

## THE NEW MILITARISM OF RUSSIA

MUCH is being blamed upon the Bolshevism of Russia—undoubtedly altogether too much. As a matter of fact, we know very little of the operation of what is called the soviet system. We know this much: That it is set up as an ideal in self-government for men to struggle for. We get glimpses from various views from various angles by various individuals which must be taken for what they are worth as views undoubtedly possessing some and probably a deal of truth. It may be much like sitting on the side lines of a motion picture show—somewhat distorted—but something of the true direct view will be acquired.

The New York Tribune in a recent editorial article discussed an interview given to John Clayton, its correspondent, by Leon Trotzky at Moscow, on the Soviet system, presenting a picture of communism as it works out in reality. The following is from The Tribune:

The picture offers a significant contrast to the ideal design of a socialistic community presented by theorists. We commend the comparison to our parlor pinks and sentimental radicals.

Trotzky says that in organizing communist society "militarizing economic life" must be resorted to. "This militarization," he explains, "is all the more necessary because we have undertaken the mobilization of peasantry on a large scale for the solving of problems demanding application for a large number of people."

This is a mild phrase, "mobilization of the peasantry," but what does it mean? It means that the farming masses of Russia are molded into a working army by force and in this disciplined and compact form are used as their rulers will and direct.

But Trotzky's "militarization of economic life" does not stop with the peasant. "Some comrades," he goes on to remark, "might say that while we may have recourse to militarization when applying to labor (common) and mobilized peasants, such militarization is not justified when dealing with skilled labor because there are the trade unions to organize." But he holds that the military structure is superior and adds this significant statement: "In a carefully planned organization like ours labor ought to be transferred from one front to another and commanded exactly as soldiers are."

No autocracy in modern or ancient times has conceived, much less executed, such mastery of a whole people's energies and individual freedom. The German system of militarization for war is a pale shadow of autocracy against this tremendous domination. The "militarism" our pacifists are prating about—that is, obligatory training for a few months or even, as in France, for two years, and obligatory service in case of war—is a joke in comparison. Wars, after all, do not occur oftener than once or twice in a generation. But the communist autocracy takes over the daily life of all Russians, puts the individual in the ranks for a perpetual daily servitude to the will of his rulers. All life is a mobilization and men are "transferred from one front to another and commanded exactly as soldiers are."

How would the American skilled mechanic or the American farmer or the

American day laborer like this system? How would they like being mobilized and under command "exactly as soldiers are," being dispatched to dig a canal in the tropics, to drain the swamps of the lower Mississippi, to mine the coal of Alaska?" "Citizen-Comrade Federal No. 3,417,802 will report May 15th, at a. m., with tools, at mobilization station No. 11,708 under mobilization order 702 for service in the Death Valley irrigation project. By order of Chief of Staff, Irrigation Division, Economic Army, Proletarian Republic of America," etc., etc.

Pleasant thought for Americans. We do not know that such a system is not necessary to save Russia at this stage of her development. It is clear the Russians can not get along without despotism. They cut down the inefficient despotism of the czardom, but they were not ready for the life of freemen, so a new despotism was set up by the forces of life which always compel order to emerge from the worst chaos. The new despotism is very likely better for Russia than the old. It is more intelligent, more efficient, more powerful. But it is despotism.

We speak of Russia because it is in Russia the tremendous demonstration is going on, but the lesson applies to the whole Soviet experiment. When Lenin and Trotzky took over the revolution they undoubtedly expected, as all Socialist theorists do, that men would discipline themselves and work for the common good. It did not turn out that way. It never will while the nature of man is what it is and has been since time began. The Russian masses, released from the tyranny of the old system and deprived of the incentive of private profit, lost all discipline and ceased to work. Chaos ensued until Lenin and Trotzky were forced to adopt measures of coercion. The czar had his Cossacks and his courts. Lenin and Trotzky formed the Red guard. There was a change of names and personalities. Let us say also a change in purpose and ideals. But the method was identical. Force was a necessity and force was organized and today rules the people of Russia as they never have been ruled before.

The Socialist state must always do this. Remove the private incentive, the force of private need or private ambition, and collective force must be used. The Socialist state can never be anything but a despotism, reaching deeper into private life, controlling more of men's activities than any other form of organization known yet to mankind. It may provide material security and provision for the masses of men more uniformly than individualist society. But it can only do so by the abolition of all private liberty.

The American prefers to take his chance with life as a freeman, his chance to suffer or to achieve. He prefers to grow and to progress through individual effort and not to surrender his all to a collective will even if it purports and sincerely purposes to rule him for his own welfare.

Perhaps the Russians must pass through this experience before they can be efficient as freemen. We must hope the new despotism will become and remain benevolent although despotism does not tend to remain benevolent. But to be benevolently ruled does not lead men toward freedom.

Every man's task is his life-preserver.

## THE TRUTH IN TEXTILES.

MUCH legislation the past few years has been directed toward preventing the producer from palming off on the public inferior products thru various flim-flam methods of marketing. The fruit industry presents an example. Efforts are being made to carry similar protection for the consuming public into manufacturing lines, and needless to say, the movement is meeting with strenuous opposition. One of these is the "truth-in-fabrics bill," introduced in Congress by Representative Burton L. French, of Idaho. The measure requires cloth manufacturers to stamp on each and every piece of cloth the percentage of virgin wool contained, and the amount of shoddy, if any, with the same requirement for clothing made up for the market. In defense of his bill Representative French says:

It is, of course, apparent who the ones are who are opposed to the bill. They are not the consuming public, but they are the ones who are handling woolen fabrics that the public cannot know as to the contents of virgin wool and shoddy. Their arguments against the bill are the stock arguments that were made against the pure food and drug law, the oleomargarine law, and every other law that has sought to protect the public from the unscrupulous.

One dealer says that there would be great difficulty in the marking—that is, the mechanical process.

We showed to the committee by abundant evidence that this is not correct. Some manufacturers are today branding and marking their fabrics to show their trade marks, to show their firm name, or to show the contents of the fabric. We showed the committee that the cost would be approximately one-fifth cent per yard, or in other words, less than one cent for a suit of clothes.

Without the text of the bill discussion of its provisions, is of course, out of the question. But if its object is honestly aimed, and works no hardship or mischief to the manufacturer, opposition appears in a poor light. The reliable manufacturers should welcome such a measure as protection against the unscrupulous. There is no reason why the public should not be apprised of what goes into fabrics as well as what goes into an apple box, or a milk bottle.

## HOW BRITAIN DEALS WITH RADICALS.

THE British government, functioning with noiseless precision, is shipping to Russia hundreds of what her public officials are pleased to call extreme radicals. There are no soviet arks; no pleadings before federal judges and no dock-side demonstrations. As fast as these destructionists are overtaken in their missionary work they are sent aboard a vessel whose destination is nearest the Soviet coast and ticketed for their former homes with instructions to remain there under penalty of severer punishment if they return.

## THE BEAUTIFUL NAME

(L. M. Montgomery)

I think people make their names nice or ugly just by what they are themselves. . . . Live so that you beautify your name, even if it wasn't beautiful to begin with, making it stand in people's thoughts for something so lovely and pleasant that they never think of it by itself.

The best known American road in Europe is the Columbia Highway, which rivals the famous Alpine thoroughfares of Switzerland; and the Riviera road along the Mediterranean, in the south of France, famous thoroughfare which passes the Louvre, palace of the former kings of France and present leading art gallery of the world, was laid out by Julius Caesar 55 years before Christ.