

RUSSIAN SOVIET IS NOT TOTTERING, DECLARES WRITER

Russian People Are Supporting It as Against Denikine, Fearing Landlords' Return to Power.

WOULD REMOVE BLOCKADE

Sees in Resumption of Economic Relations Best Way to Get Rid of Reds; Soviets to Remain.

(Continued From Page One)

munists and Cossacks of Russia. No impartial observer can leave soviet Russia today without delivering this message from millions of Russians terrified at the prospect of the coming winter with its hunger, cold and disease.

MILITARY NOW RULES

From a dictatorship of the proletariat the soviet government is rapidly becoming a military dictatorship. The military situation now dominates everything, and the civil functions of the soviet institutions are being taken over by revolutionary defense councils. Blockaded by its enemies, the soviet government is compelled to postpone social reconstruction and concentrate all vital resources to the prosecution of the war which is waged with masterful organization and skill. There is strong opposition to the severe war regime within the ranks of the Communists, a strong group of the latter standing against iron rule and for internal reforms. But so long as the British and French keep Denikine, Yudenitch and Kolchak in the field, so long will soviet Russia be ruled by extremists and extraordinary commissions.

MODERATES GAIN ON VICTORY

During my stay in Russia there was one moment when the moderate Bolsheviks gained a big victory. There was uncovered in Moscow an extensive counter-revolutionary organization maintaining intercourse with General Denikine, receiving financial support from Admiral Kolchak and preparing for the overthrow of the soviet government. There followed thousands of arrests by an extraordinary commission. When General Denikine learned of the arrest of General Dimitrieff, one of the leaders of a secret officers' organization, he threatened the soviet government by wireless that in case General Dimitrieff was executed reprisals would be taken. More than 100 persons responsible for the plot were shot as enemy agents. In the midst of this tension a bomb was thrown into the hall where the Moscow communist central commit-

tee was in session, causing three deaths. This provoked the indignation of the masses, strengthening the extremists considerably since it was thought that the bomb was thrown by members of the counter-revolutionary organization at large. At the funeral of the victims of the explosion there was an imposing manifestation of soviet power. Certain communist sections marched under banners inscribed with a demand for the "red terror" and the mass extermination of the bourgeoisie. For a day or two there was great anxiety lest there be a repetition of the outbreak of mass terror such as followed the attempt on Lenin's life last year. However, the central committee of the communist party took quick action. Lenin, supported by the majority, carried the field against the terror and the extremist agitation was stopped. Later it was discovered that the bomb was thrown by anarchists who have recently become active again.

MANY RUMORS ARE LIES

The rumors circulated abroad about the terror in Russia, about Trotsky having arrested Lenin and similar occurrences are vicious lies. Upon arriving in Russia one feels immediately the rule of an organized government capable of keeping order. The state of things under the soviet regime is the very opposite of anarchy. There were no street disorders when I was in Moscow and the other cities I visited. I was perfectly safe on the streets of the capital, which I traversed after midnight on numerous occasions, although I was sure to be stopped several times and asked for my passport. The opera and the theatres are crowded as usual. Tea parties are surprisingly well patronized in spite of almost fabulous prices.

Two days ago I crossed from soviet Russia, where I spent six weeks. During this period I was under arrest three days. I traveled by cattle, troop and passenger trains, of every description, for a distance of 1600 miles, and mixed with thousands of people of all classes. I talked with the Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik leaders, and visited several sanitation factories as well as other plants. All the time I was gathering information as to the political, military and economic conditions in soviet Russia; evidence of counter-revolutionary plots, Bolshevik executions and misdeeds; and proof of the terrible Denikine atrocities and frightful Ukrainian pogroms; first hand facts current in the highest Communist circles; the international relations of the soviet government and the fate of the Bonhoff family, as well as a number of other subjects.

HARD TO ENTER RUSSIA

It is becoming next to impossible to enter soviet Russia. Since my first trip to Russia in May last, the Finnish border has been tightly closed. This time I spent the whole month of August maneuvering into a position close to the soviet Russian front. Finally early on the morning of September 5, I found myself conveyed, with my eyes and face covered with a handkerchief, to the bank of the River Dvina, forming the Lithuanian-Russian front. Ten miles to the south an artillery duel was in progress over the possession of Dvinsk. Several hundred feet across the water was the Red army's position. A Lithuanian officer who was ordered by the general staff to assist me in entering soviet Russia tried to persuade me to give up the attempt, saying that there was no

boat on his side of the Dvina, and that Bolshevik machine guns on the opposite bank would doom my effort to failure. However, upon my insisting, he led me, waving an improvised white flag, to the edge of the water, with my eyes still covered by the handkerchief.

BOAT SENT FOR HIM

The Bolshevik machine guns did not fire upon the white flag, and soon, to my cry, "Dovaristochi," came the reply, "We listen." Having put my case before the Reds across the Dvina as loudly as possible, I asked them to send a boat for me, which was done. Still robbed of my sight by the handkerchief, I was rowed across and greeted there by several men of the Red army, whose faces I could not see, and led to battalion headquarters. Here my bandage was removed, and I found myself in a cabin filled with curious but disciplined soldiers. I was driven to the regimental and then to the brigade headquarters, where I was treated most courteously, the conduct of officers and men leaving nothing to be desired.

From the type of men forming the regimental and brigade staffs I realized that the Red army was not a collection of bands, but a highly organized military machine. It was evening when I was brought to the division headquarters at Dvinsk. The city was under fire and the shells were causing considerable damage as well as casualties among the people. Here I was handed over to a "special section" of the extraordinary commission dealing with military matters only, and placed under arrest. Anybody crossing the soviet front falls into the hands of the special section and is arrested as a possible spy. After a most minute search I was thrown into a wretched room. All night the artillery boomed violently. On the afternoon of the following day, together with a batch of other prisoners I was ordered to be sent to army headquarters at Veliki Luki. The distance to the station being two miles I asked permission to take a cab or hire a baggage carrier.

"NOT AMERICA," HE IS TOLD

"This is not America," shouted the warden. "Here there is democracy. You cannot have somebody to do your work." I pleaded that it was physically impossible for me to carry two heavy cases a distance of two miles, but I was forced to take them. A few minutes later I broken down and the conveying soldiers, in spite of the warden's orders, allowed me to hire help. When we seated ourselves in a box car the enemy artillery in the hills across the river opened fire on the station. The shells came nearer and nearer to us. The panic stricken passengers detoured and scurried to cover inside the massive station building. We prisoners wanted to follow the passengers, but were held at a revolver's point by the chief of the convoy, who announced that anybody attempting to move would be instantly killed. There were a few anxious moments when we heard the report of guns and watched approaching shells. Finally, when a shell flew over our car, striking the station squarely, the convoy decided to cover with us. The bombardment ceased and we started for Veliki Luki.

PRISONERS KEPT IN SQUALOR

There I was thrown into a detention place improvised out of a monastery. In one large room, bare of the most primitive furniture, were kept about 100 prisoners. All had to sleep on the floor. The place was vermin infested. The

food ration consisted of half a pound of bread and a quarter of a pound of sugar daily. Although it was a preliminary detention place where prisoners are kept only until their cases are investigated, there were persons here who had been under arrest for several weeks without knowing the reason why. Among the prisoners was a 16-year-old boy, who had traveled without a passport, a local peasant who had been taken for reputed sympathy with the bourgeoisie, a German who had crossed the frontier and upon whom was found a catalogue of steel firms, two Red army artillery officers suspected of a desire to go over to the enemy, a Baltic baron said to have been the holder of large estates, and a number of peasants and Jews. On my release I was given an office room and spent the night under guard. On the following day I was subjected to a cross examination and was sent to Moscow, where I was released several hours later.

ECONOMIC SITUATION WORSE

I found that the economic situation had taken a big turn for the worse since the spring. When I left Moscow in May the price of a pound of bread was 22 rubles (nominally \$11). In September it was 55 rubles (nominally \$27.50) and now it was 75 rubles (nominally \$37.50). However, this is the price not of the government ration of bread, but of the market price. Yet there is more bread in the Moscow markets today than there was four months ago, the increase in the price, therefore, indicating the fall in value of the soviet ruble. During the same period sugar were only doubled, while the free trade prices increased three and one-half times. Apples in Moscow cost 20 rubles (nominally \$10), not because of a shortage of apples but on account of speculations.

PEASANTS GROW RICH

Peasants living near the large cities have grown enormously rich by selling their produce at exorbitant prices. The farther one goes from Moscow, the poorer the peasants. In the vicinity of Dvinsk 26 rubles (nominally \$13), in Briansk 22 rubles (nominally \$11), in Tula 20 rubles (nominally \$10), and in Ufa, Samara, Saratov, Kazan and other eastern towns, from 5 to 7 rubles (nominally \$2.50 to \$3.50) a pound. In the provincial town the soviet food control is able to supply most of the bread demands of the population at fixed low government prices. There the high cost of living is not so terrible since there is plenty of money in soviet Russia on account of the high wages.

COLLAPSE NOT IMPLICATED

In spite of the seriousness of the economic and military situation, there is no reason to expect the speedy collapse of the soviet government. All the indications before my departure from Moscow were that General Denikine's successes were temporary and due to the fact that the Red army high command had committed a big error by devoting all its resources to complete the crushing of Admiral Kolchak, thereby giving General Denikine his opportunity. If it had been possible quickly to move reinforcements from the Siberian front against General Denikine the latter would not have advanced far, since the Red soldiers who drove General Kolchak back 1000 versts (about 660 miles), capturing 300,000 prisoners, destroying the entire Southern Kolchak army and opening the road to Turkestan, are imbued with an irresistible victory spirit. I saw thousands of them in Tula on the way to the Southern front from the Urals, being reviewed by Trotsky, saluting and cheering his great leader. The cavalry was magnificent and there were infantry, artillery, machine guns and armored car detachments. Three airplanes and one enormous airship flew overhead. One felt that night of the Red army. One felt that Denikine was doomed if the Russian railroads could transport from across the Volga sufficient reinforcements.

SHOULD REMOVE BLOCKADE

The day I left Moscow the soviet army assumed a general offensive against the Denikine forces. Leon Trotsky, as well as the other leaders, were confident that the Red army would be able to drive him back.

There is no permanent solution of the Russian problem in forcing General Denikine, General Yudenitch and the monarchy upon the Russian people, let alone the inequality of such a course. The only way to rid Russia of Communist control and allow the development of an advanced social democratic state lies through the removal of the blockade and the resumption of economic rela-

tions with Russia, which would enable the workers and peasants now opposed to Communism but cooperating with it in defiance of the revolution, to devote their attention toward creating a more democratic government. The extreme Communists in Russia know this, and like Lord Northcliffe, Winston Churchill and Premier Clemenceau, they are in favor of civil war. They fear the removal of the blockade, as they see in war a chance to keep themselves in power until social revolution breaks out in Western Europe. Only American food and the usual agricultural machinery and rolling stock can direct tempestuous Russia into moderate channels and gradually evolve a new Russian government. It is clear to all unbiased observers in soviet Russia that the blockade and the support of Kolchak, Denikine and Yudenitch only perpetuate unrest, chaos and bloodshed and above all Bolshevism.

WITTE SAYS PETROGRAD IS CERTAIN TO BE TAKEN

By George Witte
Special Cable to The Journal and The Chicago Daily News.
(Copyright, 1919, by Chicago Daily News Co.)
On the Russian Front, Oct. 23.—(Via Copenhagen, Denmark.)—From a hilltop at the front I saw Petrograd, the "forbidden city," today. Through strong binoculars I could plainly discern the white palaces, the green cupolas of hundreds of churches, thousands of chimneys and factory smokestacks. But no smoke poured forth as a sign of in-

dustrial and home comfort. The city rose on the distant horizon like a fata morgana, the peaceful picture being disturbed only by the roar of the guns below me and little white clouds as the shells exploded.

General Yudenitch's men are pressing forward irresistibly, and the fall of the Russian metropolis is certain within a week. Gatchina was cleared of Bolsheviks four days ago. It is still suffering from the after effects of four months of life under the Reds. The inhabitants hailed the Whites as liberators. They are bitter against the Reds, who took everything, freely distributing houses and livestock among the Bolsheviks. The peasants were found to be living in residences formerly inhabited by their superiors. The Whites are restoring the property to its rightful owners.

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