

Problems of the Soviet Representative

By Nicholas I. Hourwich

THE conscious American proletariat the other day greeted the appointment of a representative of the Socialist Republic of Russia. Celebrations of this event are still going on. Everywhere meetings are being held to greet the Soviet Ambassador. Socialist and labor organizations all over the country are sending telegrams of greeting, letters promising aid and co-operation in every way that may assist the cause of Soviet Russia, represented here by L. C. A. K. Martens, which is actually the cause of the conscious proletariat of the world,—the cause of the proletarian revolution in Russia.

But the revolutionary Socialist organizations of the American proletariat would make a fatal error if they, starting with the idea that someone, without their aid, would take care of revolutionary Russia, limit themselves simply to greetings and promises. They must not fail to translate this into revolutionary activity.

Not for a single moment do we doubt the great importance of the purely diplomatic activity of the Soviet representative. Still less are we inclined to doubt the magic power of Russian gold—the magic influence of this gold upon the minds and attitude of the American plutocracy, which has already manifested itself in an obvious manner. . . . But, with all due allowances for this, we consider it necessary to sound a warning to the American workers—and to Comrade Martens himself—against exaggerating the importance of purely diplomatic and commercial activity here. We consider that it would be a fatal mistake should these purely diplomatic-commercial efforts become the centre of his activity.

Evidently, as concerns "diplomatic" activity, Comrade Martens himself does not entertain any sentimental illusions. In an interview issued by him the other day, he definitely and unequivocally stated: "The Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic does not care about *political* recognition by the United States. . . . All that we want is *trade* recognition." Comrade Martens perfectly understands that, in a

world of capitalistic relations, commerce "is the real thing, and all else—nonsense." "Commerce" will create definite social-economic relations, a definite "equilibrium of social forces," after which, as Comrade Martens puts it, "the flag—that is, political recognition—will follow."

We would like to go a little further with this absolutely correct, truly Marxian reasoning. We should like to emphasize that commerce itself, that is, the establishment of commercial relations between Russia and the United States, in its turn, will come only as a result of definite social relations, the establishment of a definite equilibrium of social forces,—the very equilibrium on which depends the success itself and the salvation of the Russian Revolution, in general.

Comrade Lenin has repeatedly declared that the final triumph (or, inversely, the ruin) of the proletarian revolution in Russia depends on *whether the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and proletarian revolutions in other countries come to the aid of the Russian Revolution*. And in this one finds the key to an understanding of the present political situation.

If revolutionary movements of the proletariat in other countries conquer, then the conquests of the Russian Revolution, the Russian Socialist Soviet Republic, will be saved; and, as a result, of course, will come "commercial and trade" relations and all sorts of other relations. If, on the contrary, revolutionary proletarian movements in other countries fail, a mortal blow will be struck at the Russian Revolution. And, in that event, "commercial and trade" relations will not help. We ought not to forget that the capitalist world, including capitalist America, is not very anxious for commercial relations with Socialist Russia, since the cherished hope of the capitalist world is something greater—to *crush* the revolutionary resistance of the Russian proletariat, to *suppress* Socialism

in Russia, and then swallow the whole of Russia, with all her commerce, trade and natural resources.

In the prevailing political situation, the revolutionary movement of the proletariat is the main thing, the centre of gravity; *it is everything*, both in the interests of proletarian Russia and in the interests of the emancipation of the proletariat of the world. The success or failure of the proletarian movement, *the growth of the Bolshevik movement* in countries still ruled by Capitalism, is serving, at this moment, as a barometer of the "favorable" or hostile attitude of capitalist governments toward Soviet Russia.

The establishment of commercial and trade relations between Russia and capitalist countries, with all its independent value for the economic life of Russia, is, for Russia, similar to the signing of the Brest-Litovsk treaty—a means to "win time." . . .

All this, in our opinion, draws the "line of behavior" for the revolutionary Socialist organizations of the proletariat in America, as well as for Comrade Martens as representative of the Russian Soviet Government.

The centre of his attention, the compass directing his activity here into proper channels, should serve the interests of the revolutionary Socialist movement of the American proletariat, the interests of the advance guard of the movement—the *left or Bolshevik wing of the American Socialist Party*.

We are fully aware in his manifold activity, Comrade Martens may not always or frequently be in a position to act openly and definitely *under the banner* of the left wing, though, *essentially*, he should always go under that banner; but he must carefully look after and be on the lookout in order not to give the prestige of Soviet Russia to the right wing, to the moderates and social-opportunists, and thereby, perhaps unconsciously, stab the left wing in the back. It is this left wing which is the bulwark and hope of proletarian Russia, which Russia has called to its International Communist Congress.