
Questions to Debs.

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This article was sent to Debs under a cover letter dated Aug. 3, 1922.

Victor Chernov, once the leader of the rich peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie of Tsarist Russia, who now maintains his headquarters in Berlin, Germany, sent a cablegram to Eugene V. Debs, now in a sanitarium at Chicago, urging him to join in the demand for mercy for the Socialist Revolutionaries on trial at Moscow.

Chernov signed his cable on behalf of the Berlin delegation of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, which gave and still gives the lie to its own name as the party of the "reactionary democracy" of the small manufacturers.

Debs responded to Chernov in a protest to Lenin, still in agony as the result of an attack by a Chernov Party-inspired would-be assassin. Debs urges Lenin "against the execution of any of the Socialist Revolutionaries or the unjust denial of their liberty."

Debs, therefore, takes his stand temporarily on the side of Chernov, the enemy of Communism, and against Lenin, one of the spokesmen of the Russian worker and peasant masses in their struggle to abolish the rule of capitalist exploiters and landlords and usher in a Communist Society.

The controversy that Debs thus enters into by taking his stand on the side of Chernov is as big as the class struggle itself.

This statement will therefore be confined to asking Debs if he is really acquainted with the nature of the source from which he draws his inspiration. These questions are taken, with a few

changes in wording, from matter sent out through the *International Press Correspondence*. Here they are:

Is Debs aware of the fact that at the end of 1921 Colonel Makhlin published in the *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* an article on the methods of organizing an armed peasant revolt against the Soviet Government, of blowing up the railways of Soviet Russia and of the massacre of the Red Army? (*Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* is Chernov's organ.)

Is Debs aware of the fact that during the Kronstadt revolt there appeared an article in the *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* from the pen of Victor Chernov calling upon the peasantry to rise? "And you despots, Bolsheviki!" this article reads, "your days are counted; IF YOU CARE FOR YOUR LIVES CLEAR OUT OF THE WAY. The people is rising and judgment will be pronounced."

Is Debs aware of the fact that Chernov's journal, in view of the Kronstadt rising, stated: "Those who do not support the people of Kronstadt are allies of the bloodstained Field Marshall Trotsky and his hangmen. We have made up our minds. We are with the Kronstadt people against their oppressors and hangmen."

Is it known to Debs that the Ninth Congress of Chernov's Socialist Revolutionary Party passed the following resolution: "THE ARMED STRUGGLE WITH THE BOLSHEVIK

POWER IS INEVITABLE and therefore the active elements of the people must be organized.”

Has Debs knowledge of the fact that Victor Chernov wrote the following in his journal on this decision of the party: “The Socialist Revolutionary Party takes up the struggle against the Bolshevik despots on all fronts.”

Is Debs aware of the fact that the French government financed the enterprises of Chernov’s Socialist Revolutionary Party; that this took place in the territory of Soviet Russia through the medium of the Danish Embassy, and that at present it is being done through the Czechoslovak government at Prague?

Is it known to Debs that Chernov’s Socialist Revolutionary Party supported Antonov’s uprising and that the latter executed hundreds of revolutionary workers?

Is Debs aware of the fact that in Samara and Kazan, when Chernov’s Socialist Revolutionary Party was in power, there the Bolsheviks were killed off with beastly cruelty?

Is Debs aware of the fact that Chernov’s Socialist Revolutionary Party committed robberies and expropriations on the territory of the Soviet Republic with the connivance of its Executive Committee, that the stolen money was handed over to a member of the Executive Committee (Rakov) and that the Eighth Congress of the Socialist Revolutionary Party sanctioned the expropriations?

Is Debs aware of the fact that Chernov’s Socialist Revolutionary Party received from the French military mission explosives in order to blow up the railways of Soviet Russia?

Is Debs aware of the fact that the “shock troops” of Chernov’s Socialist Revolutionary Party prepared an attempt on the lives of Trotsky and Zinoviev, and that the Executive Committee of that party approved of individual terrorism?

Is Debs aware of the fact that Chernov knows that Volodarsky, Soviet commissar, was murdered with the approval of the Executive Committee of

the Socialist Revolutionary Party, and that the assassin, Sergeev, a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, received orders for this deed from Gots, a member of the Executive Committee?

Is Debs aware of the fact that Chernov’s Socialist Revolutionary Party negotiated with the Ivanov counterrevolutionary organization with the object of inducing the German Northern Army to attack Petrograd and deliver power to a bourgeois government?

Is it known to Debs that Chernov’s Socialist Revolutionary Party delegated as participant in these negotiations Colonel Postnikov, who got into communication with the commandant of the German Army with a view of obtaining information?

Is Debs aware of the fact that Chernov’s party was also receiving financial support from the Ivanov counterrevolutionary organization?

Is Debs aware of the fact that Chernov’s Socialist Revolutionary Party cooperated with Filanenko’s counterrevolutionary organization and was also receiving financial support from the latter?

Is Debs aware of the fact that Chernov’s Socialist Revolutionary Party was organizing party cells within the Red Army and that on many occasions it prepared mutinies, for instance, even immediately after the October (1917) Revolution, when the members of that party led an army against Petrograd?

Is it known to Debs that Avksentiev, Kerensky, and Chernov participated in this movement?

Is Debs aware of the fact that Lydia Konopleva communicated with the Executive Committee of Chernov’s Socialist Revolutionary Party upon the intended plot against Lenin? Does he know that on behalf of the Executive Committee, Chernov and Gots negotiated with Konopleva in this matter? Is he aware of the fact that the Executive Committee approved the plan? Is he aware of the fact that the Executive Committee sent its member, Richter, to Moscow, in

order to prepare for assassination?

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We wonder how many of these facts were known to Debs when he sent his Chernov-inspired cable of protest to Lenin.

We feel that the workers of this country ought to know if Debs thinks the lives of Chernov's counterrevolutionists are more sacred than the lives of Russia's Communist workers and peasants, still waging the war for the preservation and strengthening of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, and for the protection of the beginnings of the world social revolution.

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When Chernov overthrew the Soviet Power on the Volga in 1918, it ended with the crowning of Admiral Kolchak as Monarchist Dictator of Siberia.

Behind the cable that Chernov sent Debs there lies the hope for the overthrow of Soviet Power throughout Russia, and the rule of another Kolchak over the whole of Russia.

The history of the early days of the Bolshevik Revolution showed the Communists too gentle with their force-loving adversaries. The Bolsheviks were not in love with the use of force. They used it only when necessary to win and preserve the workers' revolution.

The Proletarian Dictatorship is still fighting for its life in Soviet Russia. It has only reached the doorstep of Communism. Capitalism throughout the world, aided and abetted by the Chernovs, has made war, is making war, and will continue to make war to its last breath against the emancipating rule of Russia's workers.

But Communism replies to Capitalism with its own weapons, the only weapons Capitalism knows, and with the spread of the social revolution over the world, the workers everywhere are compelled to take their stand.

We, therefore, ask Debs if he is acquainted with Chernov and his Socialist Revolutionaries; if he knows the facts as set forth above.

And, knowing, we ask him if he still stands with Chernov and the counterrevolution, or with Lenin and the world socialist revolution?

We are sending Debs a copy of this article. We shall be glad to publish his reply.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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