
Consul of Russian Republic Here to Open Trade with US; Authorized to Spend \$200,000,000: His Official Statement of Conditions Lays Ghost of Lies and Slanders of Violence About Soviet Rule and Its Aims — To Open Negotiations for Withdrawal of US Troops from Archangel

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The Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic has appointed L.C.A.K. Martens as its official representative in the United States, with the power of opening trade negotiations with the American government, it was announced yesterday [March 20, 1919].

The credentials, just forwarded to Martens, who is a worker of long standing in the Socialist movement of Russia, empower him to place at once in banks in Europe and the United States gold to the amount of \$200 million to cover the price of initial purchases which it is the desire of Russia to make of the United States.

Announcement of his appointment was cabled to Martens about three months ago, but it was not until recently that he received the credentials authorizing him to make known the plans of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic regarding trade relations with the United States.

Issues Complete Statement.

Martens' first act as the official representative of the stable government established in Petrograd was to issue a complete statement of the reasons for his appointment and the objects which he desired to

obtain. He has forwarded his credentials to the State Department in Washington.

Whether recognition of Martens by the State Department will involve recognition of the Soviet government, or whether the State Department may deal with him as an industrial agent only, will develop in a short time.

Martens' statement, addressed to all who are desirous of learning of the possibilities of trade with Russia, reveals the truth about Russia without the partisan squint through which most eyes heretofore have viewed conditions in that country.

The vastness of the financial negotiation which he lays before the industrial forces of the United States, and the amount of respectability which lies behind the prospect are of the most far-reaching character. It is expected that his statement will correct many of the mistaken ideas now held regarding the Soviet.

He summarizes the needs of Russia today — the things that Russia is in the market for — as machines, clothing, canned meats, and chemicals.

The articles that Russia is able to sell are: flax, hemp, hides, bristles, furs, lumber, grain, platinum, metals, and minerals.

Extends Greetings to All.

At the same time that Martens made this announcement he extended to all American fellow workers fraternal greetings from the Russian workers, and expressed the gratitude which the Russian workers feel for the sympathy and understanding they have met with from their brothers here during the darkest hours of the revolution, when the issue was in doubt.

The following is a brief characterization of Martens:

L.C.A.K. Martens, appointed representative of the Russian Soviet government in the United States, is a mechanical engineer and a man of business experience, 44 years old. He was born in Bachmut, in the province of Yekaterinoslav, southern Russia [Ukraine]; had his school education in the "gymnasium" at Kursk, and graduated as a mechanical engineer from the Technological University at Petrograd. For the past few years Martens has been in the United States as the American representative of the Demidov Iron and Steel Works, which has purchased here several million dollars' worth of machinery for the Works. The Demidov works are the largest steel works in Russia. Before the

war they employed 28,000 men. About a year ago the Demidov plants were nationalized by the Soviet government.

Opens Offices Here.

He has opened a bureau of the "Representative of the Russian Federal Soviet Republic," with temporary headquarters at 299 Broadway, Room 1812.

Martens statement follows:

Explains What Russian Power Is and Its Responsibilities.

I have recently received credentials appointing me representative in the United States of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, with instructions to negotiate for the opening of trade relations between the United States and Soviet Russia. Soviet Russia wants to arrange the purchase of great quantities of supplies here. As a first step, I have forwarded my credentials to the State Department, with a memorandum on conditions in Russia and an outline of the desire of my government to re-establish trade with the United States.

My government, in the event of trade being opened with the United States, is prepared to place at once in banks in Europe and in the United States gold to the amount of \$200 million to cover the price of initial purchases.

To insure a basis of credits for additional Russian purchases in the United States, my government is ready to submit propositions which I believe will be acceptable to Americans interested in Russian trade.

The purchase I am empowered to arrange will be commensurate with the needs of the 150 million people of Soviet Russia. These needs are now all the greater because of the disorganization of the war and the utter extravagance and incompetence of the Tsarist regime; and because for the past year and a half Russia has been able to carry on practically no foreign trade.

Russia is now prepared to purchase in the American market great quantities of commodities such as: railroad supplies, agricultural implements and machinery, factory machinery, tools, mining machinery and supplies, electrical supplies, printing machinery, textile manufacturers, shoes and clothing, fats and

canned meats, rubber goods, typewriters and office supplies, automobiles and trucks, chemicals, medical supplies, etc.

Russia is prepared to sell: flax, hemp, hides, bristles, furs, lumber, grain, platinum, metals, and mineral.

Under the old regime Germany was the greatest factor in Russian foreign trade, and the bulk of imported manufactures came from Germany. In the year before the war Germany's exports to Russia amounted to nearly four times those of Great Britain, the second factor in Russian imports. In as much as Germany's production for a considerable time remains subnormal, Russia is all the more an open market for other countries. In a trade sense, as well as in a political sense, Russia is starting anew.

Wants Troops Withdrawn.

In regard to the blockade and the invasion of Russia I am empowered to state that my government is willing and sincerely anxious to have hostilities cease in Russia and to enter into agreements with the American government to facilitate the peaceable withdrawal of American troops from Russia.

The Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic has now been in existence for over 16 months. Its government, the Council of People's Commissars, is a government controlled by and responsible to all members of the population who perform useful work, physical or mental. Only those who refuse to exercise their productive abilities, choosing to live of the fruits of the labor of other peoples, are eliminated from participation in the control of the government. Every person engaged in useful productive activities participates directly in the management of society in Russia today.

In so far as opposition has ceased in the form of violent counter-revolutionary attempts against the Soviet government, it has been possible to assuage extraordinary temporary measures, such as censorship, martial law, etc.

Violence at Minimum.

Much prejudice has been created against the Soviet government by the circulation of false and often absurdly silly reports about the nature of the institutions and measures taken by the Soviet government. One of the most frequent allegations is

that the rule of the Soviets is one of violence and murder. Of course, such an accusation is altogether unwarranted. It has been necessary to adopt stern measures against people who continuously and openly plot for a re-enslavement of the Russian workers and who resort to methods of violence in their fight. Such measures, however, have been immeasurably less oppressive than those usually resorted to by governments against their opponents who are found using violence against established society. Intervention in Russia obviously has had very much to do with the so-called terror.

During the past year the Soviet government has managed to complete the building of some 2,000 versts [2,134 km.] of new railroads. It has planned large scale work in the way of road building, canal building, etc. Tens of thousands of new primary schools, vocational schools, workers' universities, and lecture courses, especially offering agricultural instruction have been established and maintained at great expense, and educational activities have been extended to include the making of the treasures of the arts and sciences as easily accessible to the people as possible. An army of over 1 million men has been trained, equipped, and kept supplied with munitions.

In spite of the great handicaps due to the heritage of disorganization from the old regime, the lack of raw materials and machinery, the obstructional methods of opponents of the government, and to the natural confusion of a transition period of revolution, much has thus already been accomplished, and the foundations laid for a high development of economic life.

I believe it is high time for the world outside of Russia to dispense with its passionate and partisan dealing with the Russian situation, and in place of indiscriminate abuse of the Russian working people undertake to approach the situation in a sense of a serious understanding of the actual conditions and opportunities.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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