

Recognition of Soviet Russia as an Issue in the United States

By I. Amter.

"If the United States is waiting for the Soviet Government to fall, it will wait a long time. So it might as well recognize Russia now as later." This was the message that Senator Wheeler, of Montana, took back to the United States from a visit to Soviet Russia in May of this year. Mr. Bush, chairman of the New York Chamber of Commerce, who also was recently in Soviet Russia, stated that closer economic relations between Russia and America would be of great mutual benefit. He laid down what he considered the bases for the resumption of economic relations between the two countries.

During the month of July a group of United States senators and prominent industrialists were in Moscow. Among them were ex-secretary of the Interior Fall, Mr. Sinclair, chairman of the Sinclair Oil Corporation, and Mr. M. Day, president of the International Barnsdall Corporation. It is clear that the latter two men are interested chiefly in Russia's oil. Nevertheless, Sinclair stated that "American public opinion is more and more inclining towards the recognition of Russia, and this may still force the government to renew relations with the latter: though this in any case will be the result of a Progressive victory".

Not only is a large part of the American people inclining towards the recognition of Soviet Russia, but recognition is becoming an issue. The influx of prominent public men of America to Soviet Russia is not a matter of chance, it is not the desire to obtain a summer vacation in the Caucasus. *The question of economic relations with Soviet Russia is one of the questions of the day in America. It is one of the questions that are dividing the ranks of the bourgeoisie and of the workers. It will be one of the issues of the coming electoral campaign, if it is not settled before.*

It is not generally known that six European and four Eastern governments have granted de jure recognition and established semi-normal diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia. Trading relations have been established with seven other European countries. Japan is in negotiation with the Soviet Government regarding treaty relations. Influential circles in France are working for opening negotiations between Russia and France.

In June, M. Duverget, when in Moscow, stated that he hoped that the commercial interests that he represents would be able to induce the French Government to resume economic and, later, political relations with Soviet Russia.

For some time, Senator Borah has been conducting widespread propaganda in the United States for the recognition of Soviet Russia. As a matter of course, his meetings have been attended by radicals and liberals but it has been noticed that even the conservative press has taken a sympathetic attitude toward them. That he did not stand alone was to be noted in the number of progressive senators and representatives who have come to visit Soviet Russia. Senator Ladd, a member of the Progressive Bloc, accompanied by Senator King, Democratic Senator of Utah, and Mr. Frear, Congressman from Wisconsin, recently were in Soviet Russia, but were silent about recognition. All of the visitors, without exception, expressed their astonishment at the progress that has been made in Soviet Russia in the past year and the stability of the government—a good augur of recognition. Several were interested in Baku oil—further reasons for economic relations and recognition.

What is the basis for the movement in favor of relations with and recognition of Soviet Russia by the United States? The oil industrialists and the farmers are highly interested in Soviet Russia; so also are the machine manufacturers. The interest of the oil industrialists needs no explanation. The competition between England and America, in particular, for the oil resources of Europe is very keen. By the so-called "treaty" of Lausanne, England and France have been beaten, and America is making a separate treaty with the Turkish government. Morally France and England won, but practically, Turkey remained in possession of the oil wells of the Mosul, the transfer of which to American oil magnates for exploitation she is now negotiating. The oil wells of Russia are alluring. Recently the Standard Oil Co. had to negotiate with a California oil producer for the delivery of 36,000,000 barrels of oil. The race is sharp—and Soviet Russia is taking her time; oil becomes more valuable from day to day.

The farmers have a peculiar interest: there is a glut of wheat on the American market. America's best customer, Germany, is unable to purchase a large share of the surplus that is worrying the American farmer. The situation is so serious that the American farmers are endeavoring to devise some method whereby 200,000,000 bushels of wheat may be removed from the American market this year. Prices are far below the cost of production. Russia is now beginning to invade the European market. Russian wheat is far cheaper than American wheat. Little by little, the European market, which had become largely the property of the American farmer, is being and will be threatened by the Russian peasant. A short time ago, the fear was expressed that American farming would not be able to supply even the American market. The outlook is for an *overproduction* for some years to come, unless the American farmer deliberately limits production. There is, however, another method: to come to an agreement with the Russian farmer, delimiting their mutual spheres. This presupposes recognition of the Soviet Government de jure or de facto. In any case, it is obvious that the American Government, through which the farmers will have to act, will be obliged to give the Soviet Government, through which the Russian peasant acts, some compensation for restricting her market. Hence the widespread demand among the American farmers for the recognition of Soviet Russia.

There is another element among the farmers, an honest element that believes in fair play. They are the poorer farmers, who today are suffering from the depredations of Wall Street. They sympathize with the Russian peasants and, being opposed to the present regime in the United States, both Republican and

Democratic (which has given rise to independent political action of the farmers and workers), demand that Soviet Russia be recognized.

Producers of big machinery are interested in Soviet Russia, since they recognize the vast market that Russia represents. This conviction is not limited to American manufacturers. On August 2, Premier Baldwin said in the House of Commons: "The largest potential market in Europe is Russia. Sooner or later that market will be open, and the German exports will go largely into Russia because in the past Germany has been the country most familiar with trading with Russia and the most competent to conduct it." The hopes of crushing Soviet Russia having been abandoned, the capitalist governments are now eager to capture the Russian market. They recognize the disadvantages that they must submit to, but the necessity of securing a further market for the tremendous production that is taking place in all industrial countries, is inducing them to accept many disadvantages that otherwise they would oppose.

Thus there is a big element that is interested in the recognition of Soviet Russia and is making insistent demands that such action be taken. It is obvious that economic interests will be the chief factors in forcing the recognition of Soviet Russia. The strength of these interests is growing and they are backed by a large section of the working class. There is a committee called the National Labor Alliance for Trade Relations with and Recognition of Soviet Russia, which is made up of influential trade union leaders. Borah has held several very successful meetings under the auspices of this organization. In addition, large labor bodies have endorsed the idea; among the latest advocates is the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor, one of the largest State labor organizations in the United States. The Federated Farmer Labor Party, which was recently organized in Chicago, also endorsed recognition.

The lines are being clearly drawn both between the two flanks of the bourgeoisie and of the workers. Just previous to the departure of Senators Ladd and King to Soviet Russia, Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, and an enemy of Soviet Russia from the very beginning, addressed a letter to them, pointing out the fearful deeds of the Soviet Government. Not only does it aim to destroy the American Labor Movement by sending revolutionists into the country to revolutionize the unions, he declares, but it also plots against the American Government, intending to supplant it with a Soviet Government. This, honest workers like Mr. Gompers cannot tolerate. After accusing the Soviet Government of various other offences, and displaying an ignorance of Russian conditions that even a school-boy would not be guilty of today, Gompers asked the American senators to procure information on eight diverse subjects.

In most recent times, Gompers has given sufficient evidence of his "interest in the Russian people". Only a short time ago, he threatened to expel the Seattle and Minnesota central labor bodies, among other reasons, for favoring the recognition of Soviet Russia.

Gompers gave Secretary of State Hughes occasion to express an official opinion on the question of Soviet Russia. Hughes remains immovable in the matter of recognition: the American Government will not and cannot recognize the Soviet Government. Making the usual charges that have bored the world for the past six years, Mr. Hughes gives utterance to such a profound knowledge of events and facts that a short quotation from his statement would not be inappropriate. "A new constitution has just now been promulgated, providing in effect for the continuance of the regime of the 1917 coup d'état under a new title. The constitution, it is understood, contains no bill of rights, and the civil liberties of the people remain insecure. There is no press except the press controlled by the regime, and the censorship is far reaching and stringent. Labor is understood to be still at the mercy of the State. While membership in official unions is no longer obligatory, workmen may not organize or participate in voluntary unions."

Official, conservative Washington has spoken—and the challenge is being accepted. The official position of the American Federation of Labor has been announced, and the progressives and radicals are out to contest it. Recognition of Soviet Russia is the issue!

However, one feature of the situation is remarkable: United States Senators and Congressmen, prominent businessmen and the president of a Chamber of Commerce, manifest sympathy with and understanding of Soviet Russia, while Samuel Gompers, professed labor leader, combats not only Soviet Russia, but also who support her. Senator Brookhart, however, answered the eight questions that Gompers addressed to Senators King and Ladd. Among the frank statements in support of Soviet Russia, Brookhart said: "The Russian press is practically free. The

opposition to the government is negligible. No one wants to start an opposition paper. It would receive no support. Peasants and laboring people are all united for the present government. No decent foreign correspondent is censored. So long as he does not attempt untruthful propaganda there is no censorship.

"The workingmen are organized and there are very few 'scabs' such as Gompers encounters here. It is a workingmen's government and the laboring classes are 99⁹/₁₀ per cent in favor of the existing government and they are all in the unions."

Brookhart is against the form of elections, he dislikes the fact that the former Czarists are not allowed to vote. But he categorically demands the immediate recognition of the Soviet regime.

While on his tour in the West, Harding likewise declared against recognition. Economic and political conditions, however, favor the progressive group: not only the United States, but the other European capitalist governments will be obliged to renew relations with Soviet Russia within the near future. It will be a distasteful step: it will mean a strengthening of the very forces that are leading to the disintegration of capitalism. But as Baldwin said, "the largest potential market in Europe is Russia", and that is the basis of the philosophy and morality of capitalist governments. The progressives have a winning issue: they declare they will force it in America and win.

The Position in Germany

By Wilhelm Bartz.

Berlin, October 3, 1923.

Events in Germany are developing more rapidly than we can follow them; but they are developing in the direction already indicated by us. Things are veering violently to the right. Kahr rules in Bavaria. He is said to have taken over the government. This report is, however, denied. And what need is there for a change of government? Kahr has only to whistle and all the authorities, including those of the Reichswehr, will obey his call. The latest is that he has had one of the members of the social democrat defense units arrested, because he is said to have molested the national socialists. The harmless occupation of the old portion of the town of Küstrin, appears now, according to the more recent official reports, to be a concerted Putsch plan. The guilelessly designated "national communist bands", of which the first official reports spoke, turn out now to be the "Steel Helm" people who, on the Oder and the Havel and in other places, wished to launch an attack on the 1st of October. The bomb has exploded prematurely.

A number of reckless spirits find themselves in custody. In North Germany the military dictatorship continues. Such measures of freedom as had hitherto existed for the working people were to be entirely done away with by an authorization law, which would empower the government to render invalid, by means of special orders, such laws as the eight hour day law. Behind this authorization law stood the social democratic ministers, as well as the ministers of the People's Party, but not, however, the parties from which these ministers came. The German People's Party was, of course, heart and soul for this law. But it demanded that it be carried through by a government in which the German Nationals, that is, the rightest of the right, should be represented. Nay, more. It demanded that these German Nationals should supplant the social democratic ministers. The social democrats would not immediately consent to this act of suicide. They stood by their ministers; in fact, as an answer to this thrust from the right, they were going to support a motion of the communists which demanded the setting aside of the state of siege in Bavaria which meant the destruction of the legal cloak for the dictatorship. Hence the crisis. This ended, as was not otherwise to be expected, with a compromise. The social democrats gave way.

A cabinet meeting which lasted until the early hours of the morning deliberated on the situation. Up to the time when these lines are given into the press the position is as follows. That in the Bavarian question, the social democrats will vote against the communist motion demanding the abolition of the state of siege. The social democrats agree to swallow the authorization law which will endow the government of the Republic with extraordinary powers, provided that this law shall not remain in force to the 31st. March 1924, but only so long as the present cabinet is in office. With regard to the setting aside of the eight hour day law, it is stated that "a formula has been found to which all the coalition parties could consent. In the event of the resignation of the Food Minister for the Republic,