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Russian Peace a "Scrap of Paper"

Pact of Lenine-Trotzky Government With Germany Will Be So Regarded by President Wilson and the Allied Leaders



The Russian-German peace parley at Brest-Litovsk. Prince Leopold of Bavaria (white beard) is shown signing the armistice. M. Joffe, chairman of the Bolshevik delegation, is the second seated figure from the right. The woman is a Russian.

By ALBERT WHITING FOX.

THE peace terms which Imperial Germany has forced on the Bolsheviki at the point of the sword will be regarded as a "scrap of paper" by President Wilson and the other leaders of the Entente. Any treaty signed by the Prussian war lords on the one hand and the Bolshevik leaders on the others will be regarded as null and void on the double edged principle that the German military masters who have imposed it have no authority to speak for the German people and that Lenine and Trotzky do not constitute a legitimate Government representative of the Russian people.

Apart from these reasons, the fact that the so-called pact has been obtained under threat and duress renders it totally worthless as an international document, according to President Wilson.

The Mailed Fist Expected.

But the practical and immediate results of the forced capitulation of the Bolshevik leaders have of course to be considered by the President and the allied statesmen. The mailed fist policy of Prussianism as applied to Russia was not unexpected in Washington. Therefore there has been ample time for the United States and the Allies to frame their plans in advance.

Interest in the new development centres chiefly about the following three phrases:

1. What will be its effect on the Allies and the American war aims?
2. What will be its effect on the war aims of the Central Powers?
3. How will it probably affect the military situation?

With respect to the war programme of the coalition Powers against Germany, it can be stated authoritatively that there will be no change from the principles of action announced and reiterated by President Wilson. The fourteen specific terms suggested by the President on January 8 will still hold as the logical means of bringing an end to the world conflict. These terms are incompatible with

the German-Bolshevik agreement, as are the vital governing principles to the consummation of which the United States has pledged its entire resources to fight with the Allies to the end.

Either these principles are to be vindicated or they are not. This is the decision involved in the outcome of the war, and President Wilson is wasting no time in thinking about the possibility of a German militarism triumphant. There is no such possibility and there can be no such possibility, according to the President's way of thinking.

Officials refer to this possibility only to explain the relationship which the German-Bolshevik forced peace will bear to the final settlement. If German militarism triumphs in Russia it will triumph elsewhere and dominate the world, for the United States and the Entente are solemnly pledged to a no compromise policy with autocratic militarism. Therefore the theory of the mailed fist as applied to the Baltic provinces will either have a 100 per cent. value or no value at all.

Those who entertain the belief that the United States and the Allies would entertain suggestions looking toward a compromise with German militarism whereby Russia would foot the bill and the others would escape scot free or would perhaps receive some compensation do not appreciate the basic idea involved in the President's policy or the doctrines of men like Lloyd George and Premier Clemenceau with respect to the war.

Fair Play for Bolshevism.

To vindicate the principles of justice and democracy in matters affecting their intimate or selfish interests and to throw these principles to the winds in Russia would admittedly stamp the whole fabric of the President's war policy as a sham and a farce. The very basis of the President's doctrine of democracy and world justice is and has been on trial in Russia.

It is here that the greatest opposition to the fulfillment of this doctrine has been encountered. German cunning and German intrigue have been busy

eating away the foundations of the self-determination of peoples and making impracticable their dreams of living their lives as free men in their own way. Now comes the unmasking of this intrigue by the application of wholesale military pressure. But the rights of the Russian people to reap the benefits of a new world order of things have not so far been affected by these developments, according to the views entertained by the President.

It has been made clear time and again in statements by the United States Government that the Russian people were not necessarily to be held responsible for events over which they have no control. The United States has never recognized Lenine and Trotzky as having authority to speak for the Russian people. There has not even been a pretence of representative leadership in Russia, for the Constituent Assembly, which might have given a semblance of representative power to some faction, was dissolved by Lenine as soon as he saw that he could not intimidate or control the delegates regardless of their constituents' desires.

Trotzky and Lenine.

As for Trotzky and Lenine, the United States Government is at present inclined to be charitable and to suspend judgment. The President in his address to Congress of January 8 went on record as indorsing their sincerity. There is no reason even now to doubt the accuracy of that view despite an accumulation of reports that these men were in reality paid German agents. It is one thing to charge Lenine and Trotzky with being German agents and another thing to prove it. There has been no proof and the President has given them the benefit of the doubt, to which all men under like circumstances are admittedly entitled.

The question, according to officials in Washington, has not so much concerned the sincerity of the Bolshevik leaders as it has their grit and strength of character under the test which they have had to face. It looks now as if Lenine and Trotzky were

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