

The Defeat of Germany and the Bolshevik Peril

By Nicholas I. Hourwich

WHO, indeed, defeated Germany? Who crushed the apparently invincible and iron might of her military machine, millions strong and tested in battles innumerable? Who drove Germany out of the ranks of the participants in the capitalist slaughter of the peoples, thereby ending the war? And, finally, who, in place of the military war, let loose or inspired the social-revolutionary war now raging in Germany, and which threatens to rage in other nations of the world?

Answers to these questions have been frequently made. But all these answers were given by "interested" parties, biased in their opinions, and each one of whom tried to secure to itself the credit for the defeat of Germany.

The Allies have ascribed this victory to themselves and their war chief, the French General Foch. According to the Allied version, General Foch was the real "revolutionary hero" responsible for raising the banner of the revolutionary uprising in Germany! True, the behavior of the "victorious" Allies and their armies in Germany was not in harmony with that version, since they used and still use all their resources to crush the Revolution in Germany. . . . But who, pray, except a few "tedious pedants," considers these small deflections from the claims and the ideals of the Allies?

On the other hand, the Bolsheviks and their adherents have since the beginning assumed the credit for the revolutionary up-flare that smashed the German military machine by loosening into action the inert masses upon whose acquiescence that machine built its power.

Which of these claims is in accord with the facts? Who, then, defeated Germany?

In the newspapers the other day there was a statement by a witness whose testimony in this instance can be considered as disinterested and truthful, and which cannot be suspected. This witness is none other than General Hoffman, the head of the German delegation at Brest-Litovsk, who translated the oily words of the Austro-German diplomats into the brutal language of the sword; that General Hoffman who used the military power of Germany to crush helpless Russia, and was satisfied that he had. . . . As the representative of a conquered country, General Hoffman is naturally not particularly interested in whom to ascribe the cause of the defeat—to the Allies or to the Bolsheviks. Who secures the honor of Germany's defeat is of slight, if any, importance to him. Moreover, as a representative of the German bourgeois-aristocratic military caste, General Hoffman's inclination would undoubtedly be to ascribe the defeat to an opponent

"equal" to him and his class—and "his country," to ascribe it the political and social system, to the opinions and principles, of the Allies (with whom he has a natural affinity, in fact), rather than to the modern "sans culottes"—the Bolsheviks. Indeed, according to the conceptions of the caste represented by General Hoffman, to be vanquished by an opponent "equal" to himself is less humiliating than being vanquished by an opponent occupying a "lower" social plane. Then this General Hoffman was a star actor in the campaign to defeat and crush the Bolsheviks. . . .

And yet it is General Hoffman who was compelled to admit the victory of the Bolsheviks. In an interview with Ben Hecht, the correspondent of the New York Globe and the Chicago Daily News, General Hoffman said:

"Germany was not beaten on the western front. Neither Marshal Foch nor Field Marshal Haig nor General Pershing defeated the German armies. Germany was defeated by an upstart named Lenin.

"You ask me what I consider lost the war for Germany. My answer is *Bolshevism*. I will tell you the exact moment that marked the beginning of the end. It was when General Ludendorff telephoned me at the headquarters on the eastern front from France to sign peace—peace with any Russian able to write his name.

"But immediately upon signing with the Bolsheviks we discovered that we had been conquered by them instead of having conquered them. *Our victorious army became rotten with Bolshevism. Our military machine became the printing press of Bolshevik propaganda. We did not dare to send a corps of the German Bolsheviks to the western front. What is worse: thousands of Bolsheviks entered Germany. It was Lenin and the Bolshevik propaganda that defeated Germany, undermined our morale and stirred up the quack Socialists in the country.*" (My italics.)

Replying to the rather naive question of the correspondent as to whether the German military machine was harmed by Scheidemann's "Socialistic propaganda," General Hoffman answered:

"No! Scheidemann was all right. Russian agents did it and German fanatics like Liebknecht."

That the admissions of General Hoffman are not prompted by a secret sympathy for the Bolsheviks can best be judged by his "recipe" for German salvation, proposed to the American correspondent:

"Exterminate Bolshevism with an iron hand and much more energetically than Herr Noske is doing."

Nevertheless, General Hoffman was forced to confess that *the Bolsheviks have crushed the German military machine*.

Bourgeois society will not admit officially the truth of General Hoffman's confession; but it knows that it is true. General Hoffman admits in words that Bolshevism was the menace; bourgeois society, in France, England, Italy and the United States admits it in deeds.

The war produced Bolshevism as a mass movement; and this mass movement is producing the war against capital.

If the likening of Bolshevism to an "epidemic disease" implies a disease among the workers, there is another disease among the propertied classes, and that is *Bolshevikphobia*. The "red-Bolshevik" menace pursued the German military machine—"the conquerors of Bolshevik Russia;" it is now pursuing the American moneybags, who are stricken with terror. Legislators, meek "priests of God" and newspaper scribes are all bending their frightened imagination upon this problem. The word Bolshevism, recently strange and foreign to the American, now appears constantly in the newspapers as an *American* problem.

In its fit of "Bolshevikphobia," our bourgeois society seeks the "medicine" to end the red menace. It is highly significant that all the "medicines"—whether prepared in an elaborate political laboratory or by the provincial wiseacre—resemble remarkably the legislative measures, of evil memory, of the Czar's regime. Apparently the United States intends "to begin where Russia left off." . . .

Consider the proposals. Here is a bill against "anarchists," unanimously approved by the Senate Judicial Committee. This bill, under threat of imprisonment and \$5,000 fine, forbids the display of flags or the distribution of printed or written works "symbolizing or propagating the overthrow, by force or violence or by physical injury to personal property or by general cessation of industry, of the government of the United States or all governments." Does not this resemble the legislative measures of the Czar? . . .

The issue is clear. Bolshevism penetrated Germany on its way to penetrate other nations. In spite of the statements of the moderate Socialists, who still believes that bourgeois society "has not yet exhausted its revolutionary mission," we are witnessing the coming end of bourgeois society and bourgeois democracy. It is moving with the speed of an express train toward, if not Czarist autocracy, then capitalist autocracy of the worst sort. And, apparently, judging by deeds, there is no difference between Czarism and the bourgeois "democracy" of Imperialism.