

SOVIET SYSTEM REND RUSSIA

New Republic Suffers Greatly From the Rule of Committees

HOWLS OR SILENCE

Non-Socialist Parties Helpless Against
the Swift Demagogue Tide —
Bolshevik Propaganda.

(London Times Cable Service to The
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Petrograd, Sept. 24.—Under the Soviet or committee system Russia has suffered a hundredfold more in six months than she had suffered in a century under the Okhrana. Unbridled license prevailed. The soldier could default, could insult, or slay his officer with impunity; the theorist could propound and apply any wild scheme, subversive or frankly traitorous; anybody could rob or murder, almost unheeded and unhampered. The revolutionary flag covered every crime, if crime it could be called, since the sanction of law had been superseded. Everybody was equal, everybody was free to say and do what he pleased—in theory; in practice, everybody had to think and to speak only as the theorist and his ally, the demagogue, should direct. Tseretelli might utter high-flown sentiments before the Soviet, Terestchenko breathe soothing optimism into the ears of allied diplomatists, Kerensky incite the soldiers to do their duty—these pleasant and delusive occupations had no organic connection with the stern facts of the revolution.

Sober Speech Impossible.

Under the new regime Russians had to be revolutionaries, had to howl with the wolves, or sing with the bards of revolution, or had to keep silent; they were not free to speak the language of sober sense or patriotism. Any attempt to utter a warning was immediately stifled. Whoever dared to criticize was banned as a counter-revolutionary, a supporter of Tsarism, an apostle of reaction. The personnel and the methods of the Okhrana, including funds from the treasury, in addition to largesse from Berlin, were at the disposal of the Soviet and its supporters. (Virtually all the agents of the Okhrana joined the Bolshevik party.) A rash expression overheard by an informer might entail imprisonment, insult, violence, or death.

Naturally, the press suffered directly by censorship restrictions, indirectly by sheer violence. A swarm of bolshevik and other Socialist organs came into the field. They were subsidized out of the secret funds, and, in the case of the bolshevik sheets, from Berlin. But that did not satisfy their insatiable appetites. They continually "expropriated" the non-Socialist editorial and printing offices and "commandeered" their paper. Leading organs of public opinion, like the *Russkoe Slovo* in Moscow and the *Retch and Novoe Vremya* in Petrograd, had to print Socialist newspapers in order to save themselves from extinction. They had to sacrifice circulation and advertisements. There was no remedy, no redress.

Unready for Liberty.

Unprepared for political independence, incapable of resisting the demagogue tide, the non-Socialist parties and the bulk of the intelligentsia drifted helplessly. Many entered the Socialist-Revolutionary stream, vainly hoping thereby to check the swifter bolshevik current. Bolshevism attracted the primitive, untutored minds of the multitude. Lenin spoke a language that the simplest *naufik* could understand. Utterly befogged by the learned arguments and foreign words so abundantly declaimed by "Social Revolutionaries" and "Social Democrats," quite unable to reconcile their pacifist tendencies with outward readiness to carry on the war, the ignorant masses, and especially the demoralized soldiery, listened delightedly to Lenin and his horde of pro-German agitators. Take the land; it is yours by right. Do not fight. All men are brothers; there should be universal brotherhood, no war.

This was the sort of Socialism that the *naufik* who was yesterday a serf could digest with ease and comfort. He was then prepared to swallow a cruder dose: "If the owner resists, take the land by force. There is no such thing as property—there should be no owners." He did not mind the trap concealed in this utterance. Once he got the land he would take care that nobody else should take it from him. Then came the final and least digestible bolus: "The Germans are your friends. They are fighting because England would not make peace. England is prolonging the war because she is making a good thing out of it. You are England's tools."

Under various guises and disguises this has been the substance of the bolshevik propaganda. It has had an immense effect upon Russia's ignorant millions. If the country at large was not plunged into the bolshevik vortex, but rather tended to go wide of its fatal swirl, we must seek the explanation elsewhere—in the strengthening, sobering influence of a healthy reaction, the elements of which had been lying dormant amid Russia's population.

Attitude of Cossacks

That the revolution was being exploited by alien influences, prejudicial to the interests of the State, irreconcilable with the character of the people, soon became evident to all sober-minded Russians. The rapid disorganization of trade and industry, the wild squandering of State funds, the plundering and destruction of private property, the loss of public confidence and credit, brought national bankruptcy within the immediate perspective. Anarchy in the rear, disaster at the front, were certain to involve Russia in a disloyal, dishonorable surrender. Almost from the outset of the crisis the Cossacks held aloof from the Soviet, and began

to unite together and to organize resistance to its destructive, disintegrating activity.

Within a few weeks of its rise they held their first congress in Petrograd, at which General Korniloff, himself a Siberian Cossack, born of a Buriat mother, was present as Commander-in-Chief of the troops. During the congress all the Cossack regiments in the capital were paraded by him and then visited the allied Embassies and Legations, presenting addresses expressive of their loyalty to the common cause and of their determination to uphold the provisional Government. From this staunch attitude they have not swerved.

Numbering several millions, grouped in twelve armies, wide flung along the southern borders of the Empire between the Don and the Pacific Ocean, the Cossacks, whether of Russian or semi-Asiatic descent, had long been accustomed to freedom and had been inured to discipline and hardship. They held broad lands from the State in return for military service. Serving with the colors, fighting the frontier tribes or protecting the border or working in their villages, they were all obliged to appear, horsed and armed, when danger threatened the State.

Big Interests at Stake.

They had large vested interests at stake; what is more, they had an inbred tradition of duty and patriotism. Therein they differed from the ordinary peasant, and it was this difference that rendered the Cossack so quickly alive to the dangers that threatened himself and his country and enabled him to focus and develop the instinct of self-preservation among his weaker, less advanced countrymen. He could be ruthless when occasion called for it, but he did not want to be a mere policeman. The old regime had used and abused his loyalty too often on such distasteful missions. The Cossack had no love for them. He was pleased to gain fuller freedom under the revolution. He was willing to help Prince Lvoff, M. Kerensky or any other responsible person in the conduct of State affairs. He was not a counter-revolutionary, but just a plain, honest yeoman, a soldier farmer.

We must appreciate these elementary truths about the Cossack, casting aside the absurd picture of him in the guise of a bloodthirsty ogre which has been handed down to us since the days of the Napoleonic invasion, for unless we know the Cossack as he is we shall fail to understand the real significance of the events that are happening and preparing in Russia at the moment.

Death of Old Regime.

When the bread riots began in Petrograd the Government resorted to the usual bureaucratic expedient: it announced the formation of a special committee, promising to take immediate measures. But nobody had the slightest faith in this discredited method of solving a difficulty. The soldiers and the Cossacks being largely unreliable, Protopopoff, foreseeing a crisis, had organized the police into machine-gun companies, to be posted on public edifices in case of an emergency. The narrative of events that occurred during the great days of the revolution is too well known to require recapitulation. Soldiers sacked the arsenal, and distributed arms to the workmen. There was sporadic fighting between the disorganized troops; armed mobs were firing in all directions; the amateur police gunners played their weapons indiscriminately and mostly without effect. There was a colossal expenditure of ammunition and very little loss of life, not more than 200 people killed. And amid the din and confusion the old regime disappeared almost without a struggle.

Birth of the New Order.

The popular desire to be rid of the Okhrana has been satisfied. The Okhrana had ceased to exist. Together with the army of spies and the Goddamerle, the ordinary police had also disappeared. Protopopoff had made them into amateur gunners. All the sober-minded elements looked for guidance to the Duma, which had made itself the spokesman of the nation in demanding reforms. President Rodzianko hoped till the last that the Czar would give way; he waited too long. The revolutionary outbreak gave almost immediate predominance to demagogues of extremist views. Amid the turmoil and confusion one regiment, the Preobrajensky Guards, rallied to the support of the Duma. This encouraged Rodzianko to form a provisional Government. For this purpose a committee representing all parties in the Duma was elected. But already a rival organization known as the Council (Soviet) of Workmen and Soldiers' Delegates had arisen.

Autocracy Friendless.

The Socialist leaders, Tchekheidze and Tseretelli, one a Georgian serf who had become a lawyer, the other a Georgian noble, and Kerensky, then an inconspicuous lawyer, were outwardly in control of the Soviet; behind them loomed an anonymous array of extremists. None of these men were either workmen or soldiers. (When a peasants' Soviet was afterward formed the directing spirits were also found to be non-peasants.) The Soviet did not object to the formation of a provisional Government by the Duma. M. Tchekheidze preferred, indeed, that the non-Socialists should assume all the responsibility, while the Soviet wielded the power. M. Kerensky alone entered the Ministry. Such were the circumstances in which the Lvoff-Guechhoff-Milikoff-Kerensky coalition came into existence, and such they have remained throughout the numerous Ministerial combinations that have followed.

Meanwhile the Czar had been

forced to abdicate in favor of his brother, and Kerensky had compelled the Grand Duke Michael to waive his rights. The autocracy, discredited by the Okhrana and by the Rasputin scandal, left few to regret it. The provisional Government, dominated by the Soviet, tried to accomplish a hopeless task. Mob rule asserted itself in every direction. The workmen wanted enormous pay and little work; the troops in the rear were enjoying themselves, plundering, idling, talking politics, undesirable, above all, of going to the front; the peasants, surfeited with money saved during their enforced sobriety, were looking forward to a general division of landed property, and looting when so inclined. The Soviet maintained and consolidated its power by constant appeal to the instincts of the masses. Programs of universal spoliation issued from its representatives in a steady stream.

The Fatal Order.

From the Soviet also came the notorious Prikaz No. 1 (order of the day) to the troops enjoining upon them as free men to render no respect or obedience to their officers. This prikaz converted the Russian army into an undisciplined mob. It was intended to do so. What cared the dreamers in the Soviet or the bolshevik agents of Germany who controlled Russian affairs for obligations of national honor or the interests of the State? They were too intent upon applying socialist theories in practice or in making a good thing out of the revolution. They began by sending a wireless message appealing to their German brothers to lay down their arms; they then incited the Russian soldiers to fraternize with the enemy.

These schemes failing to attain their object, they next invented the theory of "no annexation, no indemnity," hoping thereby to impress upon the army the belief that there was nothing to fight about, and, lastly, they discovered a panacea for all ills in a great international Socialist Conference.

When the police had been removed the local demagogues assumed control. All forms of authority—the Zemstvos, the law courts, the Governors, etc.—were superseded by committees owing nominal allegiance to the Soviet, but refractory to the provisional Government. These innumerable committees were composed of workmen, peasants, petty lawyers, partly sincere enthusiasts, partly rogues. They drew self-appointed salaries from the local treasury or levied contributions from the propertied class, which was studiously excluded from any share in this mock administration.

The Soviet in Petrograd appropriated over 700,000 rubles a month for salaries of its members. Virtually no revenue entered the coffers of the State. Such revenue as could be collected was absorbed by the local Soviet or committee. The committees were not satisfied with plunder; they hampered rural labor, forbidding the peasants to work except for prohibitive wages. Having done their utmost to terrorize the landowner, they made it impossible for the stoutest-hearted farmer to confine his loyal task of producing bread. It has come to pass, that the exchequer being empty, Russia is printing 50,000,000 rubles of paper money daily to pay her war, and that the printing press is not able to keep up with the demand for notes owing to a constant depreciation in their value.

Industries Hard Hit.

The committee system has been most disastrous in its effect upon industries. Workmen are too busy with politics to attend to their duties. Locomotives and rolling stock are not repaired. The complete paralysis of transport, the stoppage of all industries, owing to the shortage of fuel and raw materials, is a question of months or weeks, perhaps days. The output of munitions has declined by 80 per cent. All these facts and figures were brought out at the Moscow conference. They do not constitute a State secret.

In the army the committee system has been attended by a sweeping decline in fighting value.

The food problem, upon which the autocracy came to grief, has been equally mismanaged under the revolutionary regime. It has involved a colossal expenditure of something like 700,000,000 rubles in the organization of local food committees, mostly composed of people who had not the remotest connection with the business, but were merely revolutionaries. This organization has entirely failed in its purpose. It has not induced the peasant to sell his grain nor has it assured a fair and just distribution of foodstuffs.

Falling into the hands of theorists or self-seekers, the Russian revolution went far beyond the desires of the nation, and under their inexperienced or culpable guidance has assumed forms that are alien to the character or the development of the Russian people.

CLAIMS \$40,000.

Young Man Shot by Men in Patrol Boat Sues for Damages.

(Special Despatch to The Globe.)
Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., Oct. 20.—Joseph Bennett, the young man who was shot some months ago by men on the American patrol boat *Iris* in the St. Mary's River while returning one Sunday night from a motor boat trip to Hilton, returned to his home here to-day for the first time since the incident occurred. Bennett received eight bullet wounds while lying in the boat from the machine gun which fired on him from the deck of the *Iris*. A thorough investigation of the circumstances was made at the time by both American and Canadian officials, but no report as to the investigating committee's findings has yet been given out. It is understood that Bennett, through his attorney, Mr. Ulrich McFadden, has set up a claim for damages in the amount of \$40,000.