But why not call a spade a spade? If you are bent on pursuing your present policy in Russia, would it not be much better for all parties concerned plainly to admit the facts and express their readiness to take the consequences? What you



want in Russia is the crushing of the Soviet Government as such, regardless of the fact that it is anti-German and regardless of all proofs of its constructive ability. As the Soviet Government obviously is supported by the great majority of the people, you will have to suppress that majority. In order to do that you must send to Russia not a small army which could accomplish nothing but bring evidence of your hostile attitude toward the Russian proletariat, but send there millions,—to the great detriment of your military plans on the western front. Or otherwise you must allow the Japanese to send an army,—and leave as a heritage of your Russian adventure an absolute Japanese domination in the East, a strengthening of Japanese imperialistic ambitions. To overcome the popular support of the Soviet Government you must in addition to that prepare yourself for a *permanent* occupation of the vast area of Russia, because as soon as you should withdraw your troops from any region, you would have on your hands new rebellions followed up with blind revenge taken on those Russians who have supported you in the accomplishment of the coup d'etat. You have the example of the Ukraine before your eyes. Do you not see that the bloody rule established by the Germans in the Ukraine, although it is partly due to the peculiarities of Prussian militarism, mostly is an inevitable natural consequence of the fact that the poorer Ukrainian peasantry,—and in Ukraine there is a larger percentage of rich and conservative peasants than in any other parts of Russia,—blindly revolts against attempts to deprive them of their newly won land and freedom?

I have many times pointed out that most of the program of the Soviets which you object to, including the repudiation of the debt, is a logical result of the expropriation of land by the peasants. To put an end to the policy of the Soviets you will have to repudiate the expropriation of land, and then you at once will find yourself in the same position as the Germans found themselves in the Ukraine.

And is there no lesson for you in the dispatches from

Samara? The first dispatches from that city about a month ago were that the Czecho-Slovaks had occupied the city, disarmed the Red Guard and deposed the local Soviet, with the result that the local bourgeoisie at once proceeded to take a bloody revenge upon the workers, killing hundreds of Soviet members, the armed presence of the Czecho-Slovaks making this revenge possible, although they themselves did not participate in the execution. After a few weeks the Red Guard took possession of the city once more, and one hundred Czecho-Slovaks were publicly hanged in retaliation of the execution of the Soviet members. That story will repeat itself over and over again. And for what use,—as at the end of it all, sooner or later, there must be, and *there will be*, the ultimate victory of the social principles represented by the Soviets to-day?!

I am not a pacifist nor do I shudder at civil war, if such must befall. But I would gladly give my life if thereby I could prevent unnecessary slaughter of people. Yet the experience of the past two years plainly shows, that however much the workers would like to avoid bloodshed and civil war, they will not be allowed to do so by their opponents, who do not seem able peacefully to admit the inevitable trend of the social evolution. The workers in Russia and in Finland today are the *conscious* majority, just as the “third estate” became the conscious majority against feudalism 150 years ago. You can not expect the workers in Russia and in Finland voluntarily to renounce their supremacy in favor of the retention of old forms of society, which have brought them nothing, and can bring them nothing but misery.

Is it then possible at all that the former ruling classes in Russia by sheer reasoning power should admit this fact and thus avoid unnecessary struggles and bloodshed? And if it is not possible for the Russian bourgeoisie to see it, as they personally have been deprived of all the privileges so dear to their hearts,—is it not possible that *you*, their intellectual class brethren, who are not *personally* as closely interested in

the situation, and, therefore, should be more able to retain your faculty of clear judgment, would advise them, or at least not encourage them in their blind class rebellion against forces that are unsurmountable?

But nothing at all is heard from you, nor from other "liberals." A most curious situation has developed. America, which was expected to be the country to bring democracy into the world, is today politically more sterile than any other country in the whole world. Even from Japan we hear rumors and news of revolt, which cannot be without relation to the Russian adventure. In England liberal thought is using valiantly all avenues of expression. The English liberal papers are intelligently and radically criticizing the Russian policy. I am enclosing with this letter for your information, if you have not happened to see it yourself, copies of articles in the London Nation and the Manchester Guardian, which well deserve your consideration. Here we hear nothing. One or two faint-hearted whisperings in small editorials in the "New Republic" and in "The Nation" only serve as the exception which proves the rule. Not only are you not contributing anything of liberal thought to save the world from the tremendous danger of a rejuvenation of the blackest imperialism through the Russian adventure, but the "liberal" elements in America today are doing their best to squelch whatever liberal thought there is in Europe. Today your emissaries are in Europe on a special mission to extinguish liberalism. The presence of American troops in Siberia is used by the reactionaries to throw sand in the eyes of liberals in Europe and to whitewash anything that may be undertaken there by the imperialists.

Some time ago I wrote to a person belonging to the Administration as follows:

"A comparative detachedness of the United States from European politics, which you call the principle of the Monroe Doctrine, has been one of your peculiarities up to the present time, as long as you economically were more or less inde-

pendent of Europe and Europe was independent of you. When the world war revalued all former international values, and America became a part of the world family not only in words, but in action as well, and your Monroe Doctrine became more or less a relic of the past, all lovers of international democracy rejoiced in the fact, principally, because they hoped that this would mean *not America's subjugation to outworn European diplomacy, but Europe's becoming inoculated with the young virus of all that which is real in the democracy of America.*

"Now I am asking myself and I would ask you: Shall America, now that she has the greatest opportunity ever given a country to bring new forms and new, clean views into world diplomacy and international relations, shall she submit to stale shopkeeper considerations of European diplomacy and not utilize the tremendous reservoir of democracy in Russia in order to strengthen America's historical mission of bringing democracy into European policies?"

America, it seems, has not availed herself of that opportunity. Instead of that she has been induced, it seems, not only to serve reactionism, but, unwittingly, I hope, to deceive the liberal thought in the world, or at least in America, into support of that reactionism, by giving it her indorsement,—and the result of all this has been that we are now witnessing the paradox of the defenders of "law and order" and of a "new freedom" engaged in an interventionist adventure against the only force in Russia which is capable of bringing about order and the new freedom.

• It is not less paradoxical that I, representing the ideas and aims of those revolutionaries whom your press is branding as the craziest fanatics, impracticals and visionaries, should talk to you urging practical and sane policies, orderliness, and political honesty, as against chaos and disorder.

For more than six months I have been among you as a voice crying in the wilderness trying to hope against hope that rational thinking and common sense might mean some-

thing to your society, even when the greatest class issues are involved. I have been trying to do a work of persuasion, employing all possible tactfulness and consideration of the peculiarities of the situation and of your psychology. I have been doing it in the face of sneers and suspicion among my perhaps less polite, but surely more experienced proletarian comrades, who over and over again told me that it is entirely out of the question to try to make a bourgeois understand the justice and the necessity of anything which means the lessening of the class supremacy of capitalism, and who for that reason regarded as useless on the part of the workers everything except the most merciless struggle in every possible manner against those who rule the world. You are doing, I fear, all you can to encourage such views.

As the representative of the Finnish Workers' Republic I tried patiently, and using language as considerate as possible, to make your Government understand at least something about our situation over there. I offered you cooperation in return for concrete helpfulness. I proved to you that if the democratic professions of America count for anything in America, in the struggle of the workers in Finland, America has a cause worthy of unconditional support. We had there on our side not only the majority of the people, but we had that majority expressed in our favor by legal parliamentary proceedings, unequivocally proving that the cause of the Finnish workers is the cause of democracy. We had a case where the Finnish workers not only were opposed to German autocracy, but were fighting it bitterly, directly aiding the cause of the Allies, in so far as that cause involves the crushing of German militarism. We have on the side of our enemies in Finland representatives not only of the minority of the people, but of a parliamentary minority, openly hostile to even such democratic principles as are a matter of fact in America today,—as equal suffrage, social legislation and theoretical equality of opportunity. In Finland there was not even a question of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" such as in Russia. The Finnish workers expressly

wanted to call together a Constitutional Assembly on the basis of equal suffrage for all inhabitants of Finland. The other side not only temporarily allied itself with the Germans, but was for three years criminally plotting with the German imperialists and in every way was an accessory to the most abominable crimes of Prussianism. Yet that other side was the one which received all the encouragement and still is receiving it from you. I was never given a fair and a serious hearing.

Some time ago I made a formal proposition to the United States Government about cooperation between the Finnish Red Guard and the Allies on the Murman Coast, and I never received even an acknowledgment of that proposition. And, please, do not tell me that the reason for this slighting attitude was that it is not proper to confer with the representatives of unrecognized factions. Three years ago the representatives of the State Department had all kinds of negotiations with all kinds of Mexican factions not excluding Villa. You have had no scruples in officially dealing with and recognizing Professor Masaryk, representing the Bohemian National Council, although his status certainly is not as official even as mine, he being the self-appointed President of some National Council, which some time may become the Government of Bohemia or may not, but nevertheless at this time represents only an aspiration. I represent a *de jure* Government, supported by the Parliamentary majority of the people, a Government which, although it is driven out from its home-land today, has not renounced its claims and never will renounce them, and with which you *will have to* deal bye and bye, as it surely will once more come into its right.

But there was really a difference between Professor Masaryk and me. *I made it a point, and still make a point of all our cooperation with the Allies, that they should recognize the Russian Soviets.* Professor Masaryk offered to crush the Russian Soviet government with his Czechs and thus put an end to Socialist rule in Russia. There lies, perhaps, the reason for the difference in the treatment we have received.

Again I ask you, how in the name of common sense can you expect any one of us who has gone through the experiences which I have had in these six months of modest attempts at proletarian diplomacy not to see, that every political move is made on the basis of economic interests and that if we, the Finnish Socialists or the Russian Socialists, were the very arch-angels of orderliness, constructive political ability and common sanity we should still be branded as brigands as long as we did not renounce our social aims which are the natural next step in the social progress of the world?

However, I did not write this letter in order to criticize only. I have lived in America long enough to become an admirer of your tremendous resourcefulness, your ability of initiative, your youthful social vigor, unhampered by centuries of feudal tradition, and I have dreamed, as many others have dreamed, that America, because of these her assets, will be able to bring common sense into a world which is now paying a horrible price for the inability of its ruling classes to admit that the twentieth century is a century of labor democracy. And heaven knows that I, and almost everyone of us who believe in the Russian Revolution and in the ultimate victory of Socialism, from the very outset of the world war have been partisans of the Allies. Not that we for a moment renounced our convictions that class interests are the paramount issue in every capitalist state. Yet we are no such fools as not to see that modern industrial evolution, which inevitably leads to Socialism, is less hampered,—at least normally has been—by the so-called western democracy than by the rigid system of Prussianism. Also the sentimental traditions of liberal and revolutionary opportunity in France, in Belgium, in England, in Italy and in America as well as our whole-hearted disgust with those peculiarities of modern capitalistic materialism which more pronouncedly than anywhere else are expressed in the Prussian system, have kept us distinctly in favor of an Allied victory—if this war is to end in the victory of the one or the other side. I only wish that the Allies, including the United States, would not have done

everything in their power to make it as difficult as possible for any real radical to stick to those hopes!

But if the world war is to end in an alliance of imperialistic Germany and the Allies against radicalism and socialism all over the world,—if the Russian venture is pressed to its logical conclusion,—then there of course is no choice for an honest radical between the present belligerent groups. I do not know that I can hope that this may be avoided. Writing to you about these things, although I myself am pretty much losing any hope of response, *we still leave an opportunity to you to prove in some concrete fashion that a capitalist state, confronted with the problem of a rising working class, has other channels to offer for evolution than that of a brutal class war.*

Your experience in Russia until today has, perhaps even to your satisfaction, proven to you that the best outcome of the situation would be to put an end to the intervention, as long as it is not too late. I met a Government official not long ago who told me frankly that the best hope he entertained in regard to the Russian situation was that the Americans might be able to end the adventure at least as easily as you ended your Mexican intervention. I am afraid that that optimistic hope is not likely to become a fact—if something is not done at once. You were able to get away from Mexico “with honor.” You were the masters of the situation there, as far as your own actions were concerned. In Russia, especially at Vladivostok, you are not,—your financial influence with the Allies notwithstanding. You may expect to do anything you want, but you *will have to do that* into which the Japanese and Russian reactionaries will draw you,—and they know more about how to complicate the Russian situation than your representatives know how to avoid a complication.

If there is any hope of an honest ending of the present situation, it can be achieved only on the basis of actual negotiations with the Soviet Government. Today, I, as the rep-



representative of the Finnish Workers' Republic, am officially sending your Government a proposition of mediation between America and the Russian Soviets. Not that I for a moment believe that such a proposition will be entertained, or even acknowledged, but for the sake of historic record I will put myself and our cause down as having done everything imaginable and consistent with our principles to avoid the calamity of a general war between the Russian people and the Allies.

It may seem preposterous to some of your officials, and perhaps to you as well, that we, the unrecognized and uncouth representatives of the aspirations of the masses in the East, should expect even a consideration of our propositions. *But the history of what we are doing today, and of what you are doing or not doing, will be recorded a few decenniums from now by historians of a period when the idea we represent today will have become the basis of the structure of the world, and it will be our classless society of to-morrow, which will pass judgment on your class of to-day.*

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## APPENDIX

Since the writing of the foregoing a new insult has been added to the injury done to Russia. The Committee on Public Information has released for publication a series of "documents" brought from Russia by Mr. Edgar Sisson, Director of the Bureau of Foreign Propaganda. The "documents" purport to show that the soviet leaders are nothing but abject and corrupt tools of the German imperialists, who started the Russian Revolution because they were told by their German masters to do so, and were paid by Germany.

The absurdity of the accusations in the face of wellknown facts to the contrary has not prevented the daily press from accepting Mr. Sisson's "documents" as final evidence of the perversity of the soviet leaders. Such insignificant incongruities frequently occurring in Mr. Sisson's revelations, as for instance the placing of the Bolshevik revolution two weeks

before it actually took place, making Trotzky a recipient of ample German funds in Sweden at a time when, as everybody knows, he was in New York working day and night for twenty-five dollars a week, do not seem to disturb the conscience of metropolitan editors. Nor has any one raised the question just why these "documents," which have been in Mr. Sisson's possession for more than six months, have not been published before, and why they are published just now, when it appears to be impossible to communicate with Russia in order to find out more about the matter.

The fact, however, remains that Mr. Sisson's "documents" not only are questionable on the face of their contents, but that *it can be proved that they actually are brazen forgeries*. Mr. Sisson, in his too eager credulity, has been magnificently deceived by some Russian reactionaries. Under ordinary circumstances this deception would be a huge joke, but it promises instead to become a lamentable tragedy, since the inferences made by the Committee on Public Information seem likely to act as an additional means of confusing the Russian situation and estranging Americans from Russia, and vice versa, with all the dire consequences of such an estrangement.

Having been in close touch with events in Russia during the soviet regime and with persons who themselves took part in the latest Russian history, I am in a position to state the following facts:

When the November Revolution occurred in Russia and the Allied Embassies declined to continue official diplomatic relations with the new Russian Government, Mr. Raymond Robins, who was the head of the American Red Cross Mission in Russia, with the consent of the American Ambassador to Russia became the man who unofficially yet quite extensively remained in touch with the Russian Government, presenting to it the wishes of the Allies and furnishing the Allies with first hand information from the soviets. Some time in January, 1918, certain Russian Counter-Revolutionists, who were vit-

ally interested in discrediting the soviet statesmen, sent to Colonel Robins a series of "documents" purporting to show sordid relations between the German imperialists and the soviets. A part of these "documents" was a series which was in the hands of the Kerensky Government about July 1917, at a time when that government was vitally interested in convicting Trotzky and Lenine as German agents. Another part of these "documents" had reference to the period after the Bolshevik revolution. These documents are the same that Mr. Sisson is now publishing as a discovery of his own. Mr. Robins had undertaken to investigate the matter. Among others he visited Mr. Halpern, who, in July and August, 1917, prosecuted Trotzky on behalf of the Kerensky Government. Mr. Halpern has admitted that he had many of these "documents" at his disposal last July, *but they turned out to be forgeries* and could not be used against the Bolsheviks. The person who had fabricated them on behalf of certain Russian Counter-Revolutionists had made the mistake of confusing the Russian calendar with the western calendar, and his dates had become so badly mixed that the forgery became obvious in spite of the skill with which the "documents," including imitations of the handwriting of various Bolshevik functionaries, were made. Through diligent inquiries from other sources Colonel Robins became convinced that the rest of the "documents" as well, in so far as they had relation to the activities of the soviet statesmen, were just as unreliable.

In addition to this, Colonel Robins, being in close touch with the situation from day to day, personally knew that certain statements in the documents simply could not be true, as he had personal knowledge of the situation in question. It should also be added that these particular "documents" were only one instance of many more or less cleverly constructed "frame-ups," organized, on the one hand, by Russian reactionaries, and on the other hand, by German propagandists,—the former actuated by their desire to overthrow the soviets with the help of the Allies, the latter vitally interested in preventing the Allies from coming to such an understanding with

the soviets as would weaken Germany's grip on Russia. Having become convinced that the alleged "documents" were a dangerous plant,—a brazen frame-up, Colonel Robins paid no further attention to them. He tucked them away together with other documentary curiosities, such as threatening letters, etc.

Some week early in 1918 came the entrance of Mr. Edgar Sisson on the Russian stage. Mr. Sisson, formerly an editor of the Hearst *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, was sent to Russia to investigate the rumors of the alleged pro-Germanism of the Bolsheviki, and to spread American propaganda in Russia. In his Russian enterprises, Mr. Sisson seems to have been quite unfortunate. Lacking any understanding of conditions in Russia, and of the psychology of the Russian people, his attempts to "educate" Russia had but poor results.

He was similarly unsuccessful in obtaining any inkling of alleged pro-Germanism among the Bolsheviki, for he had before his eyes the relentless struggle of the Russian soviets against German influence and domination. He used frequently to visit the office of the American Red Cross in Petrograd, which was the center of the Allied diplomatic activities in Russia, and at one time he was willing to share Colonel Robins' opinion that there was no foundation to the accusations of pro-German leanings on the part of the Bolsheviki, and that the best policy for the Allies would be to enter into actual cooperation with the Soviet Government of Russia.

Then, one day, Mr. Sisson, while in Col. Robins' office, got hold of the above-mentioned forged "documents." He took them away with him and returned next day demanding an explanation from Col. Robins, why those "documents" had not been communicated to the American Government. Mr. Robins calmly explained to Mr. Sisson the real nature of the material, and warned him against becoming too enthusiastic about it. He suggested, however, that Mr. Sisson should conduct an investigation of his own regarding the material, so

that there might be no doubt remaining as to its real nature. A few days later, Mr. Sisson returned to Mr. Robins, apologizing for his rudeness at their former meeting, and expressing to Mr. Robins his readiness to admit that the "documents" were quite unreliable. Some time later, however, Mr. Robins was informed that Mr. Sisson had not only cabled the contents of the "documents" to the United States, but had intimated, in his cablegram, that Mr. Robins was convinced of their authenticity. At the next meeting of Mr. Sisson and Mr. Robins, at which were present Major T. Thatcher of the American Red Cross and Mr. Arthur Bullard of the Committee on Public Information, a quite violent exchange of words took place between Colonel Robins and Mr. Sisson.

Mr. Sisson now began to prepare for a return to America, having first secured either photographs or originals of the "documents" referred to in the foregoing. He left Russia for England. Mr. Robins was informed that Mr. Sisson's intention was to publish the "documents" in London and to influence through them the British Government, which at that time, owing to insistent admonitions from the British representative in Russia, Mr. R. B. Lockhart, was inclined to a more friendly understanding with the soviets. Mr. Robins went to Mr. Lockhart and told him the whole story, whereupon Mr. Lockhart cabled to his government advising it not to have anything to do with Mr. Sisson's "documents," as they were wholly unreliable. The result of this action was that the British government, as well as the British press, refused to give publicity to the matter. About that time "Le Petit Parisien," a Paris paper, printed a part of the alleged "documents." Whether it got them from Mr. Sisson, or from some other source, is not known, and is not essential. Mr. Sisson returned to America some time last May or June, and there is no doubt but that his irresponsible stories did their full share in prejudicing the American Government against the Russian soviets. Yet there has not been the slightest indication of subsequent efforts further to prove the authenticity

of the alleged "documents." Mr. Sisson himself, in his curious footnotes to the sensational stories, which are now being published, gives absolutely no proofs of their reliability. He even admits that a large part of them are reprints of type-written circulars without any known source.

I myself, as a Finn, can emphatically state that certain parts of the "documents" which have reference to Finnish revolutionists, are obvious falsehoods, as any Finn who knows anything about the Finnish situation can tell. Names are mentioned which have not the slightest relation to persons in Finland. Facts are mentioned which on their face are obvious lies.

I shall, however, not dwell on the utter absurdity of the accusations contained in the alleged documents. It looks to me as an insult to the American people to suppose that they would be willing to believe the allegations made by Mr. Sisson's documents. No intelligent observer will fail to notice that the documents are deliberately chosen to prejudice the British, French, Japanese and Americans in accordance with the particular fears and susceptibilities of those nations. It cannot be an accident only that the "material" found by Mr. Sisson in each and every instance is just enough to poison the minds of each particular government, but is without any corroborating evidence, and, as stated above, without any evidence whatever that the material really was part of a correspondence between the Germans and the Soviets.

Mr. Sisson was informed by reliable persons that the "documents," or at least a part of them, must have been forgeries. If he succeeded in learning anything about Russian conditions during his prolonged stay in Russia, he must also have discovered that forging of documents intended to implicate individuals and groups was a usual practice of the counter-revolutionists. He also must have known that the Germans, who were vitally interested in discrediting the Soviet Government, if for no other reason than that of preventing cooperation between the soviets and the Allies, quite

frequently took a hand in sending out forged documents. In view of all this it seems a perfect monstrosity that these so-called revelations, for the publication of which neither the British nor the French Government dared to take the responsibility, and which in no court of any standing would be regarded as sufficient to convict a dog, are now being published not only with the sanction of a responsible department of the American Government, but with comments and explanations frankly claiming that the revelations now finally brand the Russian statesmen as rascals and bandits.

It seems hopeless in these hysterical times to appeal to the common sense and to the sense of fair play of the enemies of the Russian Soviets. Yet I cannot make myself believe that the American nation or its Government is willing to take the products of Mr. Sisson's journalistic adventures as a sufficient basis for moral condemnation of the Russian Government and through them of the Russian masses, who are backing the Soviet Government in spite of the fact that Mr. Sisson's "documents," together with hundreds of similar fabricated yarns, are well known in Russia. The President of the United States has urged a re-trial of Tom Mooney in California, whose conviction was based on alleged perjury and false evidence. Yet, Mooney had had a trial at which he had an opportunity to present the facts on his side. Now you are not only summarily convicting many persons and millions of people supporting those persons, on the basis of documents which, to say the least, are very questionable, but you are doing so without even granting them a chance to tell their side of the story. Many crimes have been committed during this war, but none of them will stand out more flagrantly than this attempt to blackguard a whole nation on the basis of spurious and unfounded revelations of a prejudiced journalist.

Among the "documents" published by Mr. Sisson are some which have no relation with the present Russian situation at all, but which do implicate the German imperialists before the war. I do not know anything about those documents, and they may be quite genuine, for all I know,—but it is very

difficult to understand just why Mr. Sisson has seen fit to publish them in this connection,—unless his reason is an indirect admission that his Russian stories, all alone, would not suffice to produce the desired effect.

SANTERI NUORTEVA.

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