

## A CRY FROM RUSSIA.

Worthy Brothers,—In the midst of all your own pressing industrial and domestic problems I want to direct your attention to the very grave situation that is now existing in Russia. Every day you are witnessing appeals on behalf of the famine-stricken people of Russia, and all the capitalist newspapers are gleefully declaring that the famine is the result of the breakdown of Bolshevik rule.

Having just returned from Russia I am able to give you exactly the truth about the present situation. There can be no doubt about the very desperate needs of the Russian people, but if the Bolsheviks had not been in power one dare not think of what would happen to the people of Russia during the coming winter, for one cannot discover a single case where there is an unequal distribution of food; and that fact has accounted for the splendid loyalty and support which the workers and peasant soldiers and sailors have given to the Russian revolution.

The present crisis in Russia is accounted for in three ways. First, the breakdown of economic life, due to the blockade of the English Government, and the sabotaging of the means of transportation, which was carried out with the aid and connivance of all the capitalist governments who were supporting the counter-revolutionaries with material and money.

Secondly, the three years' civil war, which was carried on over several fronts, during which time bridges and other important means of communication were destroyed by the hirelings of English and French Imperialism.

During the civil war it meant that thousands of skilled mechanics joined the Red Army and formed the shock battalions that finally defeated Yudenitch, Wrangel, Denikin, and Koltchak. It was, therefore, an utter impossibility for the Government of Russia to build up the economic structure to perfection during this time, but that they were well on the way to do this cannot be doubted by anyone who has been to Russia and witnessed their efforts in this direction. The revolution had definitely entered upon its reconstruction period when the famine manifested itself.

This is the third cause of the present crisis, and is due entirely to natural causes. Russia has always been a great food-growing country, and the provinces where the soil is the richest are the provinces that lie on either side of the Volga. The prospects of a rich harvest this year had been good when an unprecedented drought takes place and the whole of the crops destroyed. If you travel along the famine region fields appear to have been ravaged by a colossal fire.

This is, of course, a dire calamity for Russia, as it means that millions of people will die this winter, that diseases will break out and spread all over that vast continent; but—these effects of the famine can be mitigated if the workers of all lands will rally to the help of their Russian comrades. That help can take two forms—first, financially; and I know how tight money is with you, and I know that you may say there is starvation in England. I agree, but that is our fault. We are allowing many of our people to starve in a land overflowing with all the good things of life and, therefore, it is not help we want but censure, for allowing such a state of affairs; but in Russia they are starving because there is a natural shortage, and everyone is bearing an equal share in the common suffering.

Secondly, we must see to it that our Government is not allowed to take advantage of the present situation by trying to break the revolution. Your slogan must be, "Watch the Government." Remember Russia is surrounded by hostile border States, such as Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Rumania. All these countries have received support from England and France in the shape of money and munitions to enable them to step into Russia at the first opportunity. We must prevent that, we can prevent it, we will prevent it. The Russian Revolution achieved as a result of unparalleled sacrifice and suffering on the part of the common people is at once too holy and precious a thing to allow to be overthrown.

The famine problem is your problem too. The Russians themselves are doing everything that is possible for the people. We must force the Government to send food, medicine and clothing, whilst all the time watching them. I am confident that despite this last calamity the revolutionists will pull through. They have already done so many wonderful things, endured so much, conquered so many difficulties, that out of this last trying time they will still emerge triumphant and so build up that vast Continent of Russia to the glory and happiness of the Russian people.

Send your money along to the Famine Fund and "Watch the Government."