

# TEXTILES

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## EXPORT TRADE AND THE BOLSHEVIKI

Last April we received a letter dated April 25, signed "A. A. Heller, Director, Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic," 110 West 40th St., New York, enclosing an article for publication in TEXTILES. Publication of the article was promptly refused in a letter mailed to the New York address. When a second letter, dated May 7, was received signed "Santeri Nuorteva," from the same address, we replied that we did not care to discuss the matter any further.

Seven weeks later, on June 13, the rooms of the Russian Soviet at 110 West 40th St., New York, were raided by the State authorities and all the records and correspondence seized and turned over to the Lusk Legislative Committee investigating anarchistic and socialistic activities in New York State. Two weeks later, at the public hearing on June 26 the results of an examination of the papers were reported to the committee. Among the documents presented was our correspondence with Heller and Nuorteva. As these letters have been published in part in the New York papers we give them below in full along with extracts from the Bolshevik article. Heller's letter was as follows:

Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic.

110 West 40th St.

New York, April 25, 1919.

TEXTILES,

Boston, Mass.

Dear Sirs:

We beg to hand you herewith a statement prepared by the writer which, if published in an issue of your journal, would doubtless prove interesting to many of your readers, and be mutually helpful to them and to the Commercial Department here of the Russian Soviet Republic.

Our department is at your disposal for such additional information as you and the readers of your publication may desire.

Very truly,

(Signed) A. A. HELLER, Director.

The textile trade is somewhat familiar with the article Heller enclosed, for it is practically identical with the address made by Nuorteva about six weeks later, on June 4, at Philadelphia before the National Association of Hosiery and Underwear Manufacturers and published at that time in a number of trade journals. The following extracts from it will make its import clear:

"The Commercial Department of the Representative of the Russian Soviet Government is organized for the purpose of making purchases in the United States of all materials required by the Russian Soviet Republic, and for the sale of Russian materials in the United States.

"As soon as trade relations with Russia are resumed, our organization here will easily become the biggest import and export institution in the world.

"The quality of our products should not reflect improper working conditions. We shall not buy, for example, anything made by child or convict labor. If the cost of goods manufactured under proper working conditions is going to be higher than those made under sweat-shop conditions, we are willing to meet it.

"The Russian Soviet Government is prepared to pay for its purchases in a manner which will make the trade independent of the depreciated value of the ruble. Firstly, it is ready to place \$200,000,000 in gold in banks abroad as soon as trade relations are established. Secondly, there are large stores of raw materials in Russia, such as flax, hemp,

bristles, hides, furs, platinum, precious stones, etc., ready for shipment to the American market. The value of these exports will go toward balancing the imports into Russia. Nor will the Russian purchases be limited to \$200,000,000."

Our reply to Heller, dated April 29, was as follows:

"Yours of the 25th inst. is at hand enclosing for publication in TEXTILES an article on trade with Russia, in which the statement is made that 'the Russian Soviet Government is ready to place \$200,000,000 in gold in banks abroad as soon as trade relations are established' to pay for American goods which, your statement adds, 'should not reflect improper working conditions, for example child or convict labor.'

"While the information is confused regarding conditions in Russia and the movement that has resulted in the control of a part of that country by what is known as the Bolshevik or so-called 'Soviet Republic,' there are certain facts that have been well established. These I will summarize, being careful to exclude reports, apparently well authenticated, as to massacres and outrages by the Bolsheviks in that part of Russia under their control:

"First, the Trozky-Lenine regime obtained power by the aid of Germany at a time when the United States was at war with that nation.

"Second, the Bolsheviks immediately withdrew the Russian army from the German front and made a peace with Germany by which Russian territory was surrendered, Russian resources placed at the disposal of the enemies of the United States, and a large German and Austrian army released for operations against the United States and our Allies.

"Third, the Bolsheviks resorted to wholesale repudiation of the debt of Russia.

"Fourth, the Bolsheviks disregarded the rights of property, have been engaged in an attempt to establish a Socialist government, and have succeeded in establishing anarchy in a section of Russia surrounding Petrograd.

"Fifth, supporters and apologists of the Bolsheviks have been engaged in a propaganda in the United States, in which they have shown not only lack of sympathy, but unceasing contempt, for American institutions and have denounced our form of government as a plutocracy, scoffing at the idea that it is a democracy.

"In the face of these facts your request that we publish an offer from the Bolshevik regime to deposit \$200,000,000 of the gold it has seized as security for the purchase of American goods is a piece of effrontery that demonstrates the wide gulf that separates the Bolsheviks from Americans.

"There is evidence of provocation for your offering me an insult and so I am compelled to conclude that your letter is due to ignorance of American character. I am strengthened in this conclusion by your having attached to your proposition a statement which, if not due to ignorance, would be a piece of hypocrisy that would make Pecksniff himself green with envy. I refer to your statement that the American products you purchase 'should not reflect improper working conditions,' that you 'will not buy anything made by child or convict labor.'

"Really you should confine your purchases to goods made by followers of Lenine and Trozky, paying for them exclusively in the paper money issued by the Bolsheviks."

Ten days later Nuorteva came back with this letter dated May 7:

"We have received your letter of April 29th replying to the letter sent by our Commercial Department on April 25th. We regret to find that your prejudice against the government of Russia prevents you from publishing the statement of our Commercial Department, and of course we do not expect you to act against your inclinations.

"You admit yourself that 'the information is confused regarding conditions in Russia.' The statements you make in your letter bear witness to this fact, because your bitterness,

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if not founded on incorrect information, would be altogether inexplicable.

"We venture to correct some of your statements as follows:

"1) The Soviet Government did not obtain power by the aid of Germany. Alleged proofs in the form of certain documents circulated to maintain this fiction are nothing but forgeries, as has been proved conclusively several times.

"2) The Bolsheviks made peace with Germany because the Russian army was absolutely unable to fight. They made it only after they had been waiting without results for a reply from the Allies to a proposition made by them to the American representative of the Red Cross, suggesting a continuation of the war against Germany on the condition of military support by the Allies.

"Russian resources never benefited the German army. Notwithstanding the fact that the Soviet Government was compelled to sign a peace treaty whereby the Germans theoretically were entitled to buy supplies in Russia, they actually got nothing from the territory controlled by the Soviets because of the determined disinclination of the Soviet authorities to aid German interests. The only place where the Germans got some aid from the former empire of Russia was from the reactionary governments of Ukraine and Finland, both of whom have been favored by the Allies.

"3) The Soviet Government repudiated the Russian debts only after having waited in vain, for a long time, for a reply to a proposition made by them to the Allies in which they offered a settlement of the Russian debts by mutual agreement. Later, on various occasions, that same offer was repeated, and they stand today ready to reach such an agreement.

"4) It is true that the Soviet Government is a Socialist government. The Russians justly believe that they have a right to determine their own form of government without foreign interference. Other nations, as for example, the United States, did not deny this principle even at the time when Russia was ruled by the bloody autocracy of the Czar.

"It is not true that the Soviet Government has established anarchy in Russia. On the contrary, it is suppressing anarchy and according to the best evidence available—and it is admitted, for instance, by Mr. W. A. White in the New York World of a recent issue—the Russian Soviet Government is the most stabilized government on the European continent east of the Rhine.

"I am sure that you are fair enough to admit that there are two sides to many questions. I do not write this letter in order to change in any way your present attitude toward Soviet Russia. I only feel convinced that within a short time you yourself will find that the views you expressed in your letter, and the attitude you are taking now on the Russian situation are not warranted by actual facts, and that you then will revise your attitude."

Our reply to Nuorteva was as follows:

"Replying to yours of the 7th inst., it is useless for you to continue the correspondence with me regarding Russia, for our differences are fundamental. You are out of sympathy with American institutions. Because of the liberty accorded to the individual under our form of government, which you do not understand well enough to appreciate, you are able to do the work you are now engaged in.

"If you should return to Russia you can tell your associates there that you found at least one man in the United States who could not be fooled by either German or Bolshevik propaganda."

While we refused then to have any further discussion with the Soviets in New York, now that the letters have been published it may be well to refer to the shallowness of their reply.

1. It is well known that the German Government gave Lenine free passage across Germany from Switzerland to Russia just before the Bolsheviks seized power at Petrograd. Madame Aino Malmberg, a Finnish agitator and a defender and apologist for the Bolsheviks, when asked if Germany had not given Lenine free passage, boasted of it in an address before the Brookline Civic Forum on Nov. 18, 1917, and brazenly asked her audience: "What of it?" And this at a time when the United States was at war with Germany and devising means to feed the starving Finns. Every move made by the Bolsheviks culminating in the peace of Brest-Lit-

ovsk, was calculated to help Germany crush the United States and our Allies. Germany came very near winning the war. If the Bolsheviks had gained power a little earlier the added help might easily have turned the scale and given us a peace dictated by Germany instead of to Germany.

2. The fact that Russians are still fighting disproves the second assertion. If Russian resources did not benefit the Germans that was due to the fact that the Allies did not give the Germans and the Bolsheviks time to benefit.

3. This needs no comment.

4. The Russians are now determining their form of government, not only without foreign interference, but part of them with foreign resources which they have asked for.

We welcome the opportunity afforded by the raid of the Bolshevik headquarters in New York to point out the duty of every American citizen in these critical times. There can be no common ground between Americanism and Bolshevism. One represents nationalism; the other, internationalism. One is based on order; the other on disorder. One stands for the honorable discharge of obligations and the payment of debts; the other, for repudiation. One means protection to property rights; the other, the destruction of property rights. One is government by the people; the other, by an irresponsible autocracy. One is for America; the other is against America.

The two irreconcilable forces of order and disorder face each other, not only in Russia and throughout Europe, but here in the United States. We have watched this Bolshevik propaganda in various forms since its rise a few years ago. But whether it comes in the form of violence and anarchy as in Russia, is taught in the oily and guarded language of college graduates, or appears as a crude and clumsy bribe in the form of export trade, it everywhere means the destruction of all that makes life worth living. Bolshevism is a thing which it is the duty of every American to fight to a finish in private and in public.