

A PRISONER OF THE REDS

ЕЯ ИМПЕРАТОРСКОЕ ВЕЛИЧЕСТВО ГОСУДАРЫНЯ ИМПЕРАТРИЦА  
АЛЕКСАНДРА ФЕОДОРОВНА И НАСЛЕДНИКЪ ЦЕСАРЕВИЧЪ



THE TSARINA AND TSAREVICH.

# A PRISONER OF THE REDS

THE STORY OF A BRITISH OFFICER  
CAPTURED IN SIBERIA

BY FRANCIS McCULLAGH

CAPTAIN ROYAL IRISH FUSILIERS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

“Wer den Feind will verstehn muss in Feindes Lande gehn”

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DEDICATED TO  
MY COMRADES

THE BRITISH OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS CAPTURED  
WITH ME AT KRASNOYARSK, SIBERIA,  
JANUARY 6, 1920

## PREFACE

I ATTEMPT in the following pages to give some account of my experiences among the Bolsheviks from January to April of the year 1920. My story is neither Propaganda for Bolshevism nor Propaganda against it. I simply give all the facts, whether they tell against Communism or in its favour; and, if I indulge in deductions from those facts, my readers are at liberty to draw whatever other deductions they like. The main thing is that all the facts be placed before them; and that I have tried my best to do. The result may possibly be that this book will displease not only the Bolsheviks, but also those equally fanatical anti-Bolsheviks who believe that Lenin and Trotsky lead lives of phenomenal debauchery, that cannibalism is common in Moscow, that all Russian women have been nationalized, that the Red Army is composed of Letts and Chinese who have to be driven into action by means of whips and machine-guns, and that anyone who disputes these facts is a Bolshevik himself. I really hate Bolshevism as much as these people do, but I also hate Propaganda in so far as that word means the selection of all the facts supporting a certain theory, and the deliberate suppression of all the facts which tell against that theory, or *vice versa*. Even during the Great War Propaganda probably did more harm than good to every nation which made use of it. Laughed at by the soldiers, distrusted by the general public, regarded with unspeakable contempt by independent journalists, it was too often used merely for the purpose of screening Governments which had miscalculated and Generals who had blundered. The only good Propaganda is propaganda of the truth; it is amazing that none of the belligerent Governments ever recognized the tremendous advantages such a form of Propaganda possesses over the other kind. Of that other kind my own experiences as a combatant at the Front during the war showed me the futility and even danger. I will briefly narrate two of these experiences.

A raid was once made on German trenches in Serbia with the object of ascertaining if the Germans were still

there or had been replaced by Bulgarians. It was a successful raid, so successful in fact that, instead of withdrawing the raiding-party from the German trenches, G.H.Q. left them there some twelve hours while it tried to think out a scheme for pushing on still further, with the result that they were subjected to a murderous bombardment and finally driven out with heavy loss by a counter-attack. An English newspaper correspondent on the spot wrote a perfectly correct description of this operation, giving well-deserved praise to the brave Welsh and Lancashire battalions which had carried it out, but also telling, quite simply, how they had been forced to retire. As all the second part of his description was eliminated by the Censor, nothing appeared in the British Press but a one-sided report conveying the impression that the British had established themselves permanently in the German trenches. The effect of this report on the survivors of the raid and on the whole Salonika Army was bad; it seriously shook the confidence of our troops in the optimistic official reports from all the other Fronts, more especially as the German account of this particular operation, which was published in the English newspapers, was absolutely accurate.

My second instance is from Kolchak's Army. In June, 1919, a Russian Colonel who had escaped from the Bolsheviks delivered a lecture on Bolshevism at Omsk, under the auspices of Admiral Kolchak. It was an able, restrained, and crushing condemnation of the Soviet Government, but the speaker admitted, what is quite true, that the Reds work extremely hard. This admission infuriated one of the audience, an old "dug-out" Tsarist General, who forthwith jumped to his feet and interrupted the lecturer by loud and violent protestations that he had not come there to hear the Bolsheviks praised. He finally left the hall in a terrible rage, and five months later he was running for his life from Omsk owing to the fact that Kolchak's whole army had crumbled to pieces, because most of its leaders had made no attempt during the year they ruled Siberia to emulate the tireless industry of the Reds.

The Bolshevik Government would not now be in existence were it not for two facts: (1) Intervention, which united all

Russians and led to the creation of the Red Army; (2) injudicious and exaggerated anti-Bolshevik Propaganda, which created among the working-classes a certain sympathy for the Reds, and finally paralyzed intervention. Every London editor and every British politician knows that unduly violent attacks even on a criminal tend, in this country, to cause a reaction in his favour, especially if some of the charges are found to be false; and I have often wished, most fervently, after reading descriptions of Muscovite cannibalism, that there was an *advocatus diaboli* at every editor's elbow. The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, would inflict far greater injury on Bolshevism than the most appalling exaggerations and diatribes. Had it not been for these exaggerations and diatribes, and the suspicion that they were partly due to the preponderance of the aristocratic and capitalist interests in our Press, all British workmen would have realized long ago that, instead of being the underdog, the Reds are merely a gang of adventurers who have deprived the Russian Proletariat of all liberty and brought discredit on the cause of democracy in every part of the world. They would have seen that the things which they admire in Bolshevism are not Bolshevism at all, but are borrowed without acknowledgment from Tsarist times and from Russian Liberal parties. Ten years ago there were in the principal towns of Russia free theatres for the people and many splendid orphanages, but the Reds now point out these theatres and orphanages to visitors as if they had founded them. The very name Soviet is not Bolshevism, and the Soviet system dates from a period long anterior to 1917. As Prince Kropotkin points out in his letter to the Western Democracies published last July in the British Press, the Bolsheviks have been bitter opponents of the Soviet system, which they have in fact destroyed. The craze for education and the breaking down of class barriers for which the Reds take all the credit are due to the Russian Liberals who ruled Russia after the abdication of the Tsar. Lenin has, in fact, stolen the thunder of the Revolution, but this must not lead us to describe that particular thunder as the voice of the Devil, when it is really the voice of the great Russian people. It was this mistake

which ruined Kolchak and Denikin. There is plenty of pure Bolshevick thunder let loose from the Kremlin, and that we can all denounce as much as we like, for it is directed not only against Christianity, but also against democracy.

There are in Bolshevism noble phrases and splendid schemes which are not especially Bolshevick at all, but are borrowed from the movement that overthrew the Tsar and all he stood for. Had the Reds never appeared on the scene, those phrases would have been lived up to and those theories carried into practice, and the majority of people in England would have applauded. Now that the Reds have taken possession of them, we in England are too much inclined to regard them as typically Bolshevick, and to condemn them wholesale. One out of the combination of forces which hurled Kolchak from Omsk and Denikin from Ekaterinodar was the same force that had hurled Nicholas the Second from his throne, and, though it is harnessed at present to the war-chariot of Bolshevism, it should be our aim not to keep it there permanently, but to unharness it, remove its apprehensions, and make it understand that we sympathize fully with its fierce hatred of autocracy and militarism and with all its legitimate aspirations. So far, unfortunately, we have done exactly the opposite.

That there are publications in this country which omit everything that tells against the Bolshevicks is unhappily true; and things have, in fact, come to such a pass that it would be easier and more profitable to publish a book giving either side of the question than to publish a book giving both sides. On the one hand, there are British organizations which would buy whole editions of books which were from beginning to end one long tirade against Bolshevism, and Russian organizations which would promise very dazzling rewards, at a period which cannot now be remote, to the authors of such books. On the other hand, there is—well, an organization which gives away jewelry; and, between the two of them, poor John Bull is in a position which really excites my pity.

If any reader is kind enough to remark that an author who, under these circumstances, caters for neither of these extreme parties deserves credit, I would at once assure him



that practically all the credit is due to the publisher who accepts such an author's book, especially at a time like the present, when the publishing trade has to contend with such great and unprecedented difficulties.

I have stated above that intervention and anti-Bolshevik Propaganda helped the Bolsheviks rather than injured them. Had it not been for intervention there would be no sympathy for the Reds in this country, and there would be no Red Army in Russia. The Bolsheviks are Pacifists and anti-Militarists who were enabled to seize the reins of power through their denunciation of war, and they could never have induced a single soldier to fight for them if they had not been attacked from the outside. Their military helplessness in 1918 was ludicrous. Sometimes a dozen armed Czechs captured towns with a population of 50,000. The Czech conquest of Siberia was like the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Had the Bolsheviks been let alone they would have been overthrown a year ago by some movement originating inside Russia. Russian Communism is like a top kept spinning by external propulsion. Once the external action ceases, the top will fall. Bolshevism is contrary to human nature. It can no more persist in time of peace than a cone at rest can stand on its apex.

Several of my most sensational experiences I have had to omit, as even the most discreet account of them would compromise people who are still in Russia; but I have made a full report of these experiences to the proper authorities in this country. Other experiences I can never publish so long as there is a Bolshevik Government in Russia.

I might add that the publication of this book has been delayed by the continued detention of my fellow-prisoners in Siberia. I felt that it would be inadvisable for me to publish it until they had all crossed the frontier—firstly, because the fact that they had helped me to escape might have brought down on them the vengeance of the Bolsheviks; and, secondly, because a message received from them last February indicated that somebody who had joined them after my departure was impersonating me, with the intention apparently of leaving Russia under my name. As I explain in the text, I had been registered at Krasnoyarsk both

as an officer and as a civilian. When the civilian went to Moscow, my comrades had apparently got somebody to play the part of the officer; and it was very good for me that they did so, as the prisoners had to report once a week, and as, if my absence had been discovered, my peregrinations as an alleged journalist would soon have been cut short.

I have not had time, since my return from Russia, to read any of the numerous accounts which have been written about the present condition of that country, so that the picture which I here draw has this merit at least, that it is taken direct from nature and not copied from other drawings. In fact, most of the book was written by me in shorthand during my journey from Krasnoyarsk, and my stay in Ekaterinburg and Moscow. I can also claim, I think, to be the only foreigner who has circulated freely in Red Siberia and Red Russia without having had a Bolshevik "guide" attached to him or Bolshevik preparations made to receive him. In Krasnoyarsk, Ekaterinburg, and for some time in Moscow, the Bolsheviks completely lost track of me, and, in my Siberian fur cap and dilapidated sheepskin coat, I wandered wherever I liked. The best testimonial I ever received to the perfection of my "make-up" was the undisguised incredulity with which that excellent clergyman, the Rev. Frank North, received me in Moscow. "You mean to tell *me* that *you* are a British officer!" he cried three times, each time in a so much louder tone of voice, and with such increased emphasis on the personal pronouns, that his final shout might almost be described as a roar of indignation.

Several of the following chapters have already appeared in various periodicals, especially the *Nineteenth Century* and the *Fortnightly Review*; and I thank the various editors in question for their permission to reprint those contributions. I must also thank my friend Professor Francis de Zulueta, of All Souls College, Oxford, for his invaluable assistance in seeing this book through the press during my absence from England.

FRANCIS MCCULLAGH.

LONDON,  
October, 1920.

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THE "WORKMEN'S AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES" OF EKATERINBURG WHO ALL SIGNED THE TSAR'S  
DEATH WARRANT, JULY, 1918.

Central figure with cap is Comrade Sosnovsky, a prominent but mysterious Bolshevik probably engaged to the beautiful Miss Yurovsky. On his right is Bykov, formerly an officer. Next to him is Beloborodov, President of the Regional Soviet of Ekaterinburg. Standing upright behind Sosnovsky is Safarov, a powerful Bolshevik with a position on the Executive Committee of the party. He is not an Ekaterinburg man, but came to Ekaterinburg from Moscow nominally to occupy an unimportant post, but really to act as the secret agent of Lenin among the Ural Bolsheviks, who, being miners, were inclined to be headstrong and to defy even Moscow. Safarov accompanied Lenin on his famous train journey through Germany to Russia in a sealed carriage. At the extreme right of the first row is Goloshokin, a Commissar who occupied somewhat the same position as Safarov, and who worked hand in glove with him. At the extreme left of the back row is Tuntul, formerly a subaltern in the old army. Many of these men were neither workmen nor soldiers, but all signed the Tsar's death-warrant. The device on the Red Flag behind them reads "Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies." This picture was taken before epaulettes were abolished.





THE "WORKMEN'S AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES" OF EKATERINBURG, JULY, 1918.

(For fuller description see opposite page.)

*To face p. xviii.*

# A PRISONER OF THE REDS

## CHAPTER I

### THE FLIGHT FROM OMSK

AT the beginning of November, 1919, I was a member of the British Military Mission at Omsk, which was then, apparently, about to fall into the hands of the Bolsheviks. The British Military Mission and the British Railway Mission (which I shall hereafter designate the B.M.M. and the B.R.M. respectively) occupied a house in the town. General Sir Alfred Knox lived, as he had always done, in his special train, and intended to leave about a week before the end, bringing with him all the British civilians and all the B.M.M. officers save four. These four, of whom I was one, were instructed to stay behind as long as possible in order to obtain the latest information, and with us were a number of officers and other ranks belonging to the B.R.M.

General Knox left on November 7, and the situation rapidly darkened after his departure. The streets became filled, first with civilian refugees, and then with the retreating soldiers of the White Army; and there was a hopeless muddle at the railway station, which was blocked by hundreds of trains. Finally, on November 13, when the Reds had nearly reached the Irtysh River, on the east bank of which Omsk is situated, we transferred ourselves to railway carriages which the B.R.M. had prepared for us and for themselves. But even then there was some difficulty in getting away owing to the confusion and to several ominous instances of sabotage on the part of the Russian railwaymen. We were blocked some time, for example, by an engine in front of us being allowed to get "cold," which means that the fire was allowed to die out,

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with the result that the water in the pipes got frozen, and the pipes themselves were damaged in such a way that, under the circumstances, repair was impossible. At length, on November 14, we managed to leave just in the nick of time, for the Reds reached the other side of the Irtysh the same day and captured Omsk on November 15.

Then began a stern pursuit across a thousand miles of frozen steppe, a pursuit which lasted till January 6, and which ended in our capture on that date at Krasnoyarsk. We should never have been captured, however, had we not been greatly handicapped by having to look after a number of Russian ladies and aged people of good family entrusted to our care by our own superior officers. The obstacles we encountered during that long race were of the most varied and formidable description. In the first place, the track soon became blocked by an interminable ribbon of trains which moved very slowly and made prolonged and frequent halts. In the second place, we found great difficulty in getting water and fuel for our engine owing to the fact that there was no firewood at the stations and that nearly all the water-towers had run dry or got frozen. Sometimes we watered our engine from a wayside well, but this was by no means easy, as the soldiers of other echelons were engaged in the same occupation and were always in an even greater hurry than we were. The well always looked like a hole made in a frozen river, for its sides were encased in a thick, waxy coating of highly polished ice, and no stone or earth was anywhere visible. Long lines of men always radiated from it towards their respective engines, and passed to one another buckets which had been lowered into the orifice by a long rope of ice, and were themselves, apparently, fantastic creations of the same material. This work was not only monotonous and endless, but also dangerous, for the sheets of ice around these wells were always slippery; most of us wore hobnailed army boots which were continually sliding from underneath us; the water was invariably far below the surface of the ground, and, as there was never any railing round the opening, the risk of our tumbling down was considerable. In case we did tumble down, there was little chance of our having a



AMMUNITION BEING BLOWN UP BEFORE THE EVACUATION OF  
EKATERINBURG BY KOLCHAK.

*To face p. 2.*

comparatively easy death by drowning, for we should be sure to get wedged, head downwards, in the narrow part near the water, where the overflow from the buckets had dashed against the sides and got frozen there.

But these wells were rare, and we had consequently to get up very often thrice in the course of a single night in order to fill the boilers with snow and the tender with wood. We were in all fifteen officers and men, and, though we did this unaccustomed work in a thoroughly sporting spirit, it was, nevertheless, very trying work owing to the intense cold, the deep snow, and our own physical weakness. We had to work in our heavy fur overcoats and fur gloves, and, so far, at least, as "snowing" the engine went, our labour seemed almost useless, for the snow, when melted, produced such a small quantity of water that in a few hours the engine came to a standstill, and we had to turn out again.

We should have been in better condition for this work if we had been able to sleep comfortably at night, but that we were unable to do owing to the overcrowding in our carriages. In order that the Russian women and children entrusted to our care should be more comfortable, we slept some of us two in a bunk, others on the floor, and still others in the corridor, and those at least who slept in the corridor were seldom able to get a good night's rest. I might add that, though officers and privates necessarily mixed on terms of equality, perfect discipline prevailed amongst us, and we all worked cheerfully and harmoniously together. We even got up concerts, in which the star performers were our C.O., who had an inexhaustible collection of rag-time ballads; a polyglot Irish sergeant, who was in civil life the manager of an Opera Company; and an English officer, who sang Spanish songs to the accompaniment of a guitar which he had brought with him from South America.

As thefts of railway engines frequently occurred on this trip, and as engine-drivers of Bolshevik sympathies sometimes allowed their engines to "go cold," we kept a British guard, sometimes composed of officers and sometimes of men, to watch ours, day and night, during stoppages. It had almost "gone cold" on one occasion when our sentry

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gave the alarm just in time. On another occasion, when we lent it for a few hours to the commander of a Polish echelon to manœuvre his train with, it was returned to us with the connecting-rod broken. This accident, which could not be made good in the repair shops, crippled our locomotive badly, without, however, rendering it completely useless. We bound up the connecting-rod in wooden splints, as if it were a broken arm, so that the machine could pull us along gently on the level, though it could not ascend a hill without the assistance of another engine, assistance which was not easy to get. A further difficulty was the quantity of snow on the line. Although the snowfall during the retreat was not unusually heavy, the rails were nearly always covered owing to the fact that soldiers and refugees in passing echelons had torn down most of the snow-sheds for firewood. Besides, as the horses and sleighs of the retreating troops used the railway line as well as the roads on each side of it, they sometimes forced much hard snow on to the rails, with the result that we all had to get out on several occasions to push our train.

While waiting in Novo-Nikolaevsk we were warned by General Sakharov that a mutiny was expected in that town, and consequently we "stood to" for several nights in succession. The mutiny broke out after we left, and, during one of our many stops, the disbanded soldiers of the mutinous regiments went past us eastwards, walking on the railway track, fully armed. None of our party, however, save myself, had the curiosity even to look at them, for all our English soldiers were absolutely "fed up" by this time with shocks of every kind. Shortly before we came into one station, Achinsk, it was wrecked by the accidental explosion of a train full of H.E., and 3,000 people were killed or wounded. When we passed through Achinsk, the line was strewn with dead bodies and with the wreckage of five trains, but the incident excited little comment amongst us. All our energies were concentrated on satisfying our locomotive's insatiable cravings, and once or twice we were able to water at a station where a faint trickle still came from the pump. The struggle for water that took place on these occasions was a nightmare, as



GENERAL SAKHAROV  
*Commander-in-Chief.*

GENERAL KOLCHAK,  
*Minister of War*

CAPT. F. MCCULLAGH,  
*British Intelligence Officer.*

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half a dozen engines sometimes contended for the privilege of filling their boilers first, and as the commandants of rival echelons almost came on several occasions to blows. These scenes were extraordinary, and I can claim to describe them with authority, if not with skill, inasmuch as my comrades and I had frequently to stay up all night, not only in order to work hard, but also in order to prevent our engine being stolen. All around stretched an illimitable waste of snow, gleaming cold beneath the starlight, and fringed on the left by dark forests which continued for thousands of miles to the northward, till they dwindled to stunted shrubs, and finally disappeared altogether in the ever-frozen *tundras* of the Polar Sea. High in the darkness loomed the tall, ice-plated water-tower, which always reminded me of a gigantic Paschal candle with streams of wax congealed on its sides, the candlestick being a massive, square block of ice which had formed over a brick platform three or four feet below. From the summit of this spectral pillar hung rigid, ice-clad ropes which clinked together with the sound of clinking glass, and at its foot stood a crowd of men covered to the eyes in skins and looking like Arctic necromancers awaiting a miracle. The Jews could not have waited with more anxiety for the living stream to gush from the rock than those Slavs waited for the most indispensable of all liquids to trickle from this magic tower. Meanwhile the busy and mischievous Spirits of the Snow played every conceivable prank. They whitened young men's beards and eyebrows, they encased the rifles of the soldiers in glittering hoar-frost, they made the railway station look like an Eskimo snow-hut, they even capped the telegraph poles with snowy Phrygian bonnets several feet in height and sometimes cocked rakishly on one side.

The six or seven engines grouped around the water-tower were perfectly in keeping with that ghostly shape, bearing as they did as little resemblance to a respectable locomotive such as one sees in England as a Samoyede in winter costume bears to a London bank clerk. Snow was piled on the buffers, and on the platform in front, and on every projection at the sides; but the most startling item of the



decoration scheme was the row of giant icicles, some of them thick and long as a man's leg, which adorned the steaming flanks of the monster.

The carriages were similarly garbed in snow—fantastic wreaths of soft, unbroken snow on the roofs, deep drifts of snow on the steps, snow on the narrow window-sills, fluffy little balls of snow clinging pertinaciously to every rivet. The insides of these waggons were as unusual as the outsides, being most of them more like gipsies' vans than anything else, as soldiers and their families had lived in them for years, children had been born in them, rude family portraits adorned the walls, cats and dogs looked on them as their ancestral mansions. One train carried the equivalent of forty-four million pounds sterling in gold roubles, Kolchak's entire reserve and most of what was left of the fabulous wealth of the Tsars. Another train was laden with Kurgan butter to the value of five million roubles. A third was crammed with typhus patients, and was throwing out naked corpses at every stopping-place with as little ceremony as the stoker threw out ashes.

The commandants of all these trains contended furiously all night long in the station commandant's office, not only for the privilege of being watered first, but also for the privilege of being put first on the west track, which was comparatively free. Two of those commandants were full-blown Generals, and we nicknamed one of them the "Butter General," and the other the "Typhus General," from the nature of their respective cargoes. The "Butter General" held forth oleaginously on the importance of his little load, and warned everybody of the stimulating effect which butter would have on the Bolshevik pursuit. He was probably thinking, however, of his own safety; and in the end he was captured, but without the butter, which he had encouraged the local population to loot. The "Typhus General" quoted Kolchak's orders to prove that hospital trains should always have the precedence. But poor Kolchak had ceased to count: he might as well have cited one of the maxims of Mencius. The last we heard of the typhus train was that it had caught fire. The Reds saved some of the patients, but all the others had been burned to death.

The Poles maintained that at such a time everything must give way to military echelons; and, as both the station commandants and the military echelons were Polish, the Poles invariably had their way. But sometimes it looked as if the contest would end in bloodshed, for all the commanders went to these incredible conferences armed to the teeth and accompanied by soldiers who might be described, without much exaggeration, as walking arsenals, for, in addition to rifles, bayonets, swords, daggers, and revolvers, some of them even carried hand-grenades. A station-master in any other country would have gone mad if he had all these people in his office roaring at him simultaneously and handling their revolvers, while he was trying to converse with six people at once, and at the same time to carry on his ordinary business. And some of these station-masters nearly did go mad. On several occasions they flew into a rage, and ordered everybody who had no business in the office to leave it, but none of the intruders ever stirred a step, for they all claimed some right to be there. Even the soldiers said that they were in attendance on their officers; and, as it was no joke tackling men who carried Mills bombs, the station-master invariably subsided. Not to be out of the fashion, the British delegates at these debates were also armed; but, as we only numbered fifteen, were most of us ridiculously young, and had merely got rifles and revolvers, we failed somehow to inspire terror. For the contest was like one among a crowd of desperate men belonging to different nationalities, who had been shipwrecked on a desert island. Naturally, and as a matter of course, the nationality which had the most numerous and best-armed representatives took the first place without paying attention to the size or prestige of the Empires to which smaller groups belonged.

While the Whites palavered the Reds advanced, and we began to lose hope. "What can we expect," asked the wit of our party with comic resignation, "after leaving Omsk town on the 13th of the month, and leaving Omsk station on a Friday in a group which originally numbered thirteen persons, among them two flagrant specimens of what the Chinese call 'bad joss' in the shape of one officer who was

captured at Mons, and another officer who was twice captured in previous wars and has always brought bad luck to the army he joined?"

The last-named officer, myself, had served during the Great War in Gallipoli and Serbia. The Mons officer, an excellent fellow who worked harder than any of us, used to say from time to time with mournful humour: "It's no bally good, boys. We shan't get away. *I'm* with you. *I'm* the Jonah, all right. We'll all get pinched."

Nor could we forget that our G.O.C., General Sir Alfred Knox, had been in the habit of saying in a jocular way that *he* began his retreat in the year 1914 at Tannenberg, where he was military *attaché* with Samsonov's Army, and had been more or less on the run ever since. But I do not think he ever imagined, even in the worst days of Rennenkampf's rout, that his retreat would continue as far east as Vladivostock, and until the Year of Grace 1920.

Several of our civilian guests seriously regarded as "bad joss" the British flag which we had displayed in a prominent position on the outside of our carriage, and beneath which, to make sure (for we found that most of the Siberian peasants had never before seen the British flag), we had painted in Russian the words "British Detachment."

They pointed out that we were now traversing intensely hostile country where savage repression of the insurgent peasantry had been going on for a whole year previously, and that, as the British flag had been indirectly associated with these repressions, the guerillas, who now swarmed along the line for a distance of a thousand miles, would be excited by that emblem to attack us for revenge or for loot or for both. They added, what I do not believe to be true, that a price of 50,000 roubles had been placed on the head of every British officer. Nevertheless, we refused to haul down our flag, and it was still flying over our carriage when we were captured at Krasnoyarsk. But what they said about the danger from insurgent bands was perfectly true. Those bands had derailed very many trains, and even captured stations at a time when Kolchak's star was in the ascendant, and the line strongly guarded by the troops of six foreign countries. Now that the "Supreme Ruler" was a fugitive,

and that all the foreign soldiers were gone, they could hardly be expected to refrain from attacking Kolchak's broken rear. We therefore made elaborate plans for their reception.

At frequent intervals on our journey we were overtaken by officers and other ranks of the B.R.M. who were engaged in a new form of sport which they called "train-jumping." When they arrived in an echelon at a station they walked to that train at the head of the "ribbon" which was going off first, and generally managed to persuade the commandant to give them a "lift" to the next station, where they repeated the performance. Owing, however, to the extreme overcrowding in all the trains, no more than two persons could play this game simultaneously in the same echelon. All these players eventually succeeded in escaping; and if we had imitated them we might have escaped too, but, of course, we could not leave our refugees. The change that had taken place in the appearance of these train-jumpers was like the change which takes place in the appearance of domestic animals that have gone wild. Covered with dirty furs, unshaven, wild-eyed, and desperate, they would certainly have excited comment in Bond Street or on the Grand Stand at Ascot.

They told us stories that would fill a book, and make most books of adventure look tame. Three of them, for instance, had been in a train a few stations west of us, when it was rushed one night by a band of Reds who had come on sleighs from the north. They heard the raiders thunder on the doors of each waggon, at the same time summoning the occupants to come forth instantly on pain of death. The sound came closer; and when finally it shook the door behind which they crouched, a Russian interpreter rose in a panic to undo the fastening. But one of the British officers pressed the cold muzzle of a revolver against his head and warned him, in a fierce whisper, to keep still. Thinking that the waggon was empty, the Reds passed on; and, when the sentry whom they had left behind turned his back, the three officers slipped noiselessly from the carriage, waded through the deep snow, and gained the shelter of the forest. They afterwards commandeered sleighs and food at the point of the revolver, as, unfortunately,

firearms were the only arguments that had weight in those days. Two British officers who were with Ataman Dutov in the south got across the Chinese frontier, and turned up, long afterwards, in Peking.

As the Reds were coming still nearer, we finally got attached to a Polish echelon on the West track; but, as that track was now as congested as the East track, we gained little by the transfer. Like an airship commander making for his base in a damaged condition, with the last drop of petrol in his tanks, and enemy aircraft in hot pursuit, the Commandant of this Polish echelon now began to shed waggon after waggon with the object of lightening his train. I do not know on what principle he went, but it seemed to me that, for every verst the Reds gained on us, the Commandant jettisoned a truck. An old Tsarist "dug-out" who had lost the good qualities of the Pole without acquiring those of the Russian, this Commandant showed little sympathy for us; and his officers, some of whom, being Poles from East Prussia, had served in the German Army until they became prisoners of war, were anything but friendly. We heard that they objected to the weight of our carriage, and would like to get rid of it; and, though they denied having any such intention, several ominous circumstances seemed to indicate that they had. We discovered, for example, that one of our couplings was broken and the other so damaged that a slight bump would be enough to make it snap. As our carriage was the hindmost, and as the bumps were sometimes so bad that they swept all our crockery off the table, this was a serious matter, for, if the coupling snapped at the top of a steep incline, we should go rushing backwards at a speed which would soon become terrific, and should probably get derailed or smashed to pieces against some other train. When we drew the attention of the Poles to this matter they said that they could not repair the coupling and had no spare ones. They may have really wanted to get rid of our carriage, either because it was too heavy or because it was contaminated by typhus, for one of the refugees entrusted to us had managed to contract that disease. Or perhaps they believed, like some of those refugees, that our Union Jack

would draw the fire of guerillas, and decided that, since we refused to haul down our flag, they would leave it and us behind.

As we could not repair the coupling ourselves, we took turns as sentry over it day and night. Beside the sentry were several logs of wood, which he was to throw under the nearest wheel of our carriage immediately the coupling gave way, so as to prevent the carriage from rushing backwards. The result was that, every time we went up a slope, my heart was in my mouth, as it used to be when I heard the long-drawn wail of approaching Turkish shells in Gallipoli. Never till then had I realized that there were so many nasty inclines on that section of the Trans-Siberian which, when I traversed it formerly in swift and well-appointed trains, had always seemed to me as flat as a pancake.

In the end we bribed the Poles to place our carriage next the engine; and, when they did that, they suddenly discovered that they had couplings after all, and hastened to screw them on. We also bribed a Russian Red Cross doctor to take our typhus case into his hospital; and, realizing from the success of these experiments in corruption how eloquently money spoke, we began flinging it right and left. Our bribes must, in all, have run into hundreds of thousands of roubles; and, though this seemed a stupendous sum at the time, it ultimately proved as valueless to the recipients as so many hundreds of thousands of snowballs, owing to the subsequent action of the Soviet Government in abolishing Omsk money. In some parts of Russia banknotes are now sold by weight like waste-paper; in other parts, tons of notes are being thrown into pulping-machines for conversion into newsprint.

## CHAPTER II

### WE TAKE TO SLEIGHS

THE Reds were all this time coming nearer; and, finally, at Bolotnaya, we had to abandon our train and take to sleighs. We had the very best reason for doing so, as, in the first place, we were blocked behind a long ribbon of trains without any prospect of getting off for a week; and as, in the second place, we were told by General Pepelaiev that Novo-Nikolaevsk had been captured, and that the Reds were making a cutting-off movement from it, north of the railway, on sleighs, with Oyash or perhaps Bolotnaya as their objective. "I am leaving myself in a few minutes," said Pepelaiev in conclusion. "If you stay here forty-eight hours longer you will certainly be captured."

As a matter of fact the Reds were at Bolotnaya long before the expiration of that time, but they did not find us there, for we had left the village some six hours earlier. We had great difficulty in getting sleighs, for every sleigh was being used, either by its owner or by troops who had commandeered it; and the town commandant on whom I and another officer called told us that it was absolutely impossible for him to get us vehicles of any description. My companion happened to meet in the street, however, some Jaeger officers belonging to a howitzer battery which had been equipped a year before by General Knox, and these officers said that all our party could travel in the sleigh of their detachment. The conditions were such, however, that the ladies could not be brought; but we persuaded the commandant of an echelon on the west track to take one of our railway carriages with him, and into this carriage we crowded all the women, children, and old people who had been specially entrusted to us. There was no room in this carriage for any of our officers save one, who was sick, and the train

commandant would not attach more than one additional carriage to his train, which was on the point of leaving. This carriage reached Taiga safely with all its occupants, and we joined it there afterwards.

Having thus done all we could for our Russian *protégés*, we tried to find our sleighs, but that task was rendered exceedingly difficult by the darkness, the crowds, the confusion, and the fact that there were many sleighs, all rushing past at a great speed, and that we had no means of telling which were ours. Finally, a number of vehicles went past laden with ammunition, equipment, and baggage; and one of our Russian officer-interpreters cried out: "These are they. Jump on anyhow!" He himself, together with his wife, were comfortably installed in the best sleigh, but there was no time to ask him for explanations on that or any other subject, as he shot past like an express train.

How the rest of us managed, without mishap, to scramble aboard the succeeding sleighs borders on the miraculous, but, as I discovered three days afterwards, none of us was left behind on this occasion. Owing to the weight which it already carried, no sleigh could take more than one passenger, so that for most of the next three days we were each isolated by the darkness and the cold as effectually as if we had each been imprisoned alone in an underground dungeon with hundreds of miles between us. All the energies of every one of us were concentrated on the task of clinging to the pile of baggage on which he sat, and on watching continually for the first symptoms of frostbite in his face and limbs. None of us had enough spare force even to think of anything else. In ordinary times a sleigh can travel from Bolotnaya to Taiga in one day, but we took three days owing to the fact that we made a detour to the north in order to avoid the traffic, and for the same reason we travelled most of the time by night.

Owing to the roughness of the road and to the number of gullies, camouflaged with snow, which had to be crossed, we were frequently thrown off our sleighs, and several of us got lost for a considerable time in the forest. Private James of the Hampshires, who had just come from the hottest part of India, where he had had a sunstroke, got



one of his heels frostbitten, and the affected part turned black as tar. Another of our party, after having been pitched out of one sleigh and knocked down by another, and run over by a third, and rapped on the knuckles by the driver of a fourth on which he had managed for a moment to get a precarious hold, finally fell into the deep snow alongside the track on top of a frozen corpse; and there was hardly one of us that escaped some adventure of the same kind. It was a serious matter to get thrown off one's sleigh, and that for the following reasons: the track was narrow, the snow on each side deep, the pace very rapid; and it was, therefore, no easy matter to get aboard another sleigh, especially as the driver always objected to a stranger attempting to board him in the darkness. Trying to get into a sleigh was like trying to get into an overladen boat pushing off from a wreck, and the *izvoshchik* sometimes treated an intruder as the boatman would, striking at his benumbed hands with the butt-end of his whip in order to make him release his hold. And he could not be blamed for doing so, as any addition to the weight drawn by his tired horse might have been fatal to himself, and lead to the loss of the ammunition which he carried. Besides, it must be remembered that this was not a joy-ride, but a *sauve qui peut*. It was a time of war—nay, more than that, it was the worst period of the most terrible civil war which modern history has seen. The wonder is that such of us as were thrown out ever escaped being left behind.

One of our party who fell off his sleigh the first night managed, after floundering about for some time in the snow, to get into another. It was some time before he discovered that this sleigh did not belong to our party, and was, moreover, going in the wrong direction, perhaps to bring information to the Bolsheviks. Being wrapped up in furs and blankets, the two other occupants did not at once notice his presence; but, as soon as they did, they promptly threw him out, and then he found himself in a desert of snow without any other sleigh in sight. Luckily, however, he met by the merest chance a Jaeger horseman, who enabled him to overtake our party which had been held up by a gully. Had he been left behind he would have

tumbled about hopelessly for a few hours through the illimitable white waste; he would have fallen into gullies; he would have lost his spectacles; his eyes would have become filled with snow; his eyelashes would have become heavy with icicles; and, finally, his frozen corpse would have been added to the hundreds of others which marked the track of Kolchak's terrible retreat. I was afterwards told at Omsk by Mikhailov, the war correspondent of the *Pravda*, who had taken part in the pursuit, that about a thousand frozen corpses of White soldiers had been found by the Reds in the snow between Omsk and Krasnoyarsk, and we ourselves came across five or six corpses between Bolotnaya and Taiga. And here I might say, though I began this account for the general public with the deliberate intention of telling nothing about the really frightful and terrifying aspects of this *débâcle*, that, in some of the Russian Red Cross trains, callous hospital assistants made a practice of stripping corpses stark naked, and then piling them in the open, like logs of wood, alongside the track. Their object in stripping them was to get their garments, clothing being in that intense cold as much a necessity of life as food; but I could never understand the want of reverence for the dead and of regard for the feelings of the living which was exhibited by the exposure of these bodies on the roadside, even in large towns like Novo-Nikolaevsk, when it would have been easy to put them inside the many deserted houses, where school children could not collect around them as they did, or to cover them with at least a few shovel-fuls of snow. Ordinary burial was, of course, out of the question, for the frozen earth was hard as granite and would have had to be blasted with dynamite.

During a life spent in war, sometimes conducted in savage countries, I have never seen similar disrespect shown to the dead save in China, and there only in the case of decapitated criminals; but I must say that, in the present instance, this disrespect was exhibited only by those dead-house gentry whom prolonged warfare, even in civilized lands, tends to dehumanize. Handling corpses as they do every day of their lives, these hospital ghouls sometimes have in the end literally no more respect for a dead man than they have for a

dead horse. They become like animals, losing absolutely and for ever the instinctive reverence on this point which we find even among the most degraded races. With the soldiers in the field it is always different; and, despite their far greater need for warm clothing, I never knew during this retreat of Russian soldiers taking even the overcoat from one of their comrades who had fallen by the wayside.

I refrain from saying a word about the appalling typhus horror, which led in one case to an echelon reaching its destination with 50 per cent. of its passengers dying or dead, but I felt that I must make some allusion to the terrible fact mentioned above, owing to the profound impression of savagery and utter demoralization which it made on my comrades and myself. It seemed to us that even the most elementary observances of the most primitive civilization had been swept away by this tidal wave of civil war, that human culture had collapsed, and that the end of all things was approaching.

A comparatively minor matter was the reckless way in which the Russian soldiers threw away their lives by drinking motor spirit. Though they had no motors, and though they found their guns, their ammunition, and sometimes even their rifles too heavy to bring along with them, they managed nevertheless to carry occasionally in a sleigh, which they handled with the most exquisite skill and care, a huge cylinder of motor spirit whereof some of them were mad enough to drink. After a few hours of wild hilarity many soldiers who had tasted this poison collapsed, and then fell an easy prey to the terrible Demon of the Ice, who was always on the alert, always watching for a chance to strike.

Just as a railway engine has to stop periodically in order to take in water and fuel, so had we to stop occasionally in order to absorb, in the warm cottages, a supply of animal heat. We did not eat or drink anything; we simply sat or stood till the marrow in our bones had thawed. Then we went again into the external cold, whose first touch was like the blow of a whip across the face, and prepared to push on. No matter how warmly one was clad, even though one was protected by layer upon layer of non-conductors

like hot water in a Thermos flask, a leakage of the animal heat still went on steadily, and, unless one replenished his stock of vital warmth several times a day by the means I have described, he was inevitably overtaken by sleepiness, collapse, and death.

I pitied from my heart the poor Siberian peasants, whose houses were thus invaded all day and filled every night by endless relays of armed men who ate up all the food; used up all the fuel; took away all the fodder, sleighs, horses, and cattle; and frequently compelled all the men and boys to accompany them. When Kolchak's armies afterwards went to pieces at Krasnoyarsk and Irkutsk, they left behind them, like spars and wreckage marking the spot where they had gone down, thousands of these unfortunate peasants, their horses lost, their sleighs smashed, themselves without money or food or any means of getting back to their homes. I have got terrible statistics bearing on this subject, but this is not the place to give them; and I shall here confine myself to saying that districts, large as England, where there formerly were villages and cultivated fields, have now been reduced to the condition of deserts and are quite uninhabited.

The patience of the unfortunate peasants in the face of all these calamities was almost Christ-like, but, on the other hand, the private soldiers who invaded their houses could not help doing so, for was it not "war," which excuses everything?

On one occasion the soldiers who filled a peasant's hut and who, to do them justice, kept as quiet as mice, were politely requested by the owner to go outside for a few moments in order that the good woman of the house might give birth to a child. When they returned the child had already come into the world, and the mother, evidently none the worse for the ordeal she had just gone through, was at the fireplace making tea.

Sometimes most of the floor was covered with sleeping soldiers tightly wedged together, and whenever one of these recumbent forms stirred itself and got up, there was a move towards the vacant place on the part of those who had been left standing and expectant. It reminded me of strap-

hangers in a crowded London tramcar moving towards a vacated seat. I might here observe that this promiscuous way of sleeping contributed to the spread of typhus, as did also the habit of wearing clothes taken from corpses.

Sometimes mere children were taken from the villages in order to drive sleighs for the retreating troops. Two of our British soldiers who had brought some brandy with them once offered some of it to a burly driver who sat in front of them, and who accepted the offer with alacrity, but in a curious, piping voice. When, towards evening, all three went into a house to warm themselves, the Tommies looked on in astonishment, while their driver peeled off coat after coat, growing gradually smaller and smaller as he did so, until at last, when they had begun to fear that their was no human kernel at all inside all those furry husks, a small boy of about fourteen years of age stood grinning before them.

My own experiences on this trip were not as bad as those which some of my comrades had, but naturally they impressed me more, not only because they were my own, but also because I was older than most of the other members of our party, whose average age, if we exclude old Sergeant-Major Walters and a few others, was somewhere about nineteen. During the first night's wild ride I had taken advantage of a stoppage to get out and walk, for my feet were getting frozen. Then a very common thing happened. The long line of sleighs stretching into the darkness in front of me suddenly put itself in motion. The sleigh ahead of mine went off like an arrow shot from a bow. My sleigh followed automatically, despite all the efforts of the driver to moderate the speed of his horses until I could get in. I clutched the rear of the vehicle, but my desperate attempts to hoist myself aboard were all in vain, owing to the weight of clothing which I carried. I wore two fur overcoats, one on top of the other, and likewise two pairs of fur gloves, the outer pair having only one compartment each for the fingers. As in addition to this I carried a haversack crammed tight with my belongings, it is not surprising that my agility proved unequal to the effort demanded of it,

and that I rolled back into the snow while my sleigh shot on ahead.

When I had scrambled to my feet, my spectacles rendered almost opaque by snow and ice, I found that two or three sleighs had already dashed past, and that another was rushing down on me. My attempt to get into this one was an even greater failure than my first attempt had been. I was knocked down instantly, and by the time I had risen again, I saw that there were only two more sleighs to pass. This sight nerved me to a supreme effort, and I succeeded in gripping with my hands the rear end of the last sleigh but one. As I could not pull myself up, however, I was dragged along helplessly behind, and should soon have had to relinquish my hold, had not Sergeant Murray, a Canadian who happened to be riding in the sleigh, succeeded, but with great difficulty, in hoisting me aboard. Luckily the Russian driver was temporarily paralyzed (with drink), or he would promptly have thrown me out again.

The violence of my exertions so told on me that I never quite recovered my strength during the rest of this sleigh trip, and on the last day I was near getting lost completely. Through some misunderstanding the sleigh to which I was clinging got separated from the rest of the convoy, and at nightfall I found myself in a strange village, the only one of our party. A fatal tendency to sleep had nearly mastered me several times during the course of the day, and now, with no place to go to, I was hardly able to walk, and would willingly have lain down in the snow if I had not known well what that would have meant. The few houses that the village contained were crammed with people, while the streets and open spaces, as well as the roads for miles around, were filled with thousands of soldiers unable to find shelter. Forcing my way into one house I found it crowded with Russian officers, all fast asleep, and some of them sitting bolt upright in chairs, looking as if they were dead. The conviction that some of them were dead—dead of typhus—made me beat a hasty retreat, and then I tried another house, where I was lucky enough to find one man awake. He proved to be Colonel Ivantsev of the 14th Jaeger Volunteer Regiment, a kindly Russian officer, who,

seeing my exhausted condition, insisted on my staying with him, gave me some tea, and allowed me to sleep on the floor. He himself spent most of the night trying to straighten out the hopeless affairs of his regiment, to get food for his soldiers, and to arrange for their departure next day. At 4 o'clock in the morning, while it was still very dark, I accompanied him in his sleigh to Taiga, passing all the way through a great forest which, with its solemn silence and its dark pine-trees laden heavily with snow, was a place of almost unearthly beauty. What set off that beauty astonishingly were the huge fires kindled in it by soldiers who had been unable to find shelter in the villages. Large numbers of such soldiers passed the night seated around those camp-fires, whose red flames lit up the white, frozen plain and illuminated the dark recesses of the forest. But though those great conflagrations, which dotted the *taiga* for miles and miles, were to the last degree picturesque, they meant, unfortunately, that thousands of poor soldiers could not get proper sleep. No wonder that I often saw men fast asleep in sleighs which they were supposed to be driving, and even on horses which they were riding.

At Taiga I met my companions at the railway station in our old carriage which had just come through from Bolotnaya, and which moved off soon after my arrival.

Thus came to an end a sleigh journey which was certainly no "joy-ride," so far, at least, as I was concerned. If ever again I have to take part in a Russian retreat, I will pray that my flight be not in the winter.

## CHAPTER III

### CAPTURED

OUR journey from Taiga to Krasnoyarsk was a repetition of our journey from Omsk to Taiga, only worse. There were numerous railway accidents with considerable loss of life, and at one station we came across a deserted train which was being looted. Most ominous symptom of all, many of the Polish soldiers, who had hitherto formed an unbroken rearguard, had now fled in a body from their echelons, and were marching in complete disorder on foot. There was nothing, therefore, between us and the enemy. Insurgent bands were operating on the line to the east of us, and held for a short time one of the stations. The telegraph wires had all been cut, but the presence of guerillas on the railway was signalled by means of rockets at night. Everything indicated that we were running into a catastrophe. The curtain had in fact risen on the last act of the tragedy, but it proved to be a very short act with a rather tame and unexpected climax.

After passing Bogotol we learned that Krasnoyarsk was in the hands of an insurgent band under a well-known guerilla leader called Shitinkin, who was, however, allowing all Polish echelons and foreign officers to pass. Consequently we were not surprised or alarmed when, on January 6, we were stopped at Bugatch, six versts from Krasnoyarsk, by three men whom we took to represent Shitinkin's Government. These three men were calmly disarming the large number of Russian soldiers on foot, on horseback, and in sleighs, who had been moving eastwards on both sides of the railway and on the line itself on the way from Omsk. This interminable stream of soldiers riding in the darkness and the snow was one of the many things which made this journey seem to me



at times a fantastic romance or a feverish dream. I used to drop off to sleep at dusk while watching the busbies of the Cossacks bobbing endlessly past the window; every time I went out to "snow" the engine at night they were still passing; and sometimes for a fraction of a second after I woke up from dreams of happier lands, I was uncertain whether the dream was not reality and this incredible, infinite procession the dream.

But now this long trail had come to an end, both for the Cossacks and for us. In obedience to the orders of the mysterious Three, the Russians surrendered their arms with the peaceful unconcern of railway travellers surrendering their tickets to the ticket-collector at the end of their journey, or of sheep surrendering their wool to the shearer; and soon a huge pile of rifles, swords, and revolvers arose in the snow outside our carriage. In obedience to further orders the officers tore off their epaulettes and threw them on the ground. When I visited Krasnoyarsk a few days later I found some parts of the streets so thickly littered with epaulettes as to suggest the idea of fallen leaves in autumn.

None of the White officers offered the least objection to these proceedings. Those who had been disarmed were allowed to drift into Krasnoyarsk and there shift for themselves. We saw thousands of weaponless men pass in the space of a few hours. Korff, the Russian officer attached to our Mission, said, "These three men should be shot," but a few weeks later he himself was an officer in the Red Army. We felt sure that the Three were not alone, and we afterwards discovered that, behind a hill some 600 yards off, was a small detachment of Reds with several machine-guns.

Being under the impression that this Trio represented Shitinkin and the S.Rs. (Social Revolutionaries), and that they would soon allow us to pass, we were only amused at first by this extraordinary scene; but we were rudely disillusioned when one of the Three, a soldier with a red ribbon in his busby, entered our carriage and announced that he was the representative of the Soviet Government (Sovietsky Vlast).

This first envoy of Bolshevism was a simple man, very

polite, and very sincere in his beliefs. He could tell us nothing more, however, than that we could not go further. He could not even say if we were prisoners of war or not, and had no directions to give us. As to the general situation, civil and military, he was, however, frank and indiscreet. He said that an anti-Kolchak Government had been formed at Krasnoyarsk, and that there was a "partisan" army under Shitinkin in that town. Two regular regiments of the Reds had arrived and were on their way into Krasnoyarsk, where the local Government, which he described as being practically Bolshevik, was expected to dissolve voluntarily after handing over its power to the representatives of the Soviet Republic. One Red regiment was between us and Krasnoyarsk. He said that these Red troops had come by sleigh from Tomsk, sometimes travelling at the rate of seventy versts a day, and that some of them had even come on our own echelons.

Commissars and Red officers continued to visit us during the rest of the day, and were all of them courteous. Some of them had been officers in the old army, and one had been a trusted subordinate of General Sakharov, Kolchak's Commander-in-Chief. The Colonel of a Red regiment told us that we might retain our arms, but he insisted on the disarmament of all the Poles. Next day, however, a civilian functionary of some kind visited us and made us surrender all our weapons. The military Reds were, as a rule, friendly; the civilian Reds were fanatical and unfriendly; but the friendlies were, unfortunately, afraid of the fanatics. The soldiers at the Front were kind and courteous, as military people at the Front nearly always are.

Those soldiers constituted in fact the flaming vanguard of the Reds, the young heralds of universal revolt, who preach the Gospel of Lenin in conquered lands, and who certainly made a good impression in Siberia by their noble phrases and their scrupulousness in paying for everything. By their swords and their enthusiasm Bolshevism is maintained, but by their swords Bolshevism will fall. For their present ignorance and fanaticism can only last so long as they are at a distance from their homes, are misinformed

about conditions in Russia by Propagandist newspapers, and are daily worked up into a state of almost religious fervour by what is called the political department of the army. When they return to Russia and see how things actually are, their enthusiasm may take a very different direction; and already, indeed, they are beginning to doubt. Several of them confessed to us that they hate the military Commissars who always keep well to the rear, and who sometimes live in great luxury. "We shall kill them some day," said one of the Red soldiers; "they are no better than bourgeois." This slaughter will begin once the Bolsheviks have made treaties with their external enemies, and have turned their attention from war, about which they know a good deal, to peace, about which they know nothing.

But at present these Janissaries of the Reds are still intoxicated themselves by revolutionary enthusiasm and capable of intoxicating others. How capable they are, I saw from the effect produced on the Russians in our party by their high revolutionary fervour. "We do not kill prisoners," they said, "they lie who say so"; and told a harrowing story of a White officer at Taiga who shot his two daughters and himself sooner than surrender. "That man," they said, "was misled by his own Propaganda."

They told us, and I afterwards found that it was true, that, before evacuating Omsk, Kolchak's Cossacks had massacred a number of workmen imprisoned there. "But," they added, "we have blotted all that out of our minds. We will not take revenge." I began to see that Bolshevism, like Puritanism, the Great Tai-P'ing Rebellion, and even Mohammedanism, owes all its explosive force to—the Bible. The Divine element in Christianity is of such tremendous and supernatural potency that, if mixed with the wrong ingredients, it is capable of blowing the world to pieces. A grain of primitive Christianity added to a mass of Marxian error has made Russian Communism the terrible and most dangerous compound that it is. "An Idealism gone wrong"; that description is true as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough.

Ivan, our train conductor, an honest, hard-working civilian with no previous political views, was quite carried

off his feet by the strong wind of the new doctrine, by the large and benevolent phrases, redolent of an austere republican justice, which the Red leaders continually rolled off their tongues, phrases such as are frequently met with in the oratory of the Cromwellian captains and the French Terrorists. He spent all his time drinking in these burning words, and brought us back, incidentally, useful information as to what was going on. He witnessed the arrival of a Red commander and heard the Poles ask that their lives should be spared and that they should have special treatment. "We never kill prisoners," replied the Red General haughtily, "but after what I have heard of the conduct of the Poles in the villages through which I have just passed, *they* should be the last people in the world to ask for special treatment." And, knowing how the Poles *had* behaved in those villages, Ivan marvelled greatly at that Red leader's moderation.

Another Russian of our party was still more affected by the oratory. He was a young bluejacket, Makarov by name, who had been quartered on us by a Jaeger Colonel in order that he should attend to several of that officer's lady relatives who had been placed in our charge. The Colonel had assured us that Makarov was absolutely Bolshevik-proof, and certainly he was a very handy and active youth. Unfortunately he became so mad-drunk on the Bolshevik oratory that he heard and on a considerable quantity of raw alcohol which he imbibed that he forthwith declared himself a Red, threatened to murder every officer in the carriage, and went roaring up and down the corridor with a revolver. He made our position to the last degree dangerous, for if he began shooting or we tried to defend ourselves, the Red Guards watching through the window would have massacred all of us. I put him to bed five times; but the mixture of bad doctrine and bad drink had excited his brain to such a degree of insane activity that sleep was out of the question, and on each occasion he rushed into the corridor after me, madder than ever. In the end I began to fear that it was a clear case of homicidal mania, and that nothing would save us.

While this uproar was going on, a number of White officers

who had not yet surrendered or been disarmed were calmly planning an impossible anti-Bolshevik *coup* in the compartment of the Russian officers attached to our Mission. The whole incredible situation lacked only this finishing touch to make it perfectly unique. Here were armed officers of Kolchak's Army holding a Council of War inside the Red lines, which they had entered by reason of the neglect by the Bolsheviks of the simplest military precautions. A few miles off, on the west, was a large force of Whites, which intended to advance on Krasnoyarsk that night. A few miles off on the east was a Red force, part of which had come to Krasnoyarsk on White echelons without anybody in those echelons having ever suspected them of being Red. Our train was surrounded by Bolshevik guards, who were apparently unable to distinguish between friend and foe. The Bolshevik officers who had visited us during the day had given away their military dispositions, or, rather, their lack of military dispositions, and our Russian interpreters were now communicating that valuable information to the White leaders who had casually dropped in for a chat and a smoke, without meeting any objection on the part of the Red soldiers supposed to be guarding us. The only member of our party who did justice to the situation was old Sergeant-Major Walters, who, after having had the position explained to him, sat down deliberately, and said: "It beats me."

It was a farce, but a farce which might easily end in a tragedy; for if the Whites advanced we would find ourselves between two fires. I have passed more peaceful nights than the night of January 6, 1920, the Russian Christmas Eve, a festival for which, by the way, we had during the early part of the day been making elaborate preparations. We sat up till daybreak with our rifles loaded and ready, for we felt that if the Whites did come on it would be our duty to join them, though the most probable outcome of any fighting would be that, after having stirred up trouble, the Whites would run away and leave us to be wiped out.

The night passed, however, without incident, and we all thanked God when Christmas Day broke at length over the infinite waste of snow.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOME HORRORS OF THE RETREAT

THE preceding chapters are based on a report which I was asked to make to the War Office. It is now necessary for me to interrupt the course of my narrative in order to describe things of which, though in themselves of no military or economic significance, it is necessary that the reader should know in order that he may fully understand the terrible conditions under which this retreat was conducted, the wholesale demoralization which accompanied this flight of a people, and the profoundly depressing effect of this demoralization on my comrades and myself.

To omit all mention of these things, and to limit myself to the production of a precise military report made up of names, dates, figures, technical details, and a record of petty inconveniences, would be to leave a wholly false impression. It would be like omitting the Prince of Denmark from "Hamlet," for those things which I am going to describe overshadowed everything else; they entered into our thoughts day and night; and they will colour all our future lives. I collect them all into one chapter so that anyone who is of weak nerves or of immature years, or who only wants a story of adventure, may "skip" them if he will, and cannot therefore blame me for obtruding on his notice, without due warning, some of the ugliest aspects of war.

In the first place, to put it frankly, we were all terrified by the very name of the Reds. There was no doubt whatever but that they had committed appalling atrocities in Russia. The direct evidence that we had had on that subject from thousands of sources and the piles of corpses that some of us had seen put that fact outside the region of controversy, and the Bolsheviks themselves do not maintain that atrocities have not been committed. They admit them, infer-

entially, by saying that the Whites are just as bad, or else they only dispute the figures. I had myself become convinced, after more than a year's residence in Siberia, that, verily, some monstrous Terror must have established itself in Russia, that some diabolical shape must be sitting on the throne of the dead Tsar.

What I saw afterwards of the leniency which the Reds can sometimes show did not modify in the least this opinion of their rule, and I hope that the scrupulous impartiality with which I shall afterwards give everything that tells in their favour as well as everything that tells against them will not obscure this fact.

Tens of thousands of peaceful people had fled into Siberia during that space of time, rushing away from that Red Terror with nothing but the clothes they stood in, as people rush in their nightdresses out of a house on fire, as the farmer on the slopes of Vesuvius rushes away from the flaming river of lava. Peasants had deserted their fields, students their books, doctors their hospitals, scientists their laboratories, workmen their workshops, authors their completed manuscripts.

I had seen and talked to many of these refugees, and it was clear to me that something more than the mere fear of death had caused this precipitate and universal flight, something Satanic, something that threatened soul as well as body.

And now this monstrous and irresistible force was on our track—fifty miles off, forty, thirty, twenty, ten. Had we been pursued by Germans, Turks, or even by Senussi or Masked Tuaregs we would have been much less uneasy than we actually were. It was not that any of us feared being shot. It was something else. Is it any wonder, therefore, that this whole retreat was a nightmare, that we chafed at every delay, that we anxiously counted the gradually diminishing number of versts which separated us from our relentless pursuers?

Worst of all was the feeling that, though we had arms in our hands, we were as helpless as though we were unarmed and manacled in a rudderless boat shooting down towards the falls of Niagara. We were being swept along in the

wreckage of a demoralized army which, whatever else it did, would certainly never fight against the Bolsheviks again. We were hopelessly encumbered by the refugees who had been forced on us; nevertheless, we discussed the wildest plans of escape. We talked of leaving the train and trekking northwards through the snow to the shores of the Frozen Sea, even though it took us years, or southward to the Chinese frontier. But we soon realized that it would be as impossible to escape in either direction with our charges as it would to escape on foot from an exploration party at the North Pole.

Our sleigh journey from Bolotnaya to Taiga gave us some idea of what travelling in the snow meant; and we knew that north of us impenetrable, uninhabited forests stretched for thousands of miles till they gave place to the ever-frozen *tundras* of the Polar Sea. Southward lay the wild Chinese frontier, but it was five hundred miles southward, and the ranges of snowy mountains on the other side of it were impassable at this time of the year. The few villages between us and that frontier had been converted to Bolshevism of the reddest dye by Kolchak's punitive expeditions, so that we could hardly expect much of a welcome from them. In short, we had to stay in the train, and we realized from the first that there was very little chance of the train getting through.

And, meanwhile, the very name "Siberia" weighed upon our souls like lead. To most of us there had always been something dreadful in the very sound of these two words, "Russia," "Siberia." A great deal has been done to white-wash both of them, and some people in this country have almost brought themselves to believe that the serfs had on the whole a rather good time—no worry about money, for example, or about the choice of a wife—and that the Siberian convicts were treated quite well. But in the past they suggested only the clank of chains, and they suggest it still.

To me, at least, Russian history is one long horror. Even Nero and Caligula are joyous and artistic figures in comparison with Muscovy's short series of drunken, half-mad autocrats; and the Eleusinian Mysteries are less



repulsive than the charnel-house activities of Russia's subterranean plotters and the unspeakable excesses of her religious maniacs. The illustrated book of revolutionary "martyrs," published in 1906 under the title of "Byloe," and the portraits of the Soviet leaders with which the Hôtel Métropole in Moscow is now adorned are as repulsive to me as Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors: the diabolically criminal type being in all three cases the same. The religious sects are as immoderate in their way as the political organizations both of the Right and of the Left. The members of one sect still practise castration in obedience to what they conceive to be the command of Christ, while the followers of another sect used to burn themselves alive to the singing of pious canticles, under the direction of a crazy priest who assured them that their spotless souls suffered no defilement from the sexual filth in which they wallowed till the flames engulfed them.

Under a blue, Southern sky, and amid objects of exquisite art, the Roman Emperors revelled and murdered on old Falernian, and without any rebuke from naked, comely gods as unmoral as themselves. Stupefied by crude alcohol, the Muscovite Tsars prayed to emaciated Saints, and sinned morosely under the reproachful eyes of a tortured Christ gazing on them from dimly lighted *ikons* framed in "barbaric pearls and gold." Around them were the products of an abortive civilization, monstrous fruit of an unnatural union between Scythia and Byzantium, while, outside, the wolves howled in the dark forests of the cold and savage North.

Like an infinite stretch of desolate Polar wastes enveloped in winter darkness, save when lighted up at long intervals by awe-inspiring explosions of volcanic energy more sinister than the night itself: such seems to me the terrible story of Muscovy with its gigantic personalities revealed in flaming fire—fire that never came from Heaven—its devastating invasions; its cataclysmal popular eruptions. We fled in the fierce red glare of such an eruption, the most stupendous of them all, an eruption whose flames still leap to Heaven, and whose thunders still reverberate all over the world. Haunted by the presentiment that we would finally be

overtaken by that pursuing lava torrent of revolutionary Terror, we fled across a thousand miles of frozen steppe amid scenes of murder, savagery, intoxication, debauchery, and death, all mixed together in a mad phantasmagoria that it would be impossible to parallel in any modern war.

The crowning horror was the typhus, but the sights which I saw in this connection and the statistics which I collected were so staggering that, when I afterwards told about them in Europe, my hearers simply shrugged their shoulders and refused to believe me. I particularly remember a wealthy foreign concessionaire who, being most anxious, for his own pecuniary advantage, to open up trade with Red Russia, had resolutely made up his mind that everything he had heard of atrocities, misgovernment, and disease in Russia was grossly exaggerated, and who consequently treated with brutal discourtesy anyone who told him the truth on these subjects. What I told him was certainly not in harmony with the luxurious appointments of the breakfast-room where we met or with the attentive service of the well-trained butler or the general air of eternal and assured stability with which he had enveloped himself; but I am surprised that, after the millions of deaths and the myriad catastrophes of the last six years, there are still to be found in those parts of the world that are still safe for capitalists, narrow, prosperous, and selfish men who, when told of fresh disasters to humanity, say: "Nonsense! These figures are absolutely preposterous. Such things don't happen. You journalists never tell the truth."

Before I narrate my personal experiences, therefore, I will quote some official figures about the typhus epidemic in Siberia. One very good authority just arrived from Siberia places the number of deaths from typhus in Novo-Nikolaevsk from November, 1919, to April, 1920, at 60,000. General Voitsekhovskiy's force of 12,000 men included 9,000 sick of typhus when it arrived at Chita.

Dr. Semashko, the Commissar of Public Health under the Soviet Government, and an official whom I know to be very careful in his statements, declares that:

"In Siberia the road leading from Tomsk for two or

three hundred miles was described as covered with corpses, In fact, from Ufa right away to the far east similar conditions have prevailed. At some towns, Nikolaevsk, Omsk, and others, warehouses were found packed with the corpses of people who had died from typhus."

Even during the summer this disease, though essentially a disease of the cold weather, continued to claim its victims; so that the havoc which it will cause on an enfeebled population during the coming winter staggers the imagination. And, according to Dr. Semashko and all the foreign medical experts who have studied the question, this terrible scourge, which has already obtained a strong foothold in Europe, is rapidly advancing west along a front of 6,000 miles and may possibly invade England.

Having said this much, I shall now narrate my own experiences of typhus. During the retreat, I found it raging all along the railway line and in many of the echelons. Before the retreat began "death trains" had passed several times eastward—that is, trains in which nearly everybody aboard was sick, dying, or dead, the dead lying among the living in some of the *teplyushki*. No station-master would allow such a train to remain at his station. He passed it on to the next station with the result that, when it reached Vladivostock, conditions in it were so frightful that no description of them is possible.

Some of the echelons which took part in the retreat presented an equally shocking sight. In one of them, that of the Izhevsky Division, about one-half the passengers died of typhus or other diseases on the way from Omsk to Krasnoyarsk, and there was no doctor aboard.

When I passed Novo-Nikolaevsk on February 3 there were 37,000 typhus cases in that town, and the rate of mortality, which had never been more than 8 per cent., had risen to 25 per cent. Fifty doctors had died in that town alone during the space of one month and a half and more than 20,000 corpses lay unburied outside the town. I got these figures from a competent Russian doctor who travelled with me on that occasion, and who told me that all the measures which were being taken to cope with the epidemic were only "eye-wash." The isolation waggons which had

then been placed at each station he called "death-traps," and he explained to me how they only helped to spread the disease. He went out into the town to see a doctor whom he knew, but found that he had died of typhus and that his wife was sick of the same disease. I went to the Polish church and found the priest reading the funeral service over a rough deal coffin which contained, I was told, the remains of a Polish gentleman who had once been Governor of a Province. He had died of typhus in the train, and his body had been stripped by the White soldiers. His wife, who was also ill, had become so seriously upset by this treatment of her husband's corpse that, in order to soothe her, another lady, the only friend she had left, had by superhuman exertions succeeded in getting a most primitive coffin and in having the remains conveyed for Christian burial to the church. This lady asked me to help her to carry the coffin to the hearse that waited outside, as there were not enough men present to do so, and I gladly consented.

Conditions in the hospitals were indescribable. In one, about which an official report was written, the head-doctor had been fined for drunkenness, the other doctor only paid the place a short visit once a day, and the nurses only put in an appearance while the doctor was there. The linen and the clothes of the patients were never changed, and most of them lay in a most filthy condition in their everyday clothes on the floor. They were never washed, and the male attendants waited for the periodical attack of unconsciousness which is characteristic of typhus in order to steal from the patients their rings, jewelry, watches, and even their food.

All of our British party dreaded typhus with an overmastering dread, not so much because of the typhus as because of the hospitals. They often said that if they went into one of these hospitals they would never leave it alive. The bad air alone would kill them.

But it seemed impossible to avoid this terrible disease as, owing to the lack of water, there was no means of washing oneself or one's clothes, while the close contact in which we lived with the Russians made cleanliness on our part no guarantee against the disease. There was one case supposed

to be typhus in our carriage on the journey from Omsk to Ekaterinburg. There were several cases in the house where we lived at Krasnoyarsk. On my way back, there was one case in the compartment next to mine, and then, to crown all, a case in my own compartment, only about two feet from where I lay. It was a *feldsher*, or doctor's assistant, who fell ill, but he would not go to hospital. I found him weeping bitterly in his bed one morning, and when I asked him what was the matter with him, I found that he was weeping out of pity for himself. "If I have typhus," he said, "I am a dead man, and if I am sent to hospital I shall certainly die there. I know what those hospitals are."

His knowledge of the hospitals was certainly extensive, but his pity might have been a little more extensive; it might have extended, for example, to me. But it never seemed to strike him that in justice to me he should leave the compartment, or report sick, or have his clothes disinfected, or at least refrain from throwing his clothes on to the bench where I sat. His horror of the hospital was so great that on hearing that the doctor, a lady, was coming to see him he dressed himself and staggered into the outer air, where he spent the whole day so that he might miss her.

Many Russians came on our train at Novo-Nikolaevsk and begged us, for God's sake, to take them with us. They would be content, they said, to sleep on the outer platform even though that meant the certainty of freezing to death. They would do anything to escape "the terrible epidemic," as they called it. It was like a rush from a plague-stricken town in the Middle Ages.

On my way back to Omsk I found that the typhus in every Siberian town was as bad as it was in Novo-Nikolaevsk. With the exception of a passage and a few rooms the whole railway station at Taiga had been converted into one huge hospital and, through the windows, one could see the sick soldiers lying on the ground in their clothes. There was only one doctor for every hundred patients, and in one hospital devoted to frost-bite and gangrene cases surgeons were occupied continuously day and night amputating limbs without the use of anæsthetics. Private

houses, as well as schools, churches, and public buildings of all kinds had been converted into hospitals, and conditions in Omsk and Ekaterinburg were equally terrible.

On our eastward journey things were not so bad as this, but they were very bad indeed. A doctor attached to the White Army told me that over 20,000 people had died of typhus and cold *en route* from Omsk to Krasnoyarsk, exclusive of those who died in the towns. His own train had left Omsk with over 800 persons on board, and when they reached Krasnoyarsk twenty-six dead bodies were piled on top of one another, like logs of wood, in the open gangways outside the brake-waggon. At least one waggon in every train was converted into a travelling morgue, and the dead always overflowed on to these outer gangways.

I have already described how these dead bodies were stripped stark naked and how this practice contributed tremendously to the spread of the epidemic.

I only refer to the matter again owing to the profound impression of savagery and utter demoralization which it made on my mind.

The only coffin I saw was in the Polish church at Novo-Nikolaevsk, and the only shrouds I saw were those wrapped round dead children. The remains of those little ones were decked out by their mothers in white clothes set off by sprays of evergreen, while the drifting snow had added its own funeral wreaths. The calm, white faces were always uncovered, and the bodies, I am glad to say, were never disturbed by the corpse-strippers.

The loss in horses during this retreat has been estimated, and I give the estimate elsewhere; but the loss in children, which has not yet been estimated, must also have been very great. "Woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days."

One would have thought that, with the frozen eye of death thus fixed on them whichever way they turned and with the sound of the last trumpet thus blowing in their ears, the officers and soldiers of such a religious race would prepare for their own last end; but quite the contrary was the case; and I am rather inclined to believe, after what I have seen, that the last trumpet will only be the signal for

a final orgie of lust among some of those who are alive when they hear it sound.

Debauchery amid corpses seems impossible, but, as Merezhkovsky says, "What cannot happen, happens in Russia."

Some of the Russian officers in Omsk who had been deeply shocked by the unfounded stories about the Communist nationalization of women seemed to carry out that principle pretty thoroughly in their own private lives. And now, having deserted their soldiers, they were bringing their harems along with them, as well as all the alcohol which they could get hold of. Most of the ladies evacuated in the staff trains were wives or relatives of officers and officials, but the status of many others was very different. These others swarmed everywhere. They peered delicately at the common people out of the curtained windows of first-class cars passing swiftly through on the West track. They "wangled" their way into the most exclusive *coupés*. They were a drag on the whole conduct of the retreat, and were calculated to make one a misogynist for the rest of his life. Even the Admiral, who was married and who had the reputation among his entourage of being almost an ascetic, was very weak indeed in the matter of women and wine. He led an ostentatiously religious life, attended church in great state every Sunday and holiday, and, when he addressed the "Christian Crusaders" whom he had raised to fight the Bolsheviki, spoke with a religious fervour worthy of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Yet he brought with him on this, his last retreat, a certain Madame Timereva, who is said to have followed him to the end and to have been shot with him at Irkutsk. This case was actually cited to me by an English officer as a shining example of woman's fidelity at a time when "sexual morality had become extremely loose."

Semenov, now the most prominent Imperialist in Eastern Siberia, is also married, but nevertheless flaunts a Jewish concubine whom he picked up in a Harbin *café-chantant* and whom he proudly presents to the highest foreign officials. Kalmykov has managed to introduce obscenity into nearly all his military orders. In short, Russia is fast

losing every vestige of Christianity and civilization; and this remark applies not only to Red Russia but to White. Red Russia is probably the better of the two, for it never pretended to be very prudish, whereas White Russia posed as the champion of Christianity.

One naval officer who travelled in our train and whose place was certainly in Vladivostock if anywhere, had been sent 2,000 versts into the wilds because a superior officer coveted his wife; and in the War Office at Omsk there had been many cases of young married officers being ordered to the Front for the same reason, and being killed at the front.

The utter break-up of families facilitated this wholesale demoralization of a people. Young girls of sixteen or seventeen were sometimes left stranded at a station in their summer shoes without money or friends, and, being frightened almost out of their wits by the accounts they heard of Bolshevik atrocities, they fell an easy prey to the lust of the soldiery. Sometimes they were dressed in men's clothes, and their smooth, young faces contrasted sharply with the hairy busbies and sheepskins which they wore. Some of the girls in the soldiers' echelons were little more than children; others were evidently experienced campaigners and not unwilling victims.

I might add many horrible things about the prevalence in the villages of venereal diseases introduced by Austrian and German war prisoners and by Russian prisoners returned from Germany, but this subject I shall leave entirely to the medical authorities of the Allies.

Besides the soldier-refugees there were of course many peasants, some seated in sleighs on top of old trunks and bags and other household belongings all covered with snow, but more frequently travelling alongside those heavily laden sleighs, others trudging along on foot, all wrapped in dirty sheepskins and with their wild-looking fur caps pulled down over their faces. I pitied their poor, faithful, tired horses, some of which had come all the way from Tobolsk. Sometimes they brought cattle with them, but these were all bought or seized by the hungry troops before the end of the journey. We bought a cow ourselves after



passing Taiga and placed its quarters in cold storage on top of our car alongside other perishable articles of food.

Women and children accompanied the peasants, and often got parted from them *en route*. Parents lost their children, husbands lost their wives, children lost one another. A British subject in our train had lost three children at Novo-Nikolaevsk through going into town with his wife to buy some food for them. When he returned he found that his *teplyushka* had been attached by mistake to another echelon which had gone off. We did all we could for him, made enquiries at every station, and telegraphed up and down the line, but, up to the time I left Krasnoyarsk, he had heard nothing of the lost children. One of our staff officers had been carried off at Omsk in the same way through his carriage getting accidentally attached to the wrong train. A young clerk whom I employed and whom I had sent on in General Knox's train, placed his wife in a Russian train which was afterwards captured. An English sergeant who had married a Russian lady placed her aboard a train which got through, but he himself was captured.

All the stations along the line were covered with the most pathetic little pencilled notices regarding these lost ones.

The following specimens will give an idea of what they were like:

“ Dear Ivan i am going to stay at Andy's house in Irkutsk join ME there the children are with me but we have no food.—OLGA.”

“ Dear Masha i am waiting for you here and you will get my address at the post office.—SERGEI.”

Surnames were seldom used in these notices; the Christian name was generally given in its diminutive form and no attempt was ever made to indicate who exactly the writer was. For Olga there was evidently only one Ivan in the world, and for Sergei there was only one Masha. It never seemed to occur to them that there could ever possibly be any confusion.

These notices were scribbled all over the walls of the stations and halts. Sometimes they were written on

scraps of paper which were pasted on the walls. I have seen the whole exterior wall of a station covered with them as high up as one could reach. I have never seen a station without some of them. I have seen them sometimes pinned to the trunks of trees, a custom learned perhaps in the happy days of courtship, before the twin deluges of revolution and war had thundered over Russia.

This disintegration of a whole nation had been going on for two years before the disastrous retreat from Omsk came to accelerate the process, and it probably constitutes the greatest dislocation of family life that has ever taken place in the history of the world. The columns of all the Siberian newspapers always contained advertisements asking for lost ones. In one paper I counted forty-five such advertisements in one day. I never, during these two years, met a Russian who had not lost some member of his family. His wife had been last heard of in Kiev. His son had been studying in Moscow when the storm burst. The number of irregular alliances which this great dispersal had led to will break up millions of homes. But it is the young who will suffer most. In 1918 I had seen how respectable and delicately brought-up Russian girls had drifted into Harbin and there became the prey of Russian and Jewish speculators, of Chinamen, of every kind of human vampire, every kind of international dealer in white flesh. Those girls came from Kiev, from the Crimea, from the most distant parts of the former Russian Empire, but they were penniless, friendless, and absolutely helpless. There were wealthy Russian imperialists in Harbin, but they never thought of establishing homes for these girls or starting some sort of a society to assist them. They were all too busy playing at high politics. But surely a time must come when it will be impossible that so great a disaster to humanity as this crumbling away of a whole civilization can take place in one part of the world while another part, tranquilly unaware of what is happening, is spending its superfluous wealth on anti-vivisection societies and on homes for lost dogs.

All the nations have been moved to take action, in their own interest, against the terrible invasion of typhus which is even now moving rapidly westward from Russia. Can

they not be made to realize that the utter breakdown of civilization in Russia is an even greater danger to them than typhus and that, for the sake not only of Russia but of humanity at large, some little attention should be bestowed on the many thousands of Russian girls, youths, and children who are being allowed to grow up like wild beasts in the Far East, and in the Near East, in Scandinavia, in Finland, and in all the countries bordering on Russia? This is surely a work for the League of Nations; but those who undertake it must be animated by Christian charity. If it only results in the creation of expensive staffs and the finding of "jobs" for dug-out officers, if it only attracts aristocratic ladies on the hunt for decorations and American doctors on the hunt for advertisement, it had better not be undertaken at all.

And since every European nation now finds its wealth and its energy insufficient for the mitigation of the misery which prevails within its own borders, I think that the time has come for the Russians to do something themselves. The Russian organization in Paris seems to have a good deal of money at its disposal for political purposes. The Russian Embassies and Consulates in America and the Far East also seem to be well supplied with funds, which they might divert for a time to this primary duty which they have so far left to strangers. And if they can donate no money they might at least donate themselves. For the last two years a great number of Russian statesmen and publicists have criticized from comfortable hotels in London, Paris, and New York all the efforts of the Allies to put Russian affairs in order, and have spurred us on to a further expenditure of our blood and treasure on their behalf.

They themselves have failed, so far, to produce a Cæsar, a Monk, or a Napoleon. But they possess great funds of philanthropy, enthusiasm, energy, mysticism. In view of the fact that tens of thousands of Russian children and young women, cast adrift in foreign lands, are now threatened with a fate worse than death, cannot they try to produce a St. Vincent de Paul, a General Booth, a Florence Nightingale?

## CHAPTER V

### FACE TO FACE WITH BOLSHEVISM

I HAVE already, I think, mentioned the fact that I have been three times a prisoner of war. Some people contract the habit of getting captured, and apparently I am one of them.

On the last occasion when I was captured in war I had been searched very thoroughly, and my captors had been insatiable in their thirst for information, first of all military information about the other side, and then information about myself personally. On this occasion the Bolsheviks never asked any questions, and made no enquiries about passports, maps, or documents of any kind. They did not bring us before any superior officer. They did not ask us to sign any papers. They did not search us. In the beginning one of them manifested some slight interest with regard to our names and our nationality, but this curiosity seems to have been entirely a personal matter with him, for no details bearing on these points were placed on record. The Reds forgot all about us, and during several days we lived in our carriage unmolested and apparently ignored.

This state of things affected us differently according to our age and our temperament. Some of the younger officers promptly decided to escape by walking eastwards along the railway or southwards to the Chinese frontier, but they allowed themselves to be dissuaded from this mad enterprise when it was pointed out to them that they were being very carefully watched by a number of Red soldiers, that a whole Red Army was now on the railway to the east of them, and that they could never hope to reach the Chinese frontier owing to the deep snow, to their lack of transport and of food, and to the spells of intense cold which invariably visited the Krasnoyarsk district in mid-

winter. As a matter of fact the thermometer fell, a few weeks later, to 49° R. below zero.

Owing to the snow alone, escape was as much out of the question under the circumstances as would have been escape, by swimming, from an Atlantic liner in mid-ocean or escape in light attire, and without ski or dog-sleigh, from an exploring ship at the Pole. We had once, during the journey, made a short trip from the train with our rifles and equipment, but, after wading a few hundred yards up to the waist in snow, were uncommonly glad to get back again. Notwithstanding this, and despite the lesson taught us by our terrible sleigh-ride, some of my young companions, especially one who had been captured at Mons and four years a prisoner in Germany, were so ashamed of being taken that they wanted to risk it; but I succeeded in dissuading them, and their parents have since thanked me for doing so.

Some of us then began to visit the town and to ascertain the Bolshevik point of view, and these soon realized, to use the words of one of us, that we had "struck the queerest outfit this world has ever seen." We had "struck" a people who did not believe that there was any such thing as nationality, religion, or private property, and who were working towards the abolition of the family also. In their view mankind was divided not into nationalities, but into two classes: the Proletariat and the Parasites. All religions, treaties, and international arrangements about prisoners of war had been "scrapped" long ago, and had as little bearing on present conditions as had the religious ordinances of the ancient Egyptians on the subject of cat-worship.

Seldom since the Crusaders came into conflict with the Saracens did two schools of thought more diametrically opposed to one another find themselves face to face. We had been accustomed to a society which regarded money and birth with a considerable amount of respect, and had a vague impression that the main lines of the capitalist system had been laid down somewhere in the Bible. We had had a prejudice against people who ate with their knives, or had relatives in the tailoring business, or had been in jail,

or had had a Board School education, or who, to put it briefly, were not Sahibs.

They disbelieved volubly in God, in the Bible, in Sahibs, and even in money. They had swept all banks out of existence in Russia, and they calmly announced their intention of abolishing currency altogether. They regarded with considerable suspicion a man who had been educated at Eton, and who was the son of a parson, a squire, an officer, or a business magnate. To say that one was the son of a duke would create the same painful impression in Bolshevik circles as the admission that one was the son of a greengrocer would make in the best Mayfair society. A man who had been in jail for a political offence was sure of a warm welcome, and the more numerous his convictions the warmer his welcome. If he had had the sentence of death passed on him by a "capitalist" Government for revolutionary or seditious action, he was regarded by the Bolsheviks with that deep respect which we show to men who have won the Victoria Cross. I imagine that when Lenin's court is in working order, precedence will go by the number of "previous convictions."

Most of these points of view I gathered while living among the Bolsheviks afterwards. I bring them all together here for the sake of general contrast, and I shall go into the subject again later on and in more detail to show how sincerely they are held. I have known British Labour Members who, in their heart of hearts, "dearly love a lord," though they manage to dissemble that affection in their public utterances; but that inconsistency cannot be laid to the door of any Bolshevik whom I met.

Three months later I met a Bolshevik leader—he was one of the heads of the Extraordinary Commission in Moscow—who expressed grave doubts as to the genuineness of a certain foreign Bolshevik then in Moscow. "He talks like a thorough Communist," said this Red leader, "but his father is a wealthy man." It was no use urging that, notwithstanding this, the father might have been honest. A sorrowful and profoundly dubious shake of the head was the only reply. On the same day I met in Moscow an Englishman who had not been home for many years, and

whose Toryism seemed to date from the time of Queen Anne, for he expressed surprise at my having got a commission, though not belonging to any of the old county families.

To give another story illustrating the profound differences of view between the Bolsheviks and ourselves in the same connection, I was once in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs at Moscow trying to get my notebooks censored by a Russian Jew, who had been a tailor in England, but is now a Commissar in Moscow. Entered an elderly English lady who was extremely anxious to leave the country, but who, having married a Russian, was a Russian subject, and therefore not entitled to claim repatriation. The poor lady tried all her wiles on the ex-tailor, and had almost succeeded in persuading him to let her leave, when she suddenly spoilt everything by saying, in a tone of great mystery : "Do you know what my maiden name is ? Now, guess. I'm sure you wouldn't imagine." Then bending forward, she added triumphantly: "It's D——." Surprised and disappointed to see that the expected effect was not produced on the stolid countenance of the ex-tailor, she added: "Surely you know the name D——! Mr. Justice D——. Well, *I'm a cousin of Mr. Justice D——*. Now, then! You wouldn't think it to look at me, would you?"

She seemed to imagine that the Commissar would immediately go on all fours, but nothing of the kind happened, for he had once been before Mr. Justice D—— for using seditious language in Hyde Park, and that learned Judge's witticisms still rankled in his mind. He did not grant the passport.

But to return to Krasnoyarsk.

As for ourselves personally, if we were Parasites we could, they told us, join the "working classes." If we already belonged to the "working classes," we could get to work at once by joining the International Battalion which was being formed in Krasnoyarsk out of Magyar and German prisoners of war, or else by shovelling snow or carrying wood. Some of us had been skilled mechanics, others had been railwaymen, one had been a wireless operator, and one had been a telegraphist. The Bolsheviks were amazed

that these did not all fall at once into their proper places under the Communist régime. The shackles of the capitalistic yoke had been stricken from their limbs. Why were they hesitating? If, indeed, the iron had entered into their soul and their minds were enslaved by *bourgeois* prejudices or by religion, then the best thing they could do would be to wither away. The Government of the Russian workers was certainly not going to maintain them in their accustomed idleness.

“But why not send us back to England?” we asked. “We are no good here. Only two or three of us speak Russian.”

The reply was that, in order to fight or to shovel snow, one did not need to know much of any language. The few words which were necessary could easily be picked up. As for returning to England, it was impossible. The Bolsheviks gave different reasons to explain why it was impossible. The Red Governor of the town spoke of the British Government “shooting down British workmen”—an atrocity of which, we said, we had never heard—and the general Bolshevik view seemed to be that since open war was raging in England, as it was raging everywhere else throughout the world, from China to Peru, between the Capitalists and the Proletariat, we could not be allowed to return home unless we gave satisfactory assurances that we were going back to take the side of the Proletariat in that great struggle. It would be an act of treachery towards the British working classes, now on the very point of sweeping away an effete Parliamentary system, to let loose on them at such a crisis in their fortunes paid assassins like us, hirelings of capitalism. And the only assurance that could be considered satisfactory would be our joining the Communist party.

It will be seen, by the way, that the Bolsheviks are very ably, elaborately, and artistically misinformed about the state of things in the outer world. The marvellous system, by means of which this is done, I shall describe later.

The Red Governor to whom I have alluded above was a tall, spare Russian, with a straggling beard and the thin face of a fanatic. He had been a chemist in Minusinsk, was a



man of some education, and evidently believed every word he said. Captain Horrocks and I, after a somewhat stormy interview with him, looked at each other with amazement, for we realized that we were dealing with a state of things of which we had had no previous conception. Up to that point in the history of the world, when one nation fought against another, each was composed of an amalgam of classes which held firmly together. Now the Bolsheviks maintained that they were fighting, not only for one class in their own country, but also for the same class in every other country. They do not admit, however, that their action is unprecedented, for they say that the kings and aristocrats of Europe fought in the same way for their class at the time of the first French Revolution, and they maintain that if the working men of different countries hold together as loyally and as long as the kings did on that occasion, their ultimate success is certain. They even had the audacity to maintain that England is even now helping on this movement for the division of the world into two classes, and that if Moscow takes foreign Communists to its bosom, Mayfair lavishes the same tokens of affection on Russian imperialists.

Mixed with all this idealism, however, were sundry less lofty motives. Several of the Bolshevik leaders said: "We must keep you as hostages. We may want to exchange you for Russian Communists detained in England." As a matter of fact, our detention was, from the Bolshevik point of view, a great mistake. If allowed to go free immediately after our capture we should have left under a favourable impression, but we were kept till we had seen what Bolshevism really is, and till we had all come to hate it.

## CHAPTER VI

### WE LEAVE OUR TRAIN

WE might have lived indefinitely in our railway carriage had it not happened to be a very good one. The Polish soldiers and Russian refugees in the long lines of captured echelons which stretched far beyond Krasnoyarsk were not disturbed, because they occupied simple *teplyushki*, and some of them have not perhaps been disturbed even yet. But one day a warning came to us in some vague way that our carriage was wanted. We were not told what to do with ourselves or where to go, and no help was offered us for the removal of our baggage or the finding of quarters in the town.

I was struck to some extent on this occasion, and was very much struck on subsequent occasions, by a curious impersonality in Bolshevism. Orders seemed to arise vaguely, like opinions, amid the Communist mass, and to reach one in some haphazard way. One could not trace them back to any authorized source, but as a rule one lost no time in obeying, for there were but too many examples of how swiftly disobedience was punished.

This feeling that one is dealing with an impersonality persists, in spite of the numerous signed decrees issued daily by Commissars, for half those Commissars are men of no account, who do not know what they have signed or why they signed it. And they are changed so often that few of the general public get to learn anything about them except their names or succeed in disentangling their personality from the obscure, composite personality of the dark mass out of which they suddenly arise and into which, after a short time, they as suddenly vanish. During three weeks four changes took place, for instance, in the Governorship of Krasnoyarsk, and there were similarly frequent changes in some of the other Government departments.

These Red functionaries arise on the gloomy stream of Bolshevism like bubbles which burst in a few moments and give place to other bubbles. The great Communist chiefs in Moscow may seem to be exceptions, but even Lenin and Derzhinsky, as well as several other Red leaders who are Russian, believe firmly in the Tolstoyan doctrine that the individual, however eminent in station, is nothing, and that the mass is everything—the mass being of course the Bolshevik Secret Society of 604,000 men. I found at Moscow that both those leaders feel themselves very often to be nothing but blind instruments of a force which may finally rend them. Meanwhile they are occasionally as afraid of it as a mediæval Sultan might be afraid of a movement against him among his guards, a movement based on the suspicion that he trafficked with the infidel or kept not the Law of the Prophet. Trotsky's sudden weakening in connection with the Labour Army is a case in point.

The removal of our baggage was a great difficulty, for we were six versts from Krasnoyarsk, and *izvoshchiks* would not leave the town owing to their fear of being commandeered by the Reds. And then there was the further difficulty that, as all Omsk money had been annulled on that day by a decree of the Soviet Government and as we had practically no other kind of money, we could not pay the *izvoshchiks* even if they came. Finally, thanks to the help of Mr. Yates, a British refugee from Ekaterinburg whom Horrocks had chanced to meet at the railway station, we secured the services of a sufficient number of *izvoshchiks* by promising, on my suggestion, to pay them partly in clothes, blankets, soap, and other goods.

But no sooner had we loaded up our sleighs than a number of villainous-looking Red soldiers gathered round them and started pulling us and our things about, evidently with the intention of picking a quarrel with us and then looting out belongings. We appealed in this emergency to the Red soldier who had been the first to enter our carriage on our arrival and who was now apparently in command at Bugatch. Having just examined all our belongings and passed them, he was as irritated as we were with those

strangers who imposed a veto on our departure. Addressing them with a sternness and dignity worthy of a Roman Tribune, he asked them by what authority they were acting. Evidently taken aback, the Reds lied shamelessly about their conduct towards us, and, mumbling something about our being English and supporters of Kolchak, they gradually slunk away. Towards evening, and without any other misadventure, we reached the quarters that Horrocks and Yates had found for us in town.

All this work was very difficult, exhausting, and nerve-racking owing to the confusion which prevailed; and Horrocks deserves the greatest credit for the way he toiled for us, not only on this occasion, but throughout the whole course of our journey and in Krasnoyarsk. To mention a few of the difficulties. First of all there was that curious impersonality of which I have already spoken. Every official professed to be a servant of the people, and referred us lower down to them, instead of higher up. As, owing to their training, our officers were unable to think in such terms, it may be imagined what a paralyzing effect this attitude had on them. The military chiefs of the Red Army were still more helpless and cautious. Owing to the influx of Reds, refugees, and disbanded White troops, it was almost impossible to find a vacant room in the town; and, even if a room was found, we were liable to be turned out of it unless we got a written order from the Quarters Committee. This order it was difficult to get owing to the great number of people who were trying to get one at the same time. There was no foreign consul to appeal to except a minor employee of the Norwegian consulate, and he himself was in trouble, for he told us that a Commissar had visited him and said: "By our law you are not entitled to all these rooms. Clear out within six hours or we will throw you and your chattels into the street!"

Thus the Bolsheviks used for the good of the people, as they professed, the same laws of violence as the German militarists had used for the good of the army. In fact, if the word "proletariat" were substituted everywhere for the word "army," a good deal of Bernhardt's best-known book could have been written by a Bolshevik. But it must

be borne in mind that, in the mouths of the Bolsheviks, the word "proletariat" means 604,000 men, only 70,000 of whom are workmen.

Further difficulties were due to the fewness and inexperience of the Bolshevik officials who had, so far, put in an appearance, to their excessive addiction to Red Tape, and, at the same time, to their well-meant but foolish practice of making themselves personally accessible to every citizen—a practice which led to their wasting all the day on trifles and having no time left for really important work. I speak only of the civil officials: the army had its own organization, which worked rather well. I afterwards discovered, in Moscow and elsewhere, that this attempt to do too much is the outstanding fault of the Bolsheviks in their policy and in their practice. Obsessed by a dazzling apparition which they think to be near and accessible, they are rushing madly forward in the darkness, ignoring all insuperable physical obstacles and trampling down all moral laws.

On arriving at our destination we paid off our *izvoshchiks* (drivers), but one of them, to whom we had given a fur coat for his services, soon returned in charge of a Red soldier and restored it to us. He was in a state of alarm, and said that the soldier had declared that since our clothes were, like everything else in Russia, the property of the State, we could not give away State property, and the *izvoshchik* could not receive such property. The soldier was illogical, however, for he allowed us to pay the man in Omsk roubles, which were absolutely valueless.

Our quarters consisted of one small room and a passage in a very crowded building belonging to the Zemsky Soyuz, and they were a very tight fit. At night we slept, some of us on our camp-beds, and some of us on wooden shelves arranged in tiers, one above the other, after the fashion prevalent in the lowest-class Chinese "doss" houses in Hong Kong. All the other rooms in the house were crowded with Russian refugees of both sexes and of every age from one to seventy, all sleeping together at night on shelves such as we had. For several nights I and some of my companions had to sleep amongst them, and it was an unpleasant experience owing to the foul air and to the dis-

agreeable habit one sleeper had of gnashing his teeth all night long.

Some of the refugees were of a refined type and had evidently been accustomed to a life of ease, but they were quite apathetic and so poor that they could not even buy a newspaper. The middle-class Russian does not, as a rule, bear misfortunes well. He seems to have no backbone, he collapses altogether, and he makes no effort to get up again. Meanwhile he indulges in the most virulent abuse, not of the Bolshevik who is standing over him with a club, but of the foreign nations who are trying to help him to his feet again. A querulous old White General who had drifted in amongst us was of this type. I discovered later on, in Russia, that there are ex-landowners who, though they are still allowed to inhabit a corner of their ancestral mansions, have not sufficient energy left to wash their own faces. Such helplessness could not occur under similar circumstances in England or America; and, though Christianity teaches pity for the weak, I do not believe that it obliges us to put this class back into its old position.

After we had been in our new quarters for a few days cases of sickness, said to be typhus, occurred in the adjoining rooms; while, among our own little party, two officers and one man contracted contagious skin diseases for which isolation was indispensable but impossible.

The skin diseases spread amongst us, and, after my departure from Krasnoyarsk three weeks later, all our officers caught typhus. This was the disease we dreaded most, and, though we managed to get baths once a week and to keep our persons tolerably clean, we were always in great danger of catching it from the Russians.

This was trouble Number One. Trouble Number Two was our impecuniosity. We had over 100,000 roubles in Omsk notes with us, but, as I have already said, the Bolsheviks had declared all Omsk money worthless, and it did become absolutely worthless. Our 100,000 roubles would not buy us as much as a packet of cigarettes. The White officers, who had brought millions of roubles with them in Omsk notes, were left absolutely destitute, but, as the local Bolshevik workmen were also hard hit, bread

was issued free, as a temporary measure, to everybody. Horrocks applied for it on our behalf and got it, but a prominent local Bolshevik told me that this free distribution would not last long. Our position might, therefore, become critical at any moment, for money was essential not only to purchase food but also to buy fuel, which was quite as indispensable as food. Money was also necessary to pay for medical attendance to the sick members of our party, but the Communists provided medicines free, not to us alone, but to everybody.

To add to our troubles an official notice suddenly appeared ordering all White officers and functionaries in Krasnoyarsk to register, within three days, at the Town Commandant's, and stating that those who omitted to do so would be "shot without trial." Although, properly speaking, this notice did not apply to us, it was pretty certain that ninety-nine Reds out of a hundred who found us without papers would regard us as White officers "within the meaning of the Act," and would shoot us out of hand. All the authorities whom we consulted on the subject were unanimously of this opinion. Among them was a Czech intelligence officer who was posing as a Russian private and who wanted to pose as a British officer. He had called on us in order to enlist our aid, and his wife, a beautiful young Russian lady, who accompanied him begged us with tears in her eyes to help. But when we explained the danger of our own position, she ceased to urge us, and her husband, who knew the Reds thoroughly and had lived among them, warned us that, if we did not register, we should run a terrible risk of being shot.

At this point Captain Martel, a French intelligence officer and fellow-prisoner, came to see us, and he took exactly the same view of our position as the Czech. His opinion also was entitled to be heard with respect, for he was a native of Moscow, had lived there under the Bolsheviks, and spoke Russian as well as he spoke French. It was rather curious, by the way, that while these two able specialists in Bolshevism had a most profound horror of it, the younger members of our British party, who did not speak Russian and had only been a few months in Siberia, laughed at Bolshevism as a bogey whose terrors had been much

exaggerated. It seemed that the more one knew about the system the more one dreaded and distrusted it, and that the less one knew about it the less one feared it. I myself had been favourably impressed by the Reds on the occasion of our capture, but, as I got to know them better, I gradually came first to dislike them and then to hate them, until, after my experiences in Moscow, I left Russia with a feeling of relief such as I had never before experienced on leaving any country.

I had been greatly impressed at first by the unique opportunity that chance had thrown in my way of studying Bolshevism at close quarters from a point of view that nobody else had had, and I was determined to utilize it to the full. When, afterwards, I came to Moscow and was well received and offered every facility for the investigation of a system of government such as the world has never before seen, I planned not one but three books about it. The more I learned, however, the greater grew my horror of that vast and formidable conspiracy which aimed at nothing less than the overthrow of our Christian civilization. The higher the veil was lifted the more intense became my fear of the monstrous figure whose lineaments were being gradually disclosed. I saw that the Communists aimed at bringing about universal chaos, and pursued that aim with a directness, an unscrupulousness, and an ability which left the German militarists of 1914 far behind. This vision so appalled me that all journalistic and literary ambitions were quenched in an intense desire to get out of the country at any cost and as soon as possible.

The danger of Bolshevism grows on one like the danger of earthquakes. Foreigners just arrived in Japan laugh at the Japanese who, though a very brave people, rush out into the open as soon as the terrible earth-tremors begin, but by the time they have been forty years in the country and have learned what earthquakes really are, they themselves are the first to run.

It was late in the evening when we had this conversation with Captain Martel and the Czech, and, as the Town Commandant's office was closed, we could do nothing save promise that we would use our utmost endeavours to get



registered next day. This gives me an opportunity, therefore, to break my narrative in order to say something about Captain Martel.

This brilliant young Frenchman, who had been cut off in the same way as ourselves, but in another echelon, had visited us in our carriage a few days after our capture and had promised on that occasion to come and live with us. He never did so, however, and finally managed to get sent off to Tomsk alone, his reason for thus dropping us being, I think, the perfectly legitimate one that we were, on the whole, too unsuspecting, too little secretive, and too difficult to convince of the extreme danger of Bolshevism. No class of man in the world is so joyously frank and open as young English subalterns and soldiers—I say “English” instead of “British,” for the Scots and the Irish are of a secretive and suspicious nature, though the one is curtly and the other volubly uncommunicative. This transparent candour suits well the smooth, merry faces of the English young, and is quite in keeping with their bright cricket fields and their rolling downs, but it is out of place among the bearded Bolsheviks and in the dark forests of Russia.

Martel told us that, though correct, the leaders of the Red Army were absolutely powerless to help. He had therefore gone among the civilian Commissars, and these he found to be nearly all very fanatical and bitter. He thought he had made good friends with one Commissar who was moderate and reasonable, but then that one met another who was fanatical, with the result that he began to fear for himself, cut Martel “dead,” and would have nothing more to do with him.

The poor Frenchman managed, however, to ingratiate himself with another Commissar, but perhaps the word “ingratiate” is too strong, for though the Bolshevik allowed Martel to sleep in a corner of his room, he hardly ever spoke to him; and when, in the morning, the guest greeted his host with a cheery “Bonjour, camarade,” the host never answered a word, but only glared at him. Finally, one day, the Commissar flew into a sudden rage apropos of nothing at all and ordered Martel to clear out at once. When the Frenchman began packing his few things together, the

Commissar's infant child, of whom the guest had been very fond, began to weep and to cry, "Thou art not going to drive away the French uncle." The child even got hold of the "French uncle's" coat in its determination to keep him; and the Commissar, seeing this, relented and allowed Martel to stay on.

Martel's stories conveyed to me an impression of fierce fanaticism such as had prevailed among the Turks in Stamboul in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and reminded me strongly of some books written about their experiences by Christians who fell into the hands of the Ottomans at that time. Those were the good old days when the Sultan graciously signified his disapproval of a foreign ambassador by having him literally kicked downstairs whenever he called at the Sublime Porte; and when it was a frequent experience of the *corps diplomatique* to be bound hand and foot and thrown into the Tower of Blood at the Golden Gate.

## CHAPTER VII

### I BECAME A CIVILIAN

ON the day after we had seen Martel we were up early in the morning discussing plans in connection with our registration. We then discovered that the notice ordering registration was a day old. Thus we had only two days during which to get registered, and as the Commandant's office only remained open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. we had not much time to spare, especially as there would most probably be a crowd. As a matter of fact, the queue was already about a quarter of a mile long at 7 o'clock in the morning. On January 10 there were in Krasnoyarsk 4,575 White Generals, staff officers, and officers of field rank, while the number of subalterns and of civil officials was probably quite as great. All these, as well as a great number of others who did not need to register at all but who were anxious to be on the safe side, had lined up in a queue outside the Commandant's office; and, judging by the rate at which they were being dealt with, it was clear that all could not be registered within the allotted time.

Meanwhile we heard that we might at any moment be thrown out of our room as housing accommodation was required for the Fifth Army, which was expected in Krasnoyarsk within a few days. We were also told that a raid would be made on us for belts and binoculars, and we feared that this would result in our being stripped of everything.

In short, our condition was desperate. We had no money, and could not therefore buy food or fuel or pay for medical attendance. If we did not register within two days we ran the risk of being shot, and there seemed to be no possibility of our being able to register within that time. There might be some hope for us if only we could have a

heart-to-heart talk with some of the leading Commissars, but this we found, after many trials, to be impossible owing first to the fact that these gentlemen could never spare us more than two moments, and secondly to the fact that they all hated the sight of us and would do nothing to assist us.

They were certainly very busy, and such a long queue was waiting on every one of them that an interview of a few minutes meant a whole day standing outside their door. And the interviews, when they were accorded, were always unsatisfactory. I have already given the gist of them. "You can go and work or fight for the Communists." And then we were hustled out before we had been able to state our case at all. Horrocks and I saw the Red Governor, with the results I have already stated. Then Horrocks saw a number of other people, and they hated him because he was neat, in uniform, and English. One man he saw was suffering from a cruel scourging that had been inflicted on him by Kolchak's soldiers. His back was still in bandages, and, though he was anything but polite, Horrocks marvelled that he had not, under the circumstances, been positively rude.

All the local Communists whom I saw had been imprisoned at one time or another by Kolchak and all the imported Communists had been in prison under the Tsar. As they knew that England had backed up Kolchak and were convinced that she was working for an imperial restoration, they were not friendly.

One of them, who gave us several more minutes than any of the others, presented a new view of our position. He said: "As you are prisoners of war your proper place is in the Concentration Camp. You can go there at once if you like."

These words seem reasonable enough on paper, but it is not too strong to say that they horrified us, for the concentration camp in question was an awful place in which some forty thousand people were herded together like cattle and were dying off like flies. This camp was situated at a distance of some six or eight versts from Krasnoyarsk and had contained German and Austrian prisoners, who were

now guarding it, and from whom we, British officers, had little mercy to expect. I had seen some of these Siberian camps during the preceding winter and had come to the conclusion that death would be better than confinement in some of them. Dead bodies of typhus patients lay in some of the wards, while the dirt, the stench, and the frightful blank look on the faces of the prisoners reminded me of accounts I have read of mediæval dungeons. Their hospitals were places of unmitigated horror, and in the wards allotted to Bolshevik prisoners the latter, some of them mere boys, were allowed to lie with insufficient clothing, insufficient warmth, and hardly any attendance. Conditions were much worse now at Krasnoyarsk owing to the greater overcrowding; and the only food given to the prisoners was a little filthy black soup once a day. Typhus was raging in the Concentration Camp; and, if we were sent there, most of us would certainly die. We bade a hasty good-bye to the Commissar who made this proposition to us and never troubled him again.

Among others whom I went to see was a Commissar of Political Affairs, a clean-shaven, square-faced young workman from Petrograd who must have had an awful experience under the Tsar or under Kolchak, or under both, for he glared at me in exactly the manner Martel had described, answered me in two grunts, and then turned his back on me. It was like interviewing a tiger in his den or a seventeenth-century Sultan of Morocco in his council chamber.

Finally I discovered that civilians were registered at an office where there was no crowd, so I went in and registered myself as a civilian and a journalist. This step, which was warmly approved of by my comrades, eased the situation very much, for I was now able to see people quite easily and to explain the plight in which my comrades found themselves without at the same time betraying too much interest in them. I knew very well that if discovered to be a British officer posing as a journalist and wearing civilian dress I should be thrown into prison or perhaps shot; and, if it had not been for the desperate position in which my comrades found themselves, I would never have incurred the risks I ran.

Most of these young comrades of mine were ignorant of Russian, and all they could do to assist was to sell their clothes in the market-place in order to raise money. This the poor lads did with the utmost gaiety. The market-place was full of White refugees and local *bourgeois* in the same position as ourselves, and all selling fur coats, boots, and every kind of clothing, as well as diamond rings and jewelry. Diamonds worth a hundred pounds were sometimes sold for a few pence. The White officers and their wives who were stranded in echelons far down the line or imprisoned in the concentration camp and prevented from leaving it were, owing to their lack of money, at the mercy of Red speculators, some of them Jews, who bought from them diamonds and valuable furs for the most ridiculous prices.

Our officers and men used to go to the market-place laden with good British army blankets, "British warms," and various articles of dress, and stand among the crowd till a likely purchaser came along, fingered their wares, and began to bargain with them. These speculators were always civilians, and they sometimes spoke a little English, having been in America. After having parted one day with a fur coat at "an alarming sacrifice," one of our junior officers, a Canadian of some nineteen years old, promptly invested the proceeds in a small bag of nuts and a pair of skates and nearly broke his head the same day trying to skate on the Yenisei.

I had no time to sell anything myself owing to the subterranean activities in which I was now engaged for the benefit of all our party. I did try to sell several British sovereigns and a silver chain-work purse to a Commissar, but as his wife took a fancy to these objects and asked me to give them to her for nothing I let her have them. Her husband insisted, however, on giving me afterwards a small sum of money, about one hundred Soviet roubles, and though this was a ridiculously low price I cheerfully accepted it, for I was engaged at that moment in certain delicate negotiations with that Commissar, and, in the event, my little present had a decisive influence on the result of these negotiations. I also distributed most of my clothing and other belongings, as well as some uniforms and a typewriter

which did not belong to me, in quarters which would be likely to help, not only myself, but all our party.

All danger of our being shot was now at an end owing to a prolongation of the period for registration, and to the fact that Horrocks had succeeded in getting everybody registered. He may have been helped by one of our ex-interpreters, a Russian civilian who had got a place in the Commandant's office and became a sincere red-hot Bolshevik, but his success was principally due to his own energy in finally bursting into that office without awaiting his turn. Unfortunately he got me also registered as an officer, and, as he had forgotten what unit I belonged to, he put me down as "Irish Guards." I thus acquired a dual personality, and, when my civilian self went west, my military double remained behind in Krasnoyarsk, for a message which came through to the British War Office, after I had left, represented me as being still on the strength of the captured party. As we had to report once a week, and as the Town Commandant had never seen me, I conclude that Horrocks had permitted somebody to personate me. It was probably some unfortunate man, hunted and in dire danger—perhaps the Czech officer who had previously asked to join our party.

I hear some of my readers groaning in spirit at all this terrible duplicity, at all these cruel deceptions practised by us on the poor Bolsheviks. Well, let them groan! What we did was wrong, and we shall endeavour to atone for it by contrition, a life of penance, and a firm determination not to do it again. But, considering the circumstances of the case, I do not think that the average sinful man will care to cast the first stone.

The question of getting money still remained to be solved, and, as a means of solving it, I proposed that we should all give English lessons. Even those who did not speak Russian could, I urged, give lessons on the Berlitz system; and I thought the scheme a good one from other points of view than the financial, inasmuch as it would give our people something to do, enable them to move about a bit and to make friends in the town who might possibly be of use to them, and even result perhaps in some of them getting board and lodging in private families. The latter result

would relieve the congestion in our crowded quarters, and lessen the chances of our falling victims to typhus or some other contagious disease. All the money earned in this way would go into a common fund.

This scheme was taken up with enthusiasm, and we soon had half a dozen of our officers giving lessons, while several got board and sleeping accommodation outside. The busiest of us all was Sergeant Rooney, an Irishman who spoke Italian, French, and German as well as he spoke English and who got more applications for lessons in these languages than he could deal with. Being also an accomplished musician he was asked to play the piano at a local cinema. I tried to get him a job as organist in the Polish church, but was rather afraid that if he passed rapidly to the church after officiating at the cinema, he might inadvertently treat the congregation to rag-time.

I arranged to give lessons myself in the family of a Commissar, but they beat me down to four roubles—a fraction of a halfpenny—per hour plus one meal per day and the right to sleep on the floor in the corner of the drawing-room after everybody had gone to bed. I pointed out that a packet of ten cigarettes cost twenty-four roubles, whereat the Commissar's young wife laughed musically, and said that the German prisoners only got four roubles.

This and a hundred incidents like it showed a great change from the old days of the Russian landowner and official, who were very generous with their money and very courteous to the foreign teacher, whom they always treated as one of the family. Whatever happens in Russia, the old magnificent life of the leisured classes is gone for ever. With it are also gone all the good as well as many of the evil customs which flourish in a state of society like that which obtained in Russia seven years ago, like that which obtained at an earlier period among the Virginian slave-owners and the French noblesse. All titles, even that of "Mr.," have disappeared. If you write the word "Mr." before a man's name on a letter, the recipient will probably be arrested. "Comrade" is the proper word to use. In the same way, all the elaborate ceremonial of ordinary intercourse has been ruthlessly "cut out." You spend no time



in the semi-Oriental preliminaries with which the old-régime Russian ushered in a conversation. You plunge into the middle of your subject, say what you have got to say in as few words as possible, and then clear out. The continual handshaking which was somewhat of a terror in Russian life has greatly diminished. Large printed notices, "No Handshaking," are displayed in all Government offices, and Trotsky, when he visited Ekaterinburg during my own stay in that town, imposed a fine of one hundred roubles a time on persons in his train who shook hands or offered to do so. The reason he gave was that the custom was a waste of time and calculated to spread typhus and other diseases which then raged in Ekaterinburg. Formerly, if a man called at a house while the family were at table, he was invariably asked to share in the meal; and I once remember an old Russian lady asking me if there was any truth in an almost incredible report she had heard that in England this custom was not observed. Dear old lady, if a telegraph boy had brought her a message while she was dining in a London hotel she would probably have asked him to have something to eat.

The present lack of food and the mad hurry of the Bolsheviks have swept all that away. Busy Commissars now wolf their meals at tables strewn with papers, while keeping up a conversation on business subjects with dozens of famished people standing around them. In White circles food is too scarce for hospitality to be exercised. With one lump of sugar costing thirty roubles and a single cigarette ten roubles, anything like lavishness is out of the question. The result, curiously enough, is a development of greed and individualism, and an approximation to the manners of feverish Wall Street business men, though the Bolsheviks detest any approach to the manners and customs of capitalistic America. The old state of things was a sort of patriarchal Communism. The lady of a country house had often no idea of how many strange people had drifted into the servants' quarters and were living peacefully there—the old women knitting socks, the young women bringing forth babies, and all eating up the master's food.

The same patriarchal Communism was apparent in other

aspects of the Russian character, and sharply differentiated the Muscovite from the peoples of the West. It made him extremely picturesque and refreshing, but it also had its drawbacks; for if the Russian was wasteful with his own money, he also expected you to be wasteful with yours, and when he borrowed any from you he generally forgot the debt as quickly as he forgot your debt to him. Nothing so jarred on him as the discovery in a friend of what he considered to be penuriousness, even though it were only ordinary prudence and a praiseworthy desire to live within one's means. This discovery the Russian troops made in France and Salonika, and it caused them to despise the French in both places, and to call them by the worst term of reproach they could think of—"Jews."

Their own hardships at present have changed the Russians profoundly and perhaps permanently, and will probably call into existence a new class of bureaucrats, *bourgeois*, and farmers who will be harder, greedier, less polite, less hospitable and less picturesque than the old. They will be more individualistic, however, and more hard-working. Bolshevism will finally cure them of their communistic tendencies. It will also, I must admit, destroy the aversion of some of them to manual labour. A Russian gentleman had formerly as great a horror of manual labour as an Indian Sahib. He considered it degrading; and, even if he only dropped a book on the floor, he expected a servant to pick it up for him. The Bolsheviks, to give them their due, are fighting hard against this prejudice. Trotsky, when he was at Ekaterinburg last February, used to shovel snow himself on the railway, and he made everybody in his train follow his example. Chicherin and the other Commissars carry on conversations with visitors while hammering nails into the wall and doing odds and ends of carpentry work in their offices. They mean perhaps to indicate, somewhat theatrically, that the day of the manual worker has come, but if they succeed in destroying the Russian prejudice against manual labour as servile, they will have succeeded in doing at least one good thing, and, when they finally pass away, they will leave behind them a name "link'd to one virtue and a hundred crimes."

## CHAPTER VIII

### IN RED KRASNOYARSK

WHEN Captain Martel visited us in our railway carriage a few days after our capture, and before any of us had yet been in the town, he told us that Krasnoyarsk was *en fête*. "It's hung all over with red flags," he said, "and everybody is laughing and jubilant. The local people all look as if they had wakened up from a nightmare, as if they had just thrown off an oppressive weight. There is universal rejoicing."

As Captain Martel is, as I have already pointed out, very anti-Bolshevik, these words surprised us, but when we visited the town ourselves we found that they were true.

The whole town seemed to have gone red, literally as well as metaphorically. The red flag of the revolution hung out of every house, and red ribbons flew from most of the soldiers' caps. That "riband in the cap of youth" was also to be found very often in the buttonhole of youth, and frequently cheek-by-jowl with a brass button bearing the British arms, for many of the Red soldiers wore British military overcoats. Some of them had even dressed themselves from head to foot in flaming crimson, as if they meant to personate Satan at a fancy dress ball. The Bolsheviks seem, verily, to have gone mad over the colour and the word "red." At least one newspaper in every town used that sanguinary adjective as part of its title: *The Red Tocsin*, *The Red Road* (a technical railway periodical, but nevertheless furiously Bolshevik), *The Red Flag*, *The Red Workman*, etc., while every triumphal arch spoke the same language: "Hail! the Red Urals!" "Red Krasnoyarsk," "Red Ekaterinburg," "Red Moscow," "Red Petrograd," etc. This frenzied preference for a particular colour reminded me of Belfast on "the Twelfth," only that in Belfast it is a different colour that drives men insane with hate.

The happiness of the people at Krasnoyarsk may have

been due to a natural reaction after a period of anxiety when they feared that, between them, the Poles and the Reds would make their town the scene of a sanguinary battle in the course of which half the houses would be burned and half the inhabitants killed. It may have been due to the fact that the unstable and temporary Government of Shitinkin had given place to a Government which, whatever its faults, was Russian, from Moscow, and apparently strong. It may have been due to the unexpected pleasure of finding that the Red Army was certainly well disciplined and that it held the town in sufficient force to ensure the preservation of order. Or it may simply have been due to the fact that the inhabitants were all Bolsheviks and heartily glad to see the last of Kolchak.

Next to the happiness expressed on every face, two great facts struck us at every step: first, the extraordinary number of ownerless horses, and, secondly, the extraordinary number of Red soldiers who wore English uniform. The many thousands of horses that wandered loose about the streets and all over the surrounding country constituted one of the strangest sights that I had ever seen. They were part of the débris of the White Army. Some of them were cavalry horses, some transport horses, but most of them were the horses of poor Siberian farmers, and had been taken by force from their owners during the retreat. They wandered into courtyards, out of which they were invariably driven with hoots and contumely. They tried to follow other horses which had bridles and masters and a recognized place in society, but the stable door was always shut in their faces. They were as tame as pet dogs, but nobody had time to stroke their noses. They stood in the streets ruminating over the remarkable change that had suddenly taken place in their circumstances. They tried in vain to ingratiate themselves with men who looked like horse-fanciers. They walked into cafés. They wandered wearily through the deep snow. Drove of them blackened the distant hills.

Many of them, alas! were lame, but a good many were sound, and the first question we asked ourselves was—"Why does nobody take some of them?" The answer was that nobody had any fodder for them. If a man had

a horse of his own, he had only enough fodder to feed it through the winter and could not feed an extra animal. Besides, Bolshevism said: "These horses are all the property of the State," and that terrible image of the Socialist State, formerly a monstrous figure drawn by anti-Socialist writers, now a living and stupendous reality, made people as chary of touching those animals as they would be of touching a tiger. They were taboo. The red mark of Communism was on them. People violently resented friendly attentions from them as a respectable man would resent improper advances, threw stones at them, cursed at them in order to show that they contemplated no breach of Lenin's law.

At the same time the Bolsheviks took no care of them, and this showed me the first rent in the Bolshevik armour. The Reds had centralized everything, stifled all private initiative, abolished the municipality, squelched all popular organizations, and would have squelched even the R.S.P.C.A. if there had been a branch of it in Krasnoyarsk. They themselves were too busy to attend to this matter of the horses, and so thousands of those unfortunate beasts died. They stood in the streets and drooped their heads miserably. Then they lay down, their eyes grew filmy, and in a few weeks the roads and the hills were dotted with their frozen carcasses.

Before this last stage had been reached, townswomen with kind hearts but no knowledge of horses took pity on them as they lay gloomily with noses touching the snow, and offered them bread and other unsuitable delicacies. No man ever summoned up sufficient courage to make this generous but belated effort. By and by, when all the horses were dead, the great Bolshevik machine began to move in the matter, and some of the carcasses were transported to a big field near the railway station, where they were piled one on top of another. It was a ghastly sight, but it became ghastlier when the horses were all skinned and had their tails cut off. The large quantity of bad leather thus obtained probably figures to-day in the stock of raw material ready for export by the Bolsheviks to England. But the injury inflicted on the Siberian farmers by the loss of all these horses will not soon be made good.

When all the horses had perished, some Red Government

Department acted just as a Government Department in a non-Bolshevik country would have acted under the circumstances. It promptly turned a number of experts on to the matter, and they compiled statistics which I was able to obtain. According to these statistics more than 5,000 horses had perished of cold and hunger in the streets and in the fields around the town, and 15 per cent. of all the horses in Siberia of an age capable to work were lost during Kolchak's retreat. In thirty-one parishes near Krasnoyarsk, all the villages, cattle, and agricultural implements had been destroyed. In five counties near Krasnoyarsk, 8,365 families had been ruined; 18,149 horses seized and lost; 20,415 head of cattle taken. This refers only to the damage done along a small portion of the line, for Siberia is a huge country, and some of its minor provinces are as large as France and Germany put together. The Bolsheviks have voted 500 million roubles for the purpose of making good all this loss, but twice that sum would not repair half the material damage that has been done even in the comparatively small area referred to, while the ravages of typhus, the loss of children, the breaking up of homes, and the reduction of large cultivated areas to the condition of a desert are calamities from which Siberia will take a long time to recover.

The next great sight in Krasnoyarsk, after the horses, was the number of English uniforms which one saw on the Reds. We sent in all 200,000 sets of equipment to Kolchak, but they all seemed to pass through Kolchak's hands as water goes through a sieve, and the Reds got most of them. They told me that in Perm they had captured enough uniforms to clothe a whole division. They had found them unpacked in a storehouse, where they had probably been forgotten by the Whites, though at that time Kolchak's soldiers were very badly clad and his Generals were pressing us to send them more uniforms.

More frequently the uniforms walked over to the Reds, thousands at a time, with the Whites inside them. A Red General was nearly scared out of his wits once, during the fighting in the Urals, by seeing what he took to be the whole British Army bearing down on him; but the alarming

manifestation turned out to be only a detachment of Whites in British uniforms anxious to surrender. Such phenomena became so frequent, later on, that the Reds got quite used to it; and, by the time Krasnoyarsk had been lost, about one-fourth of the Red soldiers wore the khaki of King George.

The misunderstandings that sometimes occurred through this similarity in the uniform worn on both sides were generally tragic, but sometimes humorous. In a tavern situated in the ample no-man's-land between the opposing armies, a number of White and Red horsemen drank together amicably for hours, one night, before they discovered that they belonged to different sides. On another occasion a Cossack entrusted with a message to H.Q. of a White regiment was so misled by the dress of the sentries standing outside a farmhouse that he delivered his message there, though it was really a Red H.Q. His own appearance excited no suspicion, but he gave himself away by the first words he spoke. "Is the *Gospodin Polkovnik* (*Monsieur le Colonel*) here?" he asked; and this respectful title, for which the Reds have substituted the words "Comrade Commander," led to his instant apprehension. About the same time a White officer made the same mistake, and betrayed himself in the same way. The Bolshevik who told the story concluded grimly by saying that the officer in question *saw* the Colonel.

Some of the simple peasants serving in the Red Army had got the idea that England had supplied them direct with all this excellent equipment, and shortly after our capture a small but grateful deputation of Red soldiers who had heard that we were English came to thank us for the splendid uniforms we had supplied to them. And I must say that they *were* splendid, and that all the web equipment, haversacks, water-bottles, etc., were there, though not always fastened in a way that a British sergeant-major would have quite approved of. Many of the Reds had even got our first-aid bandages, which I had never seen with Kolchak's troops at all.

A great quantity of British Red Cross supplies—woollen comforters, Balaklava helmets, etc.—had also found its way somehow or other into the hands of the Bolsheviks. Care

had, I understand, been taken in the distribution of this stuff at Omsk; nevertheless supplies issued there in the morning were sometimes on sale in the Bazaar before evening. If the day was warm, the thoughtless Russian soldier parted for a glass of vodka or a few roubles with all the underclothing he had just received; and a week later, when it was cold, he wanted more underclothing; and his officers, who never, never held any kit inspection, complained bitterly of the English neglecting to supply the new levies with clothes.

Even when the complete British uniform was wanting, there was nearly always some little token to remind one of home—a pair of British army boots, a Canadian overcoat, British putties, a “British warm,” a Tommy’s fur cap, a British water-bottle, and, above all, British haversacks and web belts. British haversacks and belts I have seen very often as far west as Moscow, and when I met Trotsky in the Kremlin he was looking quite neat in what seemed like a pair of Fox’s spiral putties which he had probably picked up at Ekaterinburg. The fact that the buttons on these uniforms bore the British coat of arms never seemed to worry any of the Bolsheviki in the least, but I must say that they never kept those buttons polished.

The assistance we have rendered to the Bolshevik cause by these generous gifts is beyond calculation, and it proved also to be of some use both to Horrocks and myself. Once when Horrocks was being lectured truculently on the supplies his country had sent to Kolchak he disarmed the wrath of the lecturer, a Commissar, and transformed his dark scowl into a pleasant smile by simply remarking, “Well, it seems that you have got most of it!”

As for myself, when I began to pose as a civilian, the military uniform (shorn of all badges) which I still brought with me excited not the faintest suspicion, even when I was arrested by the Extraordinary Commission at Moscow. I thought it well, however, to exchange my military overcoat for a peasant’s sheepskin, but I think that I was rather a fool for doing this, and so probably did the Bolshevik official with whom I made the exchange, for he carefully kept out of my way ever after, lest I should ask to have my overcoat back again.



## CHAPTER IX

### I ESCAPE

I WAS finally offered a room in an institution which constituted the heart of Bolshevism in Krasnoyarsk, and as, for obvious reasons, my comrades were all of them in favour of my accepting the offer, I did so at once.

I told them that I would see them frequently afterwards, and I kept my promise, but I did not give them my address as I feared that some of them might unconsciously give it away or that they might chance to be overheard while talking about it among themselves. I was particularly suspicious of some of our ex-interpreters who came to see us; but several of my young companions, with that generous frankness which is (in England) such a charming trait in the character of English public-school boys, refused to entertain any suspicions, and confided in them all their little plans for escape. The ex-interpreters listened attentively, made helpful suggestions, and the plans went wrong.

The room which I occupied was separated by a low wooden partition from an office where a good deal of Government business was done, and there was much shouting, day and night, into a telephone. One day a young married lady came to get permission to bury in a separate grave the body of her husband, a White officer, who had been murdered by the Reds under the following circumstances: A White volunteer detachment which had already surrendered and given up its arms happening to encounter a Red volunteer detachment belonging to the same town in the Urals, the Reds immediately murdered all the White officers. One of those White officers was the husband of the above-mentioned lady, whose modest petition was that the body should not be buried in a common grave with the other corpses but in a separate grave. I do not know whether her request was granted

or not, but I do know that none of those Red murderers was punished for their massacre, and that the matter was hushed up.

To be quite fair, however, I must say that the Whites had, to my certain knowledge, committed innumerable atrocities during the one year that they had ruled Siberia and that the White officers had behaved with a peculiar brutality, against which the English and Scots officers strongly and manfully protested. (One officer, formerly of Carson's Army, who did not protest, now—October, 1920—holds an important position in the Irish Secret Service.) On this occasion in Krasnoyarsk a Bolshevik leader tried hard to have those Red murderers punished, but he was overruled by superior authorities who believed that punishment for such acts is a delicate matter and that it is only human that they should act on their own initiative.

One of our visitors was a Commissar from Moscow, who had false passports and was on his way to Irkutsk and Vladivostock in order to overthrow the Social Revolutionary Governments in those places. He succeeded at Irkutsk, but what happened to him afterwards I do not know. These agents with false passports are a feature of every Russian front, being very numerous in Finland, Poland, and South Russia, and always exceedingly confident of success. They laugh at the idea of Social Revolutionary Republics holding out against them, and, had it not been for Japan, they would have extended Bolshevik rule to Vladivostock six months ago.

I had frequent difficulties in explaining my position as a journalist, but was helped by the general chaos that prevailed and by a scrapbook full of newspaper cuttings, many of them in Russian, in which I was described as a celebrated war correspondent.

Some of these Russian cuttings were so laudatory and spelt my name so badly that I am afraid the Bolsheviks attributed to me a literary importance which I do not possess. One triumphant radio of theirs which was quoted in the English Press described me as "the well-known writer Macaulay."

During the revolutionary movement of 1905-1906 I had, like all the British correspondents in St. Petersburg, criticized the Tsar's Government, and, for journalistic purposes, got into touch with opponents of that Government. I now met some of these people or acquaintances of theirs, and, later on, I met several American correspondents, one British correspondent, and one high official of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, who had known me as a journalist five years earlier and were unaware that I had spent all the interval in the British Army. The journalists, Russian and foreign, who did not know me personally were acquainted with a great many newspapermen whom I knew. My name appeared in "Who's Who" as a journalist; and several prominent Bolsheviks who had been living in Italy at the time my dispatches from Tripoli raised a storm in the Italian Press, recollected me perfectly, while a very large number who had not been in Italy had heard of my connection with that storm.

I could not show my passport, as I was described in it as a military officer, but, luckily, I had with me a cutting from the *New York World* containing a portrait of myself, and this proved better than any passport.

I was sorry that I had to leave so many people under a false impression, but I had now gone so far that there was no turning back; and, besides, the money question was still very acute with my companions. They had not, at this time, begun to get any money at all for teaching, and what they earned in that way later would never have sufficed to keep them from starvation. My first duty, therefore, was to persuade Commissar Sverdlov, Vice-Minister of Ways and Communications, to let them have some money by casually pointing out to him, in a tone of emotionless unconcern, that the death by cold and starvation of my comrades, most of whom belonged really to the working classes, would not be good propaganda for Bolshevism among the workmen of England.

Having succeeded in this important matter, I quietly took various steps in other directions to render their position safe. I found them more protectors than they were aware of, for I always impressed on these friends the

necessity of not showing their friendship openly by making themselves known to my companions.

My access to Commissar circles also enabled me to telegraph from Krasnoyarsk to Moscow and Copenhagen and to bring to Moscow many letters from my companions to their relatives, and to send those letters to England. At Moscow I found the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in a curious state of ignorance about our officers in Siberia, owing apparently to a lack of connection, not only between the Commissariat of F.A. and the Commissariat of War, but also between the representatives of those Commissariats in Siberia and the central Commissariats in Moscow to which they were supposed to be respectively subordinate. I also found that Provincial Soviets and other organizations had at times an awkward habit of obstinately claiming a sort of local autonomy, and of impeding rather than helping the representatives of the Central Government.

Hence it came to pass that the F.O. in Moscow does not seem to have ever been informed officially of the capture of British troops in Siberia. So far as I know, all the telegrams on that subject that got through from Krasnoyarsk to Moscow in January, 1920, were sent by me. I sent two telegrams from Krasnoyarsk at that time to the Commissariat of F.A.; and, when I arrived myself in Moscow, I was able to supplement those telegrams by a good deal of additional information helpful to our prisoners. Many enquiries about them came from our Legation in Copenhagen, and Chicherin had always to apply to me for answers to these enquiries. Meanwhile, in Krasnoyarsk, at the Ministry of Communications in Moscow, and at the Bolshevik Foreign Office in Moscow, I lost no opportunity of making representations on behalf of my comrades. I always pointed out that, from the Bolshevik point of view, it would be good policy to release these men at once. They had been well treated, I said, and their release in itself would be a contradiction of the report that the Reds always killed their prisoners. If detained till they contracted typhus, or even till they had got excessively bored, as soldiers easily become when kept a long time in one

place doing nothing, they would only become permanently embittered against Bolshevism. My arguments seemed to make a considerable impression; nevertheless, as my companions were detained in Eastern Siberia six months after I left, it is to be presumed that there were difficulties in the way of acting on my advice. The difficulties were, I think, these: (1) The higher Commissars are secretly afraid of the dregs who keep them in power; and (2) local authorities, such as those who had charge of our prisoners in Siberia, are, as I have already pointed out, sometimes difficult to manage. The first reason is the more important. It will also tell against any trade between England and Russia and against any modification of Bolshevism.

My fellow-captives, who cordially approved of all I did for them and of the secrecy with which I did it, were very glad when I told them that my next move would be to get to Moscow and then to England. In Moscow I might be able to do something for them, and I was able to do something; but in London I could furnish the British Government with the fullest information about them, and that also I have done. They offered to draw up a paper signed by all of them, and declaring that I was acting with their sanction; but I declined to take such a compromising document with me, and it was lucky for me that I did decline.

If I had asked permission from the Bolsheviks to go east to Vladivostock, their suspicions would have been at once aroused; and, moreover, there was a front in that direction: the railway was cut, and I could never have got through. I therefore asked permission to go to Ekaterinburg in order to see Trotsky carry out there his great scheme for converting a whole army into a labour force, and making a hundred thousand soldiers beat their swords into ploughshares. I did not particularly want to see Ekaterinburg again, for I had been there three or four times and might be recognized. But if once I got to Ekaterinburg, I might have a chance of going to Moscow, and Moscow is close to Petrograd, which is near the innish frontier, and from which, as I knew every inch of the ground, escape should be fairly easy.

This proposal appealed to them at once, and they said

that, if I had asked them earlier, they would have sent me off by a train of technical experts which was leaving in a few hours. Fearing that any delay might be fatal to my plans, I offered to go at once. It would not take me half an hour, I said, to fetch the little kit I had from the town to the railway carriage in which this conversation was being carried on. "Then," they said, "we will arrange the matter at once." I saw that they were pleased at my rapidity of decision and at the indication that I was not overburdened with baggage, for, to do them justice, they are men of rapid decision themselves, and not possessed of much movable property. The matter was accordingly arranged in one minute by telephone, and in another minute I was dashing townwards for my kit.

The only difficulty I experienced was from the cold, which, as I have already remarked, was 49 degrees below zero—a frightfully low temperature, which made exposure in the open air for more than an hour positively dangerous. I had never in my life experienced such cold. Even inside the heated carriages it caused the windows to be coated with sheets of ice, half an inch thick at top and perhaps two inches thick at the bottom. All the brass-work near the windows and doors was covered with hoar frost, and, whenever a door was opened, the cold air rushed in like a whiff of smoke. Outside, my glasses were always covered with frost, and the metal pincers of the *pince-nez* burned the bridge of my nose like red-hot irons, so that I had to remove my glasses altogether. I had also to cover my face from time to time, as, otherwise, all of it and especially my nose would have been frost-bitten. But finally I managed to return in time with my kit, and to stow it in an upper bunk which had been assigned to me in the special train. I had no time to bid my companions good-bye, but I had told them beforehand that I would probably leave that day, and leave, perhaps, without being able to see them again.

The sound of the train rumbling slowly out of Krasnoyarsk was one of the pleasantest sounds I had heard for a long time, though mingled with my pleasure was a certain uneasiness when I remembered that my destination was Bolshevik Russia and Red Moscow.

## CHAPTER X

### THE JOURNEY TO EKATERINBURG

THE railway engineers in whose company I travelled to Ekaterinburg were all, save three, experts whom Kolchak had formerly employed on the railway. They had been captured, like myself, at Krasnoyarsk, but Sverdlov, the Vice-Minister of Railways, had offered work to them all.

“ I don't insist on your becoming Communists,” he said. “ You can hold whatever political opinions you like, but I do want you to help us to run our railways. Your past will not count against you. I don't care how much you assisted Kolchak. Assist the Soviet republic now: that's all we want of you.”

This was a wise and statesmanlike line to take, and it led on this occasion to the Bolsheviks obtaining the assistance of some very able railway engineers. I afterwards discovered that Sverdlov had even appointed, as his right-hand man, Colonel Klementovich, who had been second in command to Supranovitch, Kolchak's Director of Military Communications. If all the Bolshevik leaders have the same breadth of mind as Sverdlov, there is some chance that their system of government will become modified and therefore stand a chance of being permanently established in Russia.

The head of our mission, or “ expedition ” as it was called, was a Ukrainian called Dovgolevsky, who, though not quite a Communist, was so very nearly one that he had, since the October revolution, been a prominent technical official of the Soviet republic. On account of his political opinions he had had to leave Russia at an early age. He had studied at Liège and worked as an electrical engineer in various parts of Belgium and France, finally settling down in a good position in Paris as one of the heads of a

great French electrical company. He had returned to Russia in 1905 and been promptly sent as a convict to Siberia, so that the last time he had seen Krasnoyarsk was through the bars of a prison-van. Sverdlov had also been imprisoned at the same time, and, in fact, all the prominent Bolsheviks whom I met in Siberia had been in jail under the Tsar or under Kolchak. The Chief of Police in Krasnoyarsk had occupied that position under the Czechs, but the "Supreme Ruler" had put him in jail for expressing liberal sentiments. When the Reds came they thought that the mere fact of his being in jail was the best recommendation he could show, and accordingly made him Chief of Police again, or, to use the Bolshevik title, head of the National Militia.

Dovgolevsky was a tireless worker, a good organizer, and a strong Socialist. I need not give his political views: the reader will find them in any Socialist publication; but what struck me very much was the extraordinarily wide range of his reading in French and Russian, and the serious study he had evidently made of social questions.

I cannot understand how it comes to pass that people who have got a wrong but attractive theory often preach it with more energy than people who have got a right theory. Perhaps it is because the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. The Bolsheviks teach their theory of non-religion, of economics, and of government with tireless energy by means of posters, cinemas, newspapers, and free public lectures; and they drive it home not only to students leading the sheltered life of universities, but also to the man in the street. Our newspapers are full of murder cases and reports from the divorce courts. Theirs are weighed down with expositions of Marxian economics. We teach our children reading and writing, and let them "pick up" as best they can something about religion, about the mighty economic system which is to play such a large part in their lives, and about the actual working of the great constitutional machine in the manipulation of which they must now take a hand. The Communists say, "These things are kept hidden from you because, if you understood them, you would



make a clean sweep of them all," just as the Reformers said, "The Church withholds the Bible from you because if you knew its teaching you would soon put an end to Rome." It is certainly unfortunate that our future workmen get all their knowledge of economics from the *Daily Herald*, and that our future Generals get all their knowledge of English constitutional history from the *Morning Post*. Might it not be possible to give our future fitter, as well as our future Field-Marshal some inkling of the truth in early life? Could we not take a leaf from the Bolsheviks' book and boldly teach the young all about supply and demand, labour, trade unions and wages?

This, however, is somewhat of a digression. All I meant to say was that Dovgolevsky and Bolsheviks of his type take an interest in literature, in social and religious questions, and in problems of government which the average English engineer of the same standing does not, as a rule, take. In the average engineers' mess with us the conversation runs chiefly on women, horses, and drink. There is a good deal of obscenity, and, though religion and the established order of society are never attacked, those subjects have evidently not been studied, and it is "bad form" to discuss them. In the corresponding Bolshevik messes there is never any obscenity, so far as I have seen, and though religion, capitalism, kings, and war are violently attacked, they are generally attacked by men who have studied these subjects. We have, I think, got the right point of view, but it is a thousand pities that we do not stock our minds with literary and controversial ammunition for the great battle which is coming, nay, which has already begun.

The educated Bolsheviks are well aware of all that has been published about them in foreign newspapers, and I must own that they made me feel foolish when they asked me point-blank if, from what I had seen of Bolshevism in action, there was any truth in the reports that Bolsheviks always killed prisoners taken in war, and that they had nationalized all women.

"Not that we object to these lies being told about us," quoth Dovgolevsky, "for they only do us good in the long run. They convince our own people that the capitalists

will employ every mendacity against us, and they will excite sympathy for us among the British workmen who are naturally prone to take the side of people who have been traduced."

I had to admit that, if the Bolsheviks showed great moderation, a reaction in their favour was not impossible; but, during all my stay with the Reds, I never professed to agree with them, though I was always able to follow their train of thought and to enter into their frame of mind. To this gift, which I owe to my journalistic training, I attribute my success in carrying on long conversations with fanatical Bolsheviks and invariably escaping with my life.

In the carriages occupied by this railway mission there were no ladies, and there was only one woman on the train—a clerk who lived in a distant waggon and was always extremely busy with her typewriter. Nobody was allowed to ride in our cars under any circumstances. Visitors offered to sleep on the floor, to stand in the passage, or even to remain in the vestibule between the outer and inner doors, but they were always told politely but very decisively that this was impossible. Even Red soldiers were turned off like everybody else. Our Commissar was like adamant.

At every large station telephone connection was made with the town—at one time we had three telephones in the dining-car—and a tremendous amount of work was done, though the task of evolving some sort of order out of the chaos left by the retreat was appallingly great. As for food, we always got imitation coffee and a little black bread in the morning. At 4 we were supposed to get our next meal, which consisted of a kind of porridge and more imitation coffee, but, owing to pressure of work, we seldom got it before 6 or 7. Supper—*ersatz* coffee and black bread—was fixed for 10 o'clock; but the tables were sometimes covered with papers and the dining-car full of local railwaymen till 2 in the morning, so that occasionally we did not get any supper till that unearthly hour. The Russian is a glutton for work once he gets really started, but I had never seen such work as this in my life before. It cannot go on for long at such high pressure and with such insufficient food.

It is against human nature, like so many other things in Bolshevism, and involves such a strain on the chiefs, as well as on the subordinates, that both must sooner or later break down. Moreover, in so far as the railway is concerned, it is hopeless, owing to the lack of locomotives, of spare parts, and of a trained personnel.

Dovgolevsky, after all, is only an electrician, not a railwayman; and 99 per cent. of the genuine railway experts whom I met on this journey and in Ekaterinburg and Moscow and who are not Bolsheviks, or indeed members of any political party, are profoundly dissatisfied with the conditions under which they work and are only anxious to leave Russia altogether. So great is their longing to get away and so extreme are the precautions taken by the Bolsheviks to prevent them getting away, that it would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one of these engineers to pass over the frontier, unless he formed part of an official Bolshevik delegation like the Krassin Mission. Even then his wife and children would be kept behind as hostages, so as to prevent him repudiating the republic and all its works once he got abroad. This was done in the case of all the members of the Krassin Mission, with the exception of Krassin himself, and the necessity for it, from the Bolshevik point of view, is evident to all who have, like the present writer, lived among the technical experts employed by the Soviet. Practically all these experts are so anxious to leave that one man whom I met in Moscow—he was not a railwayman—discussed with me a plan for getting across the Pamirs into India. It is not putting the case too strongly to say that they are as anxious to leave Russia as people are anxious to leave a powder-magazine which has caught fire. England and the English colonies attract them all; and I think that when the gates are opened and the rush begins, we should relax our passport and immigration regulations with the object of allowing Russian technicians and well-disposed Russians generally to enter our territories and to settle there. A period of political quarantine must be enforced in our own interests, but surely the skill of these engineers could be made use of in the development of East Africa, Mesopotamia, or, better still,

those parts of Northern Canada where the climatic conditions are somewhat similar to Russia. The scheme which I adumbrate need not necessarily be a burden on the British taxpayer. The Boxer indemnity payable, and still being paid, to the Russian Legation in Peking, the revenue of the Chinese Eastern Railway, and various credits which the Tsarist and Kerensky Governments opened in Washington and other capitals might be used for the purpose, in connection with a similar scheme which I have outlined at the end of Chapter IV.; and, in return, we could let all the British subjects who want to go to Red Russia go there freely and stay there permanently.

What the engineers most object to is their insufficient pay and their impossible position. They all exist on sufferance, are generally described as *bourgeois* specialists, and are constantly the object of fierce attacks in the Socialist newspapers. Lenin, it is true, came to their rescue on one occasion, and said that, though they had been willing slaves and tools of the capitalists, and were undoubtedly *bourgeois*, they should be tolerated and even paid highly until such time as the proletariat had produced technical experts of its own; but even this is hardly good enough. There is not sufficient inducement or an attractive enough future to make these highly skilled experts go on working. The elimination from their lives of all professional ambition, all possibility of legitimate recompense and rewards, all expectation of being able to give their children a good start in life, and to ensure for themselves an honoured and comfortable old age—all this makes the technical experts profoundly discontented, and will inevitably tell on the quality of their work. It will also prevent young men of ability from making themselves fit to succeed them, for why should a young man scorn delights and live laborious days with the object of fitting himself for a lower position than that which he would otherwise occupy? By burning the midnight oil and spending years in hard study, he only qualifies for a place among the submerged, suspected, and temporarily tolerated tenth, whereas, if he made no special exertions, he would remain among the ruling class, the workmen.

There are now, and there will probably continue to be in the future, among the technical experts, enthusiasts who will despise all these difficulties for the sake of the Socialist Soviet Republic, but will their number be large enough to meet the requirements of a vast modern State?

A minor point which caused me more concern at the time, and indeed until I had left Russia, than all these abstruse speculations was the fact that one of the carriages in our train was car No. 1,167, in which I and my comrades had travelled from Omsk to Krasnoyarsk. I now remembered that during that journey I had deposited in a cavity underneath my bunk in that car a number of letters which one of Kolchak's officials had asked me to transmit to England. In order to pass them through our post-office and our censorship I had written my name and rank on the outside of each envelope; and if these letters were now discovered my position would be rather awkward. But, luckily, the car had been requisitioned in such a hurry, and was kept so full of people and baggage until we reached Moscow, and even for a month afterwards, that this secret receptacle was never opened.

My passport I kept until I reached Moscow, but it was nearly two months before I had destroyed all the other clues which pointed to my connection with the British Army. Again and again, after I thought that I had destroyed everything suspicious, I came across letters and bank receipts in which my military rank was given, British Army forms, and official documents regarding my travelling expenses, and my voyage in 1918 from Liverpool to Vladivostock via America. My identity disc and the inscription on my kit-bag came near to hanging me, when I was afterwards arrested in Moscow by the Extraordinary Commission, as I shall relate in a subsequent chapter.

There were many abandoned White trains all the way between Krasnoyarsk and Omsk. One deserted carriage was labelled "French Military Mission," and one captured armoured train, which was full of shells, bore the inscription H.M.S. *Suffolk*. It had been manned by a detachment of bluejackets from that vessel, had done excellent work at the Front, but had been in charge of Russians when captured.



CORPSE OF THE GRAND DUKE JOHN.



CORPSE OF THE GRAND DUCHESS ELIZABETH.

*To face p. 82.*

All the Bolshevik Red Cross trains had been fitted out by various Grand Duchesses, and bore their names, which had been painted over but were still legible through the paint. Those Grand Duchesses had been thrown alive into a disused mine-shaft at Alapaievsk, near Ekaterinburg, and then overwhelmed by a mass of earth cast on top of them. I still have photographs of their swollen and unsightly corpses. On top of those names were painted the words "Sanitary Train, R.S.F.S.R." (Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic).

Few good locomotives had been captured, but a great many "cold" and rusty ones, so that the spoils of war taken by the Bolsheviks in the shape of utilizable railway material were not as great as might have been expected from the completeness of their victory. This failure to capture railway locomotives was a great disappointment to the Reds, for their need of engines was acute. Even on the train in which I travelled, and which, as it belonged to the Assistant Minister of Railways, must have had the best engines procurable, there were very bad locomotives, which had to be changed several times during the course of the journey.

West of Novo-Nikolaevsk an engine and about a dozen carriages had been deliberately smashed by the Whites. The engine had been run off the line and lay topsy-turvy, completely ruined, while, on a siding, two echelons had been more or less wrecked. Trucks which had been jettisoned by the retreating troops and thrown off the rails were to be seen lying wheels upward at intervals along the line. The merciful snow had covered the bodies of the dead, and had partially buried abandoned guns, carts, and miscellaneous railway material.

The only bridge injured was at Omsk, where the eastern span had been blown up, with the result that a new line had to be laid across the ice, and the passage of the river took a whole day. Trotsky turned about a thousand men belonging to his new Labour Army on to the work of repairing this bridge, which has probably been completed now. The Perm Bridge, which was blown up by the Czechs in July, 1919, had been replaced by February, 1920, when

I passed over it. There was no damage done to the line at all, and the damage done to the bridges might have been very much greater.

At Taiga I made enquiries after Colonel Johnston and his companions who were reported to have been killed there, and, as a result of my enquiries, I was able to inform the British Government and the relatives of the officers in question that Colonel Johnston was certainly alive, and that the other officers were probably alive too.

At Novo-Nikolaevsk I visited the town, and was struck by the rise in the price of provisions, especially bread and butter, since I had been there last. This was due to the fact that while formerly the farmers brought their produce to market very few of them did so now. And why should they? The Soviet paper money which they received in exchange for it could buy them nothing, for there was nothing to be bought. At one stall in the market-place I saw a shabby, genteel old lady bargaining for a few of those hard, circular biscuits which the Russians are so fond of, but a corporal came along, produced a large sheaf of notes from his pocket, and promptly bought everything on the stall.

I was somewhat alarmed to find that Novo-Nikolaevsk was under the rule of a Bolshevik General, called von Blücher, who had been a Rittmeister in the German Army and a prisoner of war. He had fought against Kolchak for over a year in command of a Division, and had been noted for his severity and his military talent. Now he was in command of an Army and of the garrison at Novo-Nikolaevsk. His name was affixed to proclamations ordering all citizens to be indoors by 10 o'clock, and, as I had no desire to make his acquaintance, I always took particular care to be back in my train by that time.

Omsk I found to be paralyzed by a double terror—terror of typhus and terror of the Extraordinary Commission. The typhus had claimed so many victims that a pile of dead bodies had accumulated in the market-place and that many of the abandoned houses were, on being broken into, found to be filled from cellar to attic with corpses. The Extraordinary Commission, in revenge probably for the slaughter by Kolchak's troops of sixteen workmen, had put to death



twenty-seven of Kolchak's supporters, whose names and crimes were all given in the local Communist paper, the *Sovietsky Sibir*, No. 27, February 6, 1920, a copy of which I saw. The crimes for which they had been executed did not seem to be very great. Some were employers of labour who had been "oppressive" towards their workmen, but most of them were editors and journalists who had assisted in Kolchak's propaganda. The date of these executions was the day before the power of inflicting death had been taken from the Extraordinary Commission by a decree of Derzhinsky. That decree meant nothing, however, as the law which it summarized contained a clause to the effect that the Cheka (the usual abbreviation for "Extraordinary Commission") could still hand over "dangerous criminals" to the Army, which had the right to execute them. It was rather like the case of the Spanish Inquisition, which never put people to death but only surrendered them to the "civil arm"; and in April, 1920, I knew personally of one case where the Moscow Cheka threatened to hand over a suspect to the Army in the certain knowledge that the Army would execute him.

I wandered about Omsk a good deal despite the fact that I ran a great risk of discovery, for I had lived there some six months in all. I saw Kolchak's former War Office, now the H.Q. of a Red Division, but not the G.H.Q. of the Red Armies in Siberia. The Red G.H.Q. is in Tomsk, a much better town. I also met in the street a Chinese officer in Russian uniform, but saw no Chinese soldiers. Government eating-houses had been opened for the troops and the inhabitants, but I did not dare to visit any of them, as a ticket was necessary.

The Red flag flew over Kolchak's former headquarters; but over the building occupied three months before by the British Military Mission there flew a Red Cross flag, for the place had been converted into a hospital. The town railway station had formerly been occupied by the trains of General Knox, General Janin, General Graves, General Sirovi, the G.O.C. the Poles, and many of the Russian military leaders, as well as by Sir Charles Eliot and the other High Commissioners, not to mention the heads of the

foreign railway missions. Now it was filled with comparatively dingy-looking Red Cross trains. Some of the buildings in town had been turned into Government Schools for the children of working men, and there, as well as in Ekaterinburg and elsewhere, I saw these children studying.

Walking back to the main railway station, I saw some cigarettes for sale at an extremely high price on a stall, and was meditating the purchase of a few when suddenly a small boy, who had been observing me intently for some time, said to his companions the one word "Anglichanin" (Englishman). Heartily cursing the intense objectivity and curiosity which makes small boys so dangerous to people in my position, I beat a hasty retreat to my carriage, for Dovgolevsky would have been powerless to protect me, if once the puissant and vindictive Cheka of Omsk had got hold of me. In fact, the Assistant Minister of Railways had as good as admitted, when he sent me off, that he was powerless to protect me in case certain other departments of the Red Government thought fit to stop me, and his instructions to Dovgolevsky were, "Take him as far as you can." He had never had much hope that I would get as far as Moscow, and I began to lose hope myself when I was told that the Cheka was going to search our train, and when I noticed the alarm that this intelligence caused among my Socialist companions. The searchers consisted of three youngish men, one of them a workman from Petrograd and a virulent Communist who had, I was told, been sent specially from Russia to show the Siberian workmen how the *bourgeois* and all those with *bourgeois* tendencies were to be kept down. The others were local men. I was somewhat reassured when I learned that the object of their visit was not to search for foreign agents, but to prevent us bringing any food out of Siberia for speculative purposes, and to see that we took with us only as much as would bring us to Moscow. There was in the conversation and in the actions of these men a good deal of that austere republican justice which I had noticed at Krasnoyarsk, but it occurred to me later that if a Transport Minister's train can thus be held up by these fanatics, there will be very little chance of corn

being ever exported from Siberia for the use of persons whom the Reds politely describe as "bloated English capitalists."

When the searchers came to me, their leader was favourably impressed by my evident poverty, my scanty kit, and the fact that I had with me no food or tobacco whatever. He simply said, half interrogatively, "You are a foreign comrade," and passed on.

I was glad when we left Omsk.

## CHAPTER XI

### TROTSKY IN EKATERINBURG

I REACHED Ekaterinburg at an interesting time. Trotsky, the Minister of War, was expected there to begin the work of turning his Red Armies into Labour Armies, and making his victorious troops beat their swords into ploughshares.

It may not be known to some of my readers and may seem hardly credible to such of them as read the news from Russia and Poland to-day (July 22, 1920), but the abolition of war and militarism is one of the great objects of the Communists, and was, in fact, the cry which enabled them to overthrow the Kerensky Government in 1917. They are convinced that only by the adoption by all nations of the system of government which they have established will an end be put to land-grabbing by *bourgeois* Governments manipulated by capitalists eager for new markets and more supplies of raw material. And land-grabbing, they hold, leads to war. They have written whole books on this subject, and there is hardly an issue of their newspapers which does not refer to it, but I need not say any more about it here. To point out to the Bolsheviki that their practice belies their theory is futile and even unfair, for they answer that it was the attacks made on them by Denikin, Kolchak, the Czechs, the British, the French, the Americans and others which made them take up arms to defend their existence.

No sooner were Denikin and Kolchak crushed than Trotsky conceived the great project of turning several of his Red Armies into Labour Armies. It was just such an idea as would appeal to a clever journalist like Trotsky, and he carried it out with all the ostentation which the ex-Kaiser, also a man of an editorial turn of mind, would have shown in turning workmen into soldiers. In the first place



Trotsky determined to visit Ekaterinburg for the purpose of doing the thing in style in the very town where he had been himself a political convict in 1905, and where, in 1918, Nicholas the Second had met with his tragic end.

A daily newspaper called *The Red Tocsin* was started in connection with this movement, just as lively, well-written newspapers are started by the Bolsheviks in connection with all their movements. It was printed by "the First Revolutionary Army of Labour," and in stereotype at the head of the first page was a picture which would seem curious to the average Englishman, but which is common enough in Soviet Russia. In the foreground was a workman beating weapons of war into agricultural implements, but still carrying his rifle slung across his back in order to show that, if the necessity arose, he was ready to defend himself. In the middle distance was a Cossack ploughing, his sword by his side; and in the background rose an enormous factory with smoking chimneys, and a great crowd of factory-hands hastening joyfully to work. Overhead was the Red Star of Bolshevism.

All the contents corresponded to this picture. The success of Red workmen in repairing a bridge or a damaged locomotive was chronicled with the same enthusiasm as a British newspaper would describe a gallant feat of arms by British troops. The unit of the Red Labour Army to which these workmen belonged was given, just as we should give, in small wars, the unit to which victorious troops belonged. Every kind of achievement in the realms of industry and education was treated in the same way. The work of army and village and factory schools and the reduction of illiteracy were made matters of brisk competition; and, if *The Red Tocsin* is to be trusted, the various schools enjoyed this competition with the same zest as we enjoy cricket matches. Instead of sending news about husbands who poisoned their wives and ex-officers who murdered their sweethearts, correspondents in outlying districts sent exclusive wires about old women of sixty who had been taught to read, and about butchers' boys who had qualified for professorships. There was poetry, too—a great deal of it—but it was not the poetry of war.

It celebrated the work of the turner, the fitter, the ploughman, tinker, the tailor, the candlestick-maker, and not the exploits of the warrior. One poem which I saw was addressed by an engine-driver to a "sick" engine, as the Russian railwaymen call a locomotive which is laid up for repair; and the point of it was that the thousands of "sick" engines with which the railway lines were covered should be nursed back to health with as much care as if they were sick children.

There was much inaccuracy and exaggeration in this paper—for example, I found it guilty of both inaccuracy and exaggeration in the glowing report which it published about the repair of the Perm Bridge—but it was certainly run on original lines. Was there any demand for it on the part of the public at large? The Bolsheviks laugh at such a question, for they have as little respect for democracy as the late Lord Salisbury had. They would never even dream of asking the public what it wants any more than they would dream of asking their horses. They give the public what they consider good for it, and deprive it of all possibility of getting anything else. Just as Peter the Great used to have his boyars forcibly shaved, so the Bolsheviks, when they started their great cleanliness and anti-typhus campaign in Ekaterinburg, used to seize grown men, shave them, cut their hair, and then subject them to a compulsory bath. When the Russian public has been educated on sound Socialist lines and has grown up, it will be able to look after itself; but at present, say the Bolsheviks, it is an infant which does not know what is good for it and cannot stand on its own feet.

Bolshevism is really run to a large extent by a clique of Socialist journalists. Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Radek, Lunacharsky, and all the other leading Communists have been newspaper men, and Trotsky, though he does not speak English well, acquired in New York something of the vivid American style of journalism.

Resuscitate the late Mr. W. T. Stead; associate with him Mr. Wells, Mr. Sydney Webb, Mr. Dickinson, Mr. George Bernard Shaw, Mr. G. K. Chesterton, Lord Northcliffe, and the editors of the *Nation*, the *New Statesman*, the

*Manchester Guardian*, and the *Daily Herald*; make them all fervent Bolsheviks; give them supreme power over a people as plastic and ignorant as the Russians; and they will do something like what Lenin and Trotsky have done. Mr. Wells will draw up rough scientific schemes for an entirely original, brand-new, machine-made civilization; he will get those schemes endorsed and touched up by mad but extremely learned professors who have been shut up all their lives in their studies, brooding over the idea of a perfect State; and his colleagues will instantly put them into execution. Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Shaw will dash off in their dinner-hour brilliant, paradoxical, and revolutionary proposals about agriculture, aviation, coal-mining, and education, which will meet with the same favourable reception; and Lord Northcliffe will centralize the Press as it has never before been centralized, and employ in its service telephonic photography, the radio, the wireless telephone, the aeroplane, and every other modern invention. All this may seem fantastic, but nothing more fantastic than the reality could be written about Russia. The development of the Press alone constitutes, as I shall afterwards show, one of the most marvellous achievements in the history of journalism. Despite the acute lack of paper, the Soviet Government is at present publishing Mr. H. G. Wells' wildest pseudo-scientific romances, which it evidently regards as far superior to the New Testament or any of the other great books on which our "effete" civilization has been founded; but it has, so far, paid no attention to the same author's recent incursions into theology. And, despite the extreme paucity of skilled electricians for the most humdrum work of modern life, it is spending millions of roubles weekly and employing scores of engineers on vast schemes for the electrification of Russia, schemes which seem to have been borrowed from a romance about a future, electrified, scientifically constructed world, which was written some years before the war by the well-known novelist Kuprin. The Bolsheviks forget Marx's warning: "Wer ein Programm für die Zukunft entwirft, ist ein Reaktionär."

If the Soviet Government succeeds in getting peace, money,



and unlimited raw material, it will be most interesting to see how it is going to develop. The development will certainly be on new lines, as the Bolsheviki have not a particle of reverence for the past. Trotsky thinks himself a much cleverer man than St. Paul, with equal energy, a sounder doctrine, and a much firmer grasp on the realities of life. How can it be otherwise, he asks, seeing that St. Paul lived so long before the age of the radio, the aeroplane, and all the great scientific discoveries which have so completely changed our whole outlook on the world?

The scheme of the Labour Army might have come hot from the active brain of the great journalist who founded the *Review of Reviews*. As a matter of fact, it came from the brilliant brain of Trotsky. Ten years ago it would have been hidden away in the columns of some obscure Socialist newspaper. Now it has behind it all the resources of a great Empire.

Ekaterinburg was gaily decorated in honour of Trotsky's visit, but the Bolshevik Minister of War came, unostentatiously enough, in the night-time, and refused to hold any parades, inspections of troops, or any other formal functions whatsoever. He even refused to shake hands with anybody on the ground that this custom is carried to ridiculous extremes in Russia, is a waste of time, and contributes, moreover, to the spread of typhus, and he had abolished hand-shaking in his train by imposing a fine of 100 roubles for each offence on subordinates found guilty of it. He was certainly right in saying that this mode of greeting is carried to excessive lengths in Russia. A slight-built wiry man of medium height, dressed as a private soldier and without any decoration, he wore on his head a curious cap which has been invented for the higher officers of the Red Army. It is of khaki cloth, is cut in the style of the steel helmet worn by the ancient Russian *bogatyrs* (Knights), and the whole front of it is covered by a huge star, the Red Star of Bolshevism. His ill-developed calves were encased in a neat pair of British Army putties, probably one of the many pairs we had sent to Kolchak.

He wore no belt and carried no weapon; his face is sallow, Mephistophelean, and distinctly Jewish; his eyes dark and

bright; his beard and moustache scanty. His movements are quick and animated, and his capacity for work super-human. The employees on his train told me that they led a dog's life of it. The typewriting girls were kept working all day and far into the night. His numerous secretaries were glued to their desks all day. His telephonists were speaking into the receivers or taking down telephone messages for twenty hours out of the twenty-four. Moreover, he published on the train a newspaper called *En Route*, in which he had articles every day, and he dictated, besides, numerous contributions for the local papers in the towns through which he passed. He delivered long public speeches several times a week, and spent at least six hours every day presiding over conferences of Commissars, railway officials, and factory men. He even dared once to do a thing which Marshal Foch, Sir Douglas Haig, and even Mr. Bottomley might have shrunk from—he questioned the infallibility of doctors!

As if all the above work were not enough, Trotsky devoted himself at Ekaterinburg to transport reorganization, a task which would alone absorb the energies of a dozen Sir Eric Geddeses; and when Krassin went to England the Leader of the Red Army calmly took over the Commissariat of Ways of Communication on the ground that, as railways played such a great part in military operations, he had better take charge of them as well as of the Army. All this testifies to Trotsky's audacity and indefatigability, but it also betrays a fatal lack of organizers in the ranks of the Reds. And, it is almost unnecessary to add, Government work is not well done. Despite the electric thrill which the presence of the Red Army Commissar communicates to every Government department which he enters, there is a glut of work which clogs the whole machinery, and there are not enough experts to deal with that work. The offices are in a chaotic state, filled with visitors who cannot be attended to, and with incompetent clerks rushing hither and thither. Many of the old bureaucrats are, it is true, dribbling back from Paris with their tails between their legs, but as they are distrusted and are always placed under incompetent Reds, no really good work can

be expected of them. The Bolshevik War Minister had fitted to his train a wireless apparatus which kept him in constant touch with Moscow, and he received daily interminable messages about the Eastern Front, the Southern Front, the Polish Front, the North-Western and Finnish Front, as well as copies of all the communications received from the British and other foreign Governments, not to speak of a vast amount of technical material sent by his own War Office. He employed about a dozen secretaries, a tame editor to run his paper, a number of tame diplomats to look after diplomatic affairs, and several domesticated Tsarist officers to deal with purely military matters. He put the fear of Trotsky, if not the fear of God, into all these subordinates; but they rather gloried than otherwise in their servitude.

Most Russians like to serve a relentless master who knows his own mind, and I am not sure but that the same can be said of many Englishmen too. I was once attached to a British Battalion which was composed mostly of Labour men, and in which the discipline was very slack. When the weak and benignant C.O. was replaced by a ruthless man of purely Prussian mentality, the discipline became perfect, and the soldiers not only became proud of their iron-minded Colonel, but finally died almost to a man in carrying out his orders.

The stories told of Trotsky's revels and dissipation are obvious nonsense. The only dissipation the Bolshevik War Lord allowed himself in Ekaterinburg was a short walk every day in a beautiful pine-grove where I used to walk myself, and an hour's hard physical exercise daily shovelling snow from the railway track. In this physical exercise he made every man, woman, and child in his train take part; and the example he thus set was good, for, as I think I have already remarked, the educated Russian has the same contempt for manual labour as the White Sahib has in India. Even Mrs. Trotsky, Master Trotsky (a boy of eleven or twelve), and Master Trotsky's governess, a young Jewess of twenty or twenty-five, had to shovel snow like the rest; and this craze for manual work remained even when Trotsky was not looking

on, for, when I afterwards travelled to Moscow with the above-mentioned governess, I noticed that she sometimes got out at the wayside stations, took the pickaxe from the *muzhiks* who were breaking up the thick layer of ice that had formed on the station platform, and set to work herself with an enthusiasm which was, however, very much greater than her skill.

No sooner had he arrived in Ekaterinburg than Trotsky plunged straight into work, and I marvelled at the audacity with which he tackled matters which ought, one would think, to have been left entirely to experts. I shall give one example, the typhus question, for I know something about it, having had, a year earlier, to visit all the typhus hospitals in the Urals to interpret for Colonel Clarke, the head of the Canadian Medical Service, whom General Sir Alfred Knox had sent to the Front with the object of doing something to stop the terrible wastage of men caused by typhus among Kolchak's troops. Dr. Clarke found that a good deal of the responsibility for this state of things was due to the apathy of the Russian doctors, who would do nothing unless they were given unlimited quantities of unprocurable insecticides, though, as Dr. Clarke told them until he was hoarse and exhausted and finally caught the disease himself, heat would have served their purpose equally well.

On February 19 Trotsky summoned the D.M.S., listened with unusual and ominous calm to his statement that there was no chance of typhus decreasing, in any case, till the month of April, and then attacked him with a violence which nearly frightened that worthy functionary out of his wits. "I am no doctor," said the Bolshevik War Lord, "but I understand from you that typhus is communicated by lice. Now it must be possible to destroy these lice by delousing apparatus and by a certain degree of heat, which could, if necessary, be produced in some of our public baths. Several of the baths are very nearly hot enough for the purpose as it is; and, even if the soldiers have not got a change of clothes, they might wash in one part of the bath-house while their clothes are being disinfected in another part. I am not a believer in this doctrine of

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fatalism that you preach. I will immediately appoint a committee to investigate this question; and if I find that you do not at once take some steps in the matter, I will hand you over to the Extraordinary Commission. Good-day."

Next day an excellent bath-house was opened free at the railway station, and I myself enjoyed the first bath that I had had for three months. The Committee was nevertheless appointed, and I have given its findings in Chapter IV. It published everything, even details of hospital mismanagement that were enough to make one's hair stand on end, for the Bolsheviks, when it suits their purpose, allow the fullest liberty to the Press.

The great propaganda engine which had raised the Red Army and smashed Kolchak and Denikin was then turned on to the typhus question; and all Ekaterinburg was soon placarded with posters preaching cleanliness and denouncing dirt. Some of them contained representations of a louse magnified to the size of a small cow, and pointed out in the accompanying letterpress as a worse enemy than the "Supreme Ruler." "Kill it," yelled the posters, "as you would kill Kolchak. It is a far more dangerous enemy. Kolchak has put to death thousands of Communists. IT puts to death tens of thousands." The number and the variety of these warnings were very great; and there was every kind of striking lifesize picture in glaring colours to attract the attention of the illiterate, as well as good medical hints to impress those who could read. There were pictures of washerwomen killing enormous lice with the smoothing iron. There were horrible pictures of death seizing on the young unwashed. Communists were told that it was their duty to the Republic to keep themselves and their clothes clean, and that they were traitors if they did not. One of the commonest posters showed incidentally the nomadic condition of life which hundreds of thousands of Russian soldiers and civilians are now leading. It was generally to be found at railway stations, where crowds of people habitually cuddle down on the floor in their sheepskins at night-time and go to sleep without undressing, and it ran as follows: "Don't lie down wherever you happen

to find yourself at nightfall until you first make sure that the place is free from lice."

This propaganda resembled in some respects the old frescoes we sometimes find in ancient English churches where the fear of sin is taught by means of devils and fearsome representations of hell, but it resembled, far more, the most up-to-date American advertising. Every device known to the patent-medicine quack was made use of—suggestion, fear of sickness and death, party feeling, and hatred of enemies.

I shall afterwards show that the same all-powerful engine of propaganda is employed for other purposes, to teach Communism, to enlist support for the Red Army, to foster a hatred of England, to excite a craze for education, and to produce a contempt for priests and Christianity. The science of advertising is now taught in American Universities, and though contemptible in its way, it is a "science" which presupposes an intimate knowledge of mass-psychology, and which is capable of being used to produce the most amazing effects on the minds of a whole people. When we go deeply into the matter, indeed, we find that the whole modern world is tending more and more to be "run" by propaganda and advertisement—an inevitable outcome, it seems to me, of the system which makes public opinion rule, and which naturally leads therefore to the manufacture and the influencing of public opinion. Propaganda popularizes not only pills but also Premiers, and "floats" not only commercial companies but also creeds and kings. None of the old-established monarchies advertise, but the Soviet Government certainly means to do so, and no Government in the world is so alive to the possibilities of advertisement. Fortunately the Soviet Government is short of paper.

On the day after his arrival Trotsky addressed a large Communist meeting; and here I might remark that no such thing as a public meeting in our sense of the word is ever held in Red Russia. The Bolshevik leaders only address meetings which have been carefully packed with their supporters, and I only know of one case in which it was announced beforehand that they were going to speak.

It is impossible for anyone who is not a Bolshevik to find out when Lenin is going to speak in Moscow, the reason being simply fear of assassination, and it is next to impossible for a non-Bolshevik to hear him. Trotsky, who is a consummate orator, made a very able speech, of which the keynote was briefly this: "We have defeated Kolchak, but a much more serious enemy remains—namely, the ruined economic system of the country. To put that right we must work harder than men ever worked before since history began. Sixty per cent. of our railway locomotives are out of action, and if they continue breaking down at the same rate, we shall have 99 per cent. out of action within three months, which means a total breakdown of our transport system, and therefore of our system of Government. These engines must be repaired. The men who repair them must have food and fuel. The railway lines must be cleared of snow. Wood must be cut and brought to the railways. The Ural factories must be started. This means that all must work, work, work."

He certainly painted a picture gloomy enough to warm the heart of Mr. Winston Churchill, but he did it with a purpose; he wanted to alarm his followers thoroughly, and to make them see that the economic situation was extremely serious. He did not go so far, however, as to make them despair, and I afterwards discovered that he deliberately understated the actual extent of the economic breakdown, and omitted altogether to touch on many very disquieting features. He ended on a note of robust confidence and caused a sensation by announcing that 600 million roubles in gold had been captured with Kolchak, although he must have known that the amount was only 300 million. This news, by the way, had been carefully withheld from the public until the head of the Red Army could use it, as he did, in an effective peroration.

I was surprised at the rapidity with which this speech was, by previous arrangement, echoed and re-echoed all over the country. "The Fight against Economic Ruin" became a catchword like "Wait and See," or "We want eight and we won't wait," or any of the other famous catch-phrases of British politics. It became a stereotyped

newspaper headline. It stared at one from placards on all the walls. To judge from the reports in the Press, it was repeated by every village orator throughout the Urals. At a meeting of the Ekaterinburg Soviet which I attended, it was the principal subject of discussion, and at a meeting of the Communist "League of Youth" which Trotsky attended, Miss Yurovskaya, daughter of the Tsar's murderer and President of that League, delivered a good speech on the same lines. Trotsky must have smiled his Mephistophelean smile when he heard all this parrot outcry, most of it almost a repetition of what he had said himself. No wonder he has a profound and undisguised contempt for democracy. The same absolute unanimity prevails whenever the Bolshevik leaders raise any cry whatever, and a Britisher misses painfully the healthy controversial spirit and dogged individualism of his own people.

Trotsky's treatment of the working-classes was marked not only by an absence of flattery, but even by an autocratic touch which one would never have expected. Finding on his way from Moscow to Ekaterinburg that the workmen in a certain Ural factory were not working hard enough, he had fifteen of the worst "slackers" arrested and placed on their trial before a workmen's tribunal in Ekaterinburg. At one point on the line his train was stopped by snow, whereupon he had the whole of the local Soviet taken into custody for disobedience to the order for removing snow from the track. They also were tried before a jury of their peers; and, while the case was still *sub judice*, Trotsky wrote, over his own name in the newspapers, a ferocious onslaught on the accused, whose condemnation was thus made certain. He did not say anything about their delaying him, but he inveighed against them for delaying the trains which brought bread to the women and children of Moscow and to the Red workmen who had hurled the tyrant from his throne and stood in the breach against Denikin and Yudenich.

Trotsky's train was not one of the old Imperial trains, and could not be described as sumptuous; it consisted of about a dozen carriages, mostly *wagons-lits*, and all of them save Trotsky's own car were very much overcrowded



with *personnel*, typewriters, desks, writing-tables, and documents. All the *personnel* ate together in a large dining-car. The Minister of War had, I believe, a small dining compartment, where he had his meals with his wife and family and a few of his principal assistants. The dining-car was used most of the time as an office, for conferences, for socialistic lectures, and for educational purposes. There was also a library car packed with Propaganda literature, and a printing office on wheels for the production of the newspaper to which I have already referred.

All the outside of Trotsky's train was covered with advertisements of Bolshevism and incitements to class hatred. Imagine our Secretary of State for War touring the country (except at election time) in a train plastered all over with posters like that of a travelling circus. Such a thing would not be done even by a President of the United States. And yet, side by side with this ultra-Americanism and ultra-modernism (the ultra-modern side being represented by Cubist and Futurist productions that looked like nothing on earth), was a good deal of hoary old Tsarism. Close to the Futurist posters stood Lettish guards, who were as merciless as the janissaries of an Ottoman Sultan. About a dozen of them travelled on Trotsky's train, and kept unostentatious but careful watch on everyone who approached or entered it. The police precautions taken to protect Lenin and Trotsky are as minute though not as evident as those formerly taken to protect Nicholas the Second. Thus, the more Russia changes the more it is the same thing. It has had a tyrant who dragged it savagely—by the hair of the head, so to speak—abreast of contemporary civilization. It has now a tyrant who thinks that he is driving it far ahead of all modern civilization. But it always has a tyrant. Feminine races invariably have tyrants, just as wives who are too feminine invariably convert the best-intentioned husbands into bullies.

It was forbidden for any outsider to enter Trotsky's train without permission, and the names of all persons who had the *entrée* were pasted up inside the doors. Few of those who are entitled to enter the office car of a National Com-

missar can go right through the train. The nearer they approach the Presence, the shorter grows the list of names, until finally at the Commissar's car they find only three or four names, one being that of the Private Secretary, the sole link between the Holy of Holies and the common herd. And these arrangements were not lightly to be put aside by anyone. An official of Sverdlov's train who boarded Trotsky's train at Ekaterinburg without permission was promptly arrested, and had such difficulty in getting released that he is not likely to do so again. A lesser person might very easily have been shot.

Trotsky, to do him justice, is an extraordinary man, and is idolized by the Bolsheviki, who say, not without some truth, that he is the most remarkable Minister of War that Europe has produced during the last six years of Armageddon. He formed a numerous and well-disciplined army out of men who were sick and tired of warfare, and who only supported the Bolsheviki originally because the Bolsheviki promised them peace. He did this despite the fact that he himself had never been in the Army or studied warfare, except as an extremely anti-militarist war correspondent during the first Balkan War. He had been all his life an obscure journalist, and, if he had joined the British Army in 1914, would never have risen above the rank of lieutenant, would have been used exclusively as an interpreter, and would have had for his main occupation the buying of eggs for some Brigadier-General's breakfast-table. But if, on the other hand, he had entered British politics, he might have been as great a success as Disraeli was; and it would not matter which party he joined, for he has Jewish adaptability, has no very fixed principles, and possesses the gift, invaluable to a political adventurer, of throwing himself heart and soul into any cause he takes up. He could denounce South African Concentration Camps or defend the Black-and-Tans with the same burning eloquence, exactly as he denounced the Black Hundred pogroms in 1905 and defended Red pogroms in 1918, or as he thundered against war in 1914 and beat the jingo drum in 1919. Or he might have been very useful in Russian politics. If, when he summoned the First Duma,

Nicholas the Second had become a genuinely constitutional monarch and abolished all Jewish disabilities, he might still be on the throne, with Trotsky as the brilliant head of a Coalition Government.

Trotsky's Jewish adaptability, to which I have referred above, was strikingly illustrated one day when he unexpectedly found himself seated next a Court lady at table. His rough comrades expected to find some occasion for mirth in their leader's behaviour on this occasion, but he acquitted himself with perfect propriety, conversed pleasantly in French on eminently suitable subjects, and at the end of dinner kissed the lady's hand, as the Russian custom is, with all the finished grace of an old French aristocrat.

The War Minister of the Reds possesses a very exceptional power of organization, an extraordinarily quick brain, and a marvellous faculty for mastering in a short time the most difficult and complicated subjects. Most men find it hard enough to deal with one engrossing subject at a time, but he switches from one important matter to another a dozen times in the course of a single day, and comes to a rapid and generally a right decision each time. Leroy-Beaulieu says that "the Jewish mind is an instrument of precision; it has the exactness of a pair of scales"; and Trotsky has all the mental precision and the extreme intellectuality of his race. Owing to this fact, and to the fact that he is very ambitious and is endowed with a ruthless physical energy and a personal bravery which one does not always expect to find in a Jew, I am doubtful if he will always remain a Bolshevik or will always submit to the deeper but less agile Lenin. Trotsky in many respects resembles Lloyd George, whose brilliant work in the Ministry of Munitions is quite on a par with Trotsky's brilliant work in the Ministry of War; and I should not be surprised if, like Lloyd George, he becomes practically a dictator. He could do so to-morrow if he liked, for he has the Red Army with him, and his War Office in Moscow is a veritable fortress bristling with machine-guns and filled with troops who are devoted to him. It must be remembered that Trotsky never, until 1917, saw eye to eye with Lenin, who, in 1915, publicly

denounced the present head of the Red Army, on more than one occasion, as a "*bourgeois* opportunist." In the 2nd Social-Democrat Congress, held in 1903, Trotsky opposed Lenin.

If to be a great orator is to have an extraordinary command of language and gesture, a facility for finding the right word and coining the perfect phrase, a capacity for leading up to a climax where the audience holds its breath and you could hear a pin drop, before the roar of delirious applause greets the last master touch, then Trotsky is a great orator. His style is necessarily that of Limehouse; and he certainly finds plenty of material in the capitalist system and in the diplomacy of Europe for the last two years.

In one of the many speeches he delivered in Ekaterinburg he quoted a despatch of Lord Curzon in which that statesman considered the question of acknowledging for a moment not the Government but the existence of the Bolsheviki, in case the latter mended their manners and respected the ordinary conventions of international intercourse.

"Ordinary conventions of international intercourse!" quoth Trotsky, with grim and deliberate emphasis; and then he went on to describe the troubled period of July, 1918, when the foreign Ambassadors left Moscow. He said that Mr. Lockhart, then our Consul-General in Moscow, used often to call on him at that time, and to show great sympathy with him in his difficulties, but that Captain Sadul of the French Mission warned him that Lockhart was all this time engaged, with his English and French colleagues, in a plot to murder Lenin and Trotsky, to blow up railway bridges which would have meant the starvation of thousands in Petrograd, to dynamite trains full of soldiers, and to bribe many leaders and soldiers of the Red Army to desert. "And these are the people," thundered Trotsky in conclusion, "who complain that *we* do not observe all the niceties of diplomatic etiquette!"

I quote this merely as an example of his style of oratory, which is logical and adroit, crushing and vitriolic.

I might add that, untrue as the charge against Mr. Lockhart and his colleagues clearly is, a mass of documents which were afterwards submitted to me by the Extraordinary Commission in Moscow seemed to prove that, at various times

during the last two years, and especially on the occasion of Yudenich's advance on Petrograd, the most widespread anti-Bolshevik plots were hatched in Russia with the object of bringing about insurrections and a *coup d'état*, and that the means which some of the plotters proposed to make use of were as abhorrent to English ideas as are the means employed at present, according to the Sinn Feiners, by the English military command in Ireland. But I am sure that if there is any truth at all in these accusations, which is doubtful, the authors of these murderous plans drew them up in both cases without the knowledge of any responsible British authorities. The more desperate of the Russian Reactionaries are as little scrupulous about their choice of means as are the Bolsheviks themselves, and others may have been cognizant of conspiracies whereof we knew nothing.

People so tired of oratory as we are in England can form no conception of the delight which the Siberian workmen take in hearing plain speaking about capitalists and kings. They themselves are often political convicts or the sons of political convicts, and for hundreds of years their country has been a vast prison where the word "freedom" dare not be breathed. Nor dare be breathed now, but the yokel does not notice this in his delight at hearing the volcanic eloquence of the Bolshevik War Lord, and at seeing the red-capped ex-convict, who makes kings tremble on their thrones, standing with his foot on the neck of a dead Tsardom and his hand pointing to the Revolutionary banner overhead. I think that perhaps Trotsky's eloquence gained in effectiveness from being addressed to a simple people extremely fond of the spoken word, and unaccustomed to such oratorical fireworks as Trotsky treated them to; and perhaps the phrases which told most were those which they understood least. In all lands, indeed, it is not the clear and perfectly understood battle-cry, but the large, vague, beautiful, suggestive phrase which unlooses the most formidable tempests in the hearts of men. The cries which have stirred up the most furious storms in Red Russia are as little understood by the bulk of those who utter them as Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwock" is understood by a child of ten.

Before I leave Trotsky, I might say something about the great object of his visit to Ekaterinburg, the launching of the grandiose Labour Army scheme. He launched this scheme in the speech I have already referred to, and he made it look splendid, the realization of the dreams of mankind for a thousand years. Soldiers would fight no more. They would work for the common good. Owing to their discipline and their union, they could quickly carry out vast enterprises that ordinary workmen would take a long time to accomplish. But Trotsky had overlooked insuperable practical difficulties that any Clydeside fitter could have pointed out to him. How could all the soldiers work together if some were spinners and others boiler-makers and others belonged to various other trades? It was proposed that the skilled workmen should be sent each to the particular factory where his services would be most useful, and that the unskilled labourers should work all together at shovelling snow and carting timber. Trotsky would not have this, for it would mean that the skilled mechanics, who are the backbone of the Red Army and of Bolshevism, would be separated from the other soldiers, with the result that the Army would cease to exist as a potential striking force. And he must, he said, have a potential striking force, for the Japanese might advance from the east or the English from the south-west. He therefore kept all the troops together, with the result that, while all the Ural factories were idle, the men who could have set them going were carting snow and wood. And they carted snow and wood badly. One of the overseers of the work, a man who had had great experience in the employment of labour, told me that it took twenty soldiers to perform a task which three men accustomed to the work could do better. And, knowing something of how the military life unsuits one for civilian work, I could quite believe him. Besides, my own eyes showed me that the whole thing was a farce.

Then, again, Trotsky had declared that the man who deserted from the Red Labour Army would be treated as a soldier who deserted in front of the enemy. Did this mean that he was to be shot? The "professional

Unions," as they are called, also had a word to say about the War Office monopolizing skilled mechanics who had "done their bit," and consequently ceased to be soldiers. To cut a long story short the whole great project came in the end to nothing, and when I talked to Trotsky about it in the Kremlin a month afterwards he was rather snappy. By that time he had given way to the "professional Unions," had been frightened by the dissatisfaction of Labour, and disturbed by the criticisms of his grand idea, which came from England. As far as I know, the whole Labour Army scheme has now melted away as completely as last winter's Siberian snows, amid which it was hatched. All the waste of time and energy which it involved might have been prevented if Russia had had a free Parliament and a free Press to discuss it before it had been put into operation. Trotsky tried to make an army that could both fight and work, but only succeeded in making for a time an army that could do neither.

I have borne frank testimony in this chapter to Trotsky's energy, brilliancy, and tirelessness, but now I hear the rasping voice of the blunt, matter-of-fact, English critic saying: "This is all very well. You have given Trotsky a fine character. But what right has he to be autocratic? What right has he to go rushing about like a Tsar, arresting workmen without a warrant, suppressing democratic newspapers which criticize him, and treating people generally as if they were children?"

My reply is: "No right at all." He belongs to a party which numbers, according to his own account, 604,000 men, but which has, by a *coup d'état*, imposed its rule on 125,000,000 Russians. It is carrying out a policy which 124,396,000 Russians do not believe in and which most foreign Socialists dislike, and which more than 99 per cent. of the Russian workmen detest.

That policy has not even the name of Karl Marx to recommend it, for it is not Marxism. It is the invention of the two men, Lenin and Trotsky, who issue on their own authority pontifical decrees on the most difficult questions of government and of social science, and enforce these decrees by violence and terror. The entire Bolshevik party

is fast becoming a bureaucracy. Only 70,000 of that party are genuine workmen; 36,000 are party officials; 12,000 are Trade Union and Co-operative officials; 162,000 are military officials and soldiers; 318,000 are officials of the State and the Municipalities; 6,000 are shopmen. In Moscow there are 100,000 workmen and 230,000 Bolshevik officials, male and female.

The irony of Trotsky's position is that he leads now the same kind of life which he denounced others for leading. He is a superman who spends his day signing papers, presiding over committees, receiving deputations, just as Stolypin did. His boy is getting a far better education than any of the common herd, and will, if he and Bolshevism survive, stand a much better chance of obtaining a good Governmental position when he comes of age than any of the Bolshevik rank and file, or even than any scion of our great governing families in this country. Like all the other Commissars, Trotsky is surrounded by swarms of toadies and place-hunters for whom he must find "jobs" irrespective of their merit. I found the keenest competition for the spoils of office going on among the smaller fry, and several candidates confessed to me that nobody but friends and relations of the great Commissars stand any chance. About a year ago Sverdlov, a powerful Commissar, died; and his brother succeeded him simply because he was his brother: a thing which could hardly happen in English Cabinet politics.

No, Trotsky has no right at all to dragoon the people of Russia; and he realizes perfectly well his lack of credentials and the extreme instability of his position.



## CHAPTER XII

### IN A "PROPAGANDA HALL"

I SPENT two weeks in Ekaterinburg, and passed most of that time in the town, where I saw many interesting things and met some terrible men, the most terrible of them all being Yurovsky, the murderer of the Tsar. I had lived in Ekaterinburg previously, first in 1918 when the Czechs were there, and again in 1919 when Kolchak's troops and a battalion of the Hampshire Regiment occupied it. On both these occasions it had been a very busy place, the railway station being blocked with staff trains, most of which might be briefly described as *bordels ambulants*; the station platform, a local Piccadilly in more senses than one, being a favourite place of assignation, and always crowded with officers and ladies; the streets filled with soldiers, horses, cabs, and the swift motor-cars of great, brass Generals; the shops and eating-houses full of food; the market-place crowded with farmers' carts. In fact it was, like any other army base, a town of good cheer, overcrowding, khaki, "hustle," horses, and sin. Boisterous, imperfect, with streaks of religion and bursts of philanthropy, it was, with all its faults, human.

The Ekaterinburg that met my eyes on February 19, 1920, was completely changed. Trying to describe that change to myself in one word I meant to say "Bolshevism," but found myself saying "Puritanism." For between the two there are the most astonishing resemblances, perhaps because extremes meet, perhaps because the one is as pre-Christian as the other is post-Christian. I know that it ought not to be so, and that Lenin should be seated on a heap of skulls quaffing human blood, while Trotsky should be engaged nightly in bacchanalian revels, but, as a matter of fact, Lenin leads as austere a life as Oliver Cromwell, while Trotsky is as busy as Lloyd George.

The platform of Ekaterinburg station was no longer a promenade, and only people who had business to do came there. It was sometimes deserted altogether save for three grim and watchful figures thirty paces apart—Trotsky's janissaries. One great hall in the station had been turned into a typhus hospital, and another great hall into a "Propaganda Point." The station walls were covered with advertisements, not advertisements of the nerve tablet and hair tonic order, but Bolshevik propaganda advertisements. At each end of the platform was painted a huge notice ordering, in imperative language, all O.C.'s to bring their men without fail to the "Propaganda Point," and to apply there for newspapers and "literature," which would be given free. It was like the notices one would expect to find in a Cromwellian Army, directing the pious soldiers to some quiet tent wherein the hungry soul might find manna in the outpourings of Master Zerubbabel the chaplain or Grace-be-here the holy corporal.

These "Propaganda Points" exist in every station along the Siberian line and are very remarkable institutions. The largest hall in the station building is always selected and is generally presided over by a C 3 Red soldier who has a tiny office apart. Seated there on a collection of Bolshevik newspapers, he wrestles in his spare moments with the voluminous volumes of Karl Marx, points out to the young the damnable and pernicious heresies of Kautsky, Axelrod, Martov, and Haase, or engages in edifying conversation about Lenin's latest encyclical with wise, ungodly old Communists from the local Soviet.

Over the entrance of the Ekaterinburg hall there was painted in large letters the text, "If any man will not work, neither let him eat," while inside one saw on every wall the well-known appeal of Karl Marx—"Workers of the world unite! You have a world to gain and only your chains to lose."

The pictures and cartoons with which the whole interior was covered from floor to ceiling might be divided into several groups: (1) Those praising the Red Army and calculated to foster a military spirit; (2) those condemning capitalists, priests, and militarists; (3) those flattering the

workman and promising him the overlordship of the world; (4) those exciting anger against foreign countries, particularly France and England. In none of the Propaganda matter was there the faintest evidence of a belief in Christianity, in Judaism, or in the supernatural. All these flaring cries might be summarized in the phrase, "There is no God but Communism, and Lenin is the prophet of Communism." There were appeals to the railway workmen not to go on strike, but to remember that by striking they would inflict a deadly blow on democracy, and that, though their present discomforts were great, there was a good time coming. There were charts showing the parts of machine-guns and the way to make bombs, and these were generally accompanied by explanatory letterpress and by appeals to the workmen to drill and arm and study the mechanism of their rifles, so that no power on earth could disarm them and force them back again into the old servitude. Side by side with these were charts explaining the construction of the latest agricultural machinery, and exhorting the peasantry to make themselves proficient agriculturists. There were numerous exhortations to study and many denunciations of ignorance and illiteracy as unpardonable crimes which would only lead to the capitalist yoke being again fastened on the necks of the workers. The attacks on religion consisted of caricatures showing monks and priests making money out of holy relics and squandering that money privately on revels and debauchery. The priest was sometimes represented as a huge leering spider weaving his web around the *muzhik* and his wife and children; and these anti-clerical cartoons were generally accompanied by satirical doggerel from the pen of the Soviet's principal poet, a Moscow Communist who writes a great deal of coarse, satirical verse under the pen-name of Ivan Bedny (Poor John). All this anti-clerical propaganda would obtain the unqualified approval of the English Protestant Alliance, and I would suggest that these two great institutions should get into touch with one another for an exchange of "literature." Many huge coloured cartoons were devoted to Kolchak and Denikin, and were mostly vulgar but effective. One represented Kolchak seated in an intoxicated

condition—as a matter of fact, the “Supreme Ruler” drank rather too much at times—on an imperial throne with savage-looking Generals and fat business-men bowing in front of him and a corpulent, bibulous priest blessing him. In the background stood French and British officers. Another represented red-faced, bull-necked, brutal-looking officers of Denikin shooting women and children in the corner of a ruined cottage. The workman was always represented as young, brawny, triumphant, in shirt sleeves, neck and arms bare, a hammer in his hand, and the world at his feet. The triumph of the Red Army was exhibited, not without a rough art, in a series of cartoons, some showing the Red soldiers winding through frozen steppes, others showing them charging madly through the smoke of battle. And always over their bayonets the Revolutionary banner waved. In one double picture a number of bloated capitalists, smirking priests, and purple-nosed Generals were shown in the act of binding the Russian workman in chains. In the other section of the same picture the workman was seen breaking the chains, scattering his would-be masters right and left, and jumping on the stomach of the fattest of them. The “elimination” of the landlord was represented in a cartoon containing many sections. In the early sections we had the old days of serfdom, the slave-owning landlord being represented as lording it over his human cattle whip in hand, while an unctuous and subservient priest stood by apparently lost in admiration at the greatness of the squire; in the latter sections we had the landlord running for his life accompanied by the parish priest; and, finally, a prosperous and contented peasantry owning everything in sight, and provided with a palatial and well-attended Communist school, but with no public-house or church in the village.

Some posters dealt with British rule in India—soldiers shooting down Hindoos or blowing them from the mouths of cannon, Sahibs in solar topees ploughing with natives instead of with horses. The Bolshevik expert on Irish affairs is a Comrade Kerzhentsev, who was in Ireland during the Easter rebellion, and has published a number of pamphlets on “The Irish Revolution” and the Irish question

generally. Being a very able journalist and head of the Rosta (Russian Socialist Telegraph Agency), he makes great capital out of the present state of things in Ireland, though he realizes that the Orange workman of Belfast is far nearer to him in many ways than the Catholic peasant of Tipperary. He has probably inspired also some Irish posters, in one of which Ireland is pointed out as a striking example of the cruelty of capitalism. The main facts of the famine of '48 are given, that there was food enough in the country to feed all the common people, but that so much of it was exported to pay the rent that, owing to hunger and emigration, the population fell from eight millions to four millions.

An almost religious tone was lent to this Propaganda Hall by the pictures relating to Karl Marx. One showed a sinking ship labelled "Capitalism" in which all humanity was perishing, save only one man, representing presumably Bolshevik Russia, who was standing on a raft in the form of an open book, across which is written the name "Karl Marx." If one substituted "Holy Bible," this picture would be quite suitable for hanging up in Mr. John Kensit's "Protestant Book Shop" in St. Paul's Churchyard. There were also numerous busts of Karl Marx, looking very patriarchal in long hair and beard, but the most prominent object was generally the Red Star of Bolshevism, a huge construction of red glass with a light inside fixed high up near the ceiling, and throwing a baleful light on the great crowd always gathered underneath in the evenings.

These crowds attended the service of song and "instruction" which went on daily from about 5 o'clock to midnight, and which was certainly very popular, for I never found it possible to get anything but standing room. The best local singers and musicians, as well as good musicians from Russia, performed gratis on a platform at the end of the room where there was a piano and an orchestra. Not only were revolutionary songs given; classical songs by Pushkin and Lermontov were also heard, as well as music by Chaikovsky and other great composers. Recitations, lectures on art, education, Socialism, typhus, and every conceivable subject lent variety to the entertainment.

Meanwhile "Comrades" who wanted to write letters or to study at leisure had the use of a reading-room in which notepaper, envelopes, and some books of reference were available.

The chief characteristics of Bolshevik Propaganda are dogmatic affirmation and constant repetition, but the Faith of Lenin seems to be spread even more by contagion than by reasoning. A peculiar sort of intoxication seems to be produced in Communist crowds. A peculiar sort of atmosphere seems to be created; and, in that atmosphere, I have heard reasonable and educated Englishmen and Americans use in Moscow language so "advanced" that it almost seemed due to demoniacal possession. I have sometimes wondered, indeed, if there be not a demon whose special function it is to inflame crowds of men to perpetrate atrocities that no individual in the mob would be so inhuman as to commit. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." May not the devil be able to say that also? It seems to be fairly well established that when a group of men collect together with the object of holding intercourse with disembodied intelligences they sometimes attain their object. Why should not a conclave of master-criminals, whose hands are against all humanity, evoke in like manner, by the mere fact of their coming together, Angels of Darkness, Enemies of Man?

The streets of Red Ekaterinburg were very much quieter than the streets of White Ekaterinburg had been, and nearly everybody wore civilian dress. For the first time in five years I found myself in a town where one could walk about for hours without catching a glimpse of khaki.

I have already alluded to the decorations in honour of Trotsky's arrival. These took the form of Red flags *passim*, of many triumphal arches made of wood covered with red paper and with boughs of pine-trees, of many pictures of Lenin and Trotsky on the walls, and of all sorts of other pictures, as well as a vast amount of bunting, evergreens, transparencies, and coloured cloth on all the house-fronts. The entablature of the arch near the station was covered on each side with a huge picture twenty feet square. The painting on one side represented Lenin and Trotsky going

in a trolley along a railway track from an old burning town to a new and prosperous-looking city, the former being capitalist, the latter proletarian civilization. On the other side Lenin was represented as driving a railway engine labelled "Progress," which three foreign officers, English, French, and American, were vainly trying to stop by the offer of a bag of gold to the engine-driver, who was apparently determined, nevertheless, to run them down. There were similar representations on all the other arches and everywhere, in gigantic letters, the war-cry of Bolshevism shouted at one—"Workers of the world, unite!" If anything ever becomes true by constant repetition, this union must soon take place, for it is a stereotyped heading on every issue of every newspaper; it appears in about a dozen languages on some of the Bolshevik paper money; it appears on all the propaganda matter and all the Government stationery, and the good Bolshevik mother pastes it over her child's cradle as an American mother pastes "God Bless our Home" or as a Catholic mother puts a picture of the Madonna or the Angel Guardian.

A Bolshevik official once said to me, "What an amount of Propaganda we shall be able to do when we get enough paper!" But what an amount of Propaganda will not they do when they get peace and begin to develop the inexhaustible natural wealth of their country! Electric lights will then print in gigantic letters on the midnight sky and electric signs will flash from the house-tops, not the stirring message "Try Tapley's Tea" or "Drink Macpherson's Whisky," but "Workers of the world, unite! You have a world to gain, and only your chains to lose!" Probably they will then use in Communist and anti-Christian Propaganda throughout Moscow and Petrograd as much electric power as is now employed on commercial Propaganda in New York, Chicago, Paris, and London put together.

The former British Consulate, which had been converted into a Bolshevik Government office, had broken out into a perfect eruption of decorations with a picture of Lenin, framed in a wreath of evergreens, as the centre of the scheme. The French Consulate next door, which had been converted into a Court of Justice, was similarly decorated

and carried a picture of Trotsky. Peter the Great had been knocked off his pedestal in the centre of the town, and his place had been taken by a large marble head of Karl Marx. Catherine the Great had also been deposed. In front of the Cathedral was a great pyramidal erection of wood covered with red cloth bearing the inscription "To Labour." It was adorned with brass plaques representing half-naked figures toiling in mines, forges, and factories, these figures being so well designed that I suspect the plaques must have been taken from some museum. The house where the Tsar was murdered was converted into an office of the Political Department, and bore a great painting representing the Red Army charging through smoke and snow. The square in front of this house had been called "Resurrection Place," but that name has now been changed to "The Square of National Vengeance," which shows that the Bolsheviki, who ought to know, entertain none of those doubts about the murder of the Tsar which some people in this country still harbour. The street that runs north and south of that square is called Karl Liebknecht Street, and the other principal street, in which the municipal theatre is situated, is called Lenin Street. All the remaining streets and squares have also had their names changed, being now called after prominent revolutionists of the past or the present (even Stenka Razin, the Jack Cade of Russia, being commemorated), or after gifted though impecunious writers like Mamontov-Sibiriak.

Formerly there were few Government institutions and no clubs in Ekaterinburg, but now there are whole streets consisting of nothing else. Instead of promoting business, however, this multiplication of Government offices has killed it. The dead hand of Government control has stifled every kind of enterprise. An engineer employed by the Soviet told me that on one occasion, in order to put through a matter of urgent public interest, he had had to visit five different institutions, including a Government office dealing with railway work, a Government office dealing with Ural industries, and a "professional union" of industrial workers. The British public had some experience during the war of how a Government runs work that had previously



been left to private enterprise; but the muddle in Russia is a thousand times greater, and causes extreme exasperation even among the marvellously patient and long-suffering people of that country, who have been accustomed for centuries to the most exaggerated forms of officialism.

One man told me that if he lost a button off his trousers he would have first of all to get a permit from the "house Committee." Then he would have to bring that permit to a Commissar. Then he would have to go to a Government department which would give him an order on a Government store. Then he would wait all day in a queue outside that Government store only to find, when his turn came, that it had given out all its buttons, and that he would have to go to a similar store at the other end of the town and wait all day in a queue there. A button in the offertory is consequently a source of unmitigated joy to the impecunious Russian and Polish priests, for a whole plateful of the paper money and postage stamps which are given liberally by the Faithful would not buy as much as a packet of cigarettes. I tried to get twopennyworth of Epsom salts, a very cheap and common drug in the Urals, but I found that I had first to go to so many widely separated departments that I gave up the attempt in despair, and asked a friendly *feldsher* to get it for me. The *feldsher* told me, however, that it was no use his trying owing to the complexity of the process; and I had consequently to go without. These are not exceptional cases; they are the rule; and I often told the Bolsheviks that if a Government like that were established in England, the workers themselves or their wives would sweep it away in twenty-four hours.

There is even a strong tendency for these establishments to increase and multiply in the way we were familiar with in England during the war, and there are even *liaison* establishments to enable different departments to keep in touch with one another.

The number of "professional unions" is also very great. There are unions of railway mechanics, metal-workers, fitters and joiners, plumbers, and many others, but they are different to our trade unions inasmuch as they are absolutely powerless.

Most of the houses which are not occupied by Government departments and professional unions are used as clubs for workmen (who do not work) and as assembly halls for "the League of Communist Youth," a widely spread organization which the Soviet Government encourages very much, as it is extremely anxious to get hold of the rising generation in order to make them grow up with Bolshevik ideas. One sometimes sees workmen lolling back at their ease in the deep armchairs of a palatial club, while a famished *bourgeois* member who formerly dozed contentedly on one of those armchairs stands outside in the snow, and flattens his nose against the cold window-pane in an attempt to see what is going on inside, and perhaps in the hope of deriving some stimulus from the sight of the savoury viands. And if he wanders about the streets too late at night, he risks being run over by the "workmen" returning in their swift sleighs from the theatre where they get free seats, while he cannot get a seat at all. The largest Club in town is for private soldiers, and is called the Trotsky Club. It has a large picture of Trotsky hung outside, and Colonels, Generals, and Staff officers are, I presume, ineligible for membership, and must amuse themselves as best they can at home or in less sumptuous resorts. Others are named after less known Bolshevik leaders. Some children's homes, hospitals, and public reading-rooms are called after Mrs. Lenin and other women Bolsheviks.

As soon as the Reds entered the town everything became the property of the State, and one of the Bolshevik officials gave me a humorous description of how he had walked into one of the best houses on Karl Marx Street and "bagged" it, afterwards getting a large consignment of extra furniture by applying to the Quarters Committee, which had sent him an alabaster table, a Japanese silk screen, a fine sofa, and a miscellaneous collection of expensive chairs. He had no idea where most of this loot had come from, but suspected that some of it had been taken from the villa of a wealthy German runaway called Schmidt.

I made the acquaintance of the principal Bolshevik in the town, a big, bearded man of about thirty who looked like

an Australian squatter, but who had been a foreman in one of the Ural factories. He had, of course, been in jail repeatedly for his revolutionary activity under the Tsar's Government; had lost three of his fingers in the factory, and had got eightpence compensation for each finger; and had been for two years fighting against Kolchak. In America or Canada he would have started as a successful pioneer and would have ended as a self-made trust magnate worth hundreds of thousands of pounds, for he knew all about minerals and was full of enterprise. The rule of Nicholas the Second had converted him, however, into an embittered and dangerous revolutionary; and the equally pernicious rule of Tsar Lenin has now made him an incurable politician, and deprived the Ural industries for ever of his services. He was selected by the Gubernia Soviet to represent them in the All-Russia Soviet, and I afterwards met him in Moscow.

This man, whom I shall call Ivanov, showed me all over Ekaterinburg, and I was amused at the way he did it. "There," he said, "is the restaurant where Kolchak's officers used to drink; it is now a school. . . . There is a villa which an old General presented to the Tsar; it is now an orphanage. A wealthy mineowner lived here; it is now a barrack"; and so on. Entering the fine Museum we saw portraits of local celebrities. "Most of these will be pulled down," he said. "See that man with the sword? He was a sugar merchant who bribed right and left in Court circles, until he got a civil rank corresponding to the rank of a General in the Army. He prepared a great reception for Alexander the Second when he came here; hence all those decorations. That man with the spectacles? Oh, he was a great geologist, and a poor man from start to finish. *His* portrait will remain."

Inside the Museum he found an opportunity at every step to show his hatred of the old order of things which he had helped to crush. There was, in a glass case, an exhibit of ancient Court dresses side by side with an exhibit of peasant costumes. He sneered at the Court dresses, and pointed out the comparative superiority of the peasant costumes from the point of view of comfort as well as from the

artistic standpoint. In another glass case was a collection of objects dating from the days of the serfs, and placed there not by the Bolsheviki, but in the time of the Empire. Among them were iron fetters, a heavy iron collar for the neck, a whip for scourging the slaves, and various instruments of torture. His face grew black as he looked at them. "Can you wonder," said he, "that the Ural miners have no great affection for the capitalists and the Tsars? The first miners in this town lived like brute beasts and worked in chains."

If there are many Russians like him, I do not think that the Imperial Government will ever come back. Such Russians support Bolshevism, however, not because they like it, but because they think it is a stronger bulwark against imperialism than Kerensky's Government was. They say that if the S.R. Government had lasted a year the Tsar would have been back again on his throne before the end of 1918. By what they put up with now from Lenin, one can measure their detestation of Nicholas.

At a meeting of the Provincial Soviet, over which Ivanov presided, I sat in my peasant's sheepskin coat at the reporters' table, and tried, with a success so great as to be almost disquieting, to look as plebeian as possible. There were some things that I liked about that meeting, though I would not go so far as to recommend their adoption by our own Legislature. In the first place, the speeches were short, never over ten minutes; and in the second place, musical selections by a brass band were played between the speeches. Of the selections played, one was the *Marseillaise*, one the *Internationale*, and one the lugubrious funeral march which the Russian revolutionists have played since 1905 in honour of their comrades who have fallen in the fight against the Tsardom.

The election of delegates which took place at this meeting was a farce. To put the case in a nutshell, the ruling clique named its candidates and nobody dared to oppose them for fear of becoming a marked man. All Bolshevik elections, from those for the village Soviet all the way up to those for the All-Russia Soviet, are of this character; and the election of non-Bolsheviki is rendered almost

impossible, not only on account of this practice, but also because no candidate who is not a Communist can get any printing done, can address any meetings, can write in any newspaper, or can get a pass on the railway.

Owing to the nationalization of all private libraries, there are some thirteen or fourteen new libraries in the town, but all are for the Proletariat, and a mere *bourgeois* like myself had no more chance of being admitted to one of them than a chimney-sweep would have of being admitted in his work-a-day costume to the Athenæum Club. Consequently I had to wander about the streets, and soon I began to get quite annoyed with the glowing eulogies of Communism which glared at me in print and in paint from every wall and every arch of triumph. They seemed like Bolshevism itself, to consist only of great promises and no performance. The town contained, it is true, many Communist eating-houses, but they were only for Communists. And a disagreeable, workhouse appearance they all had. Exactly the same in every respect save that some bore the sign "Soviet Government Eating-house: For Adults"; and others, the sign "Soviet Government Eating-house: For Children." The children, by the way, are well fed, both in Ekaterinburg and in Moscow, but, as I shall hereafter explain, this is all part of a large and cunning scheme to get them from their mothers and make them regard themselves as children of the State, and not bound by ties of peculiar affection to any man and woman.

All the adult Bolsheviki who have been in these feeding-places detest them cordially, and say that the food is very bad. I did manage to get into one myself, though I had nothing to eat in it; and the impression it made on me was painful. This nationalization of restaurants would never be tolerated by the British working-man, and I am not sure that even the British tramp would like it. To feed in one of these places makes one feel like a pig being fed by a master. Government employees in all countries tend to be superior and uncivil; having been a Government employee myself for the last five years, I can therefore understand that tendency. To buy a postage stamp from a Government employee is hard enough at times for the buyer, but to have to take,

not buy, your *hors d'œuvre* and soup, entrée, joint, sweets, and coffee from such a superior person is the last word in discomfort. Such a system would brutalize any people. The brutal would become more brutal, and the rest would hunger-strike and die of starvation. The abolition of charity might be a good thing, though I am afraid that the poor will be always with us, but the abolition of hospitality and of the home is inhuman.

Repelled by the blank, barrack-like exterior of the Soviet feeding-troughs, I tried to buy food elsewhere, but I found it utterly impossible. Again and again was I attracted by painted and temptingly illustrated signs dating from Tsarist times, and telling that bread and butter, sugar and coffee, honey and milk and jam, were to be had within. I always found a locked and empty shop, broken glass in the windows, broken bottles on the floor, an inch thick of dust on the counter, and a spider's cobweb on the rusty scales. When this had happened the hundredth time I permanently lost all faith in Bolshevism as a sane Governmental system. But being now ravenously hungry I determined to try sundry humble little places, where I had formerly bought excellent bread and matchless Siberian butter. Not one of them was open, nor had any of them apparently been open for six months. All trade stopped when the Reds entered the town, just as all trade stopped in Pompeii when it was overwhelmed by Vesuvius.

It was not that the Red Army had eaten up everything, or that all the food had been sent to European Russia, for no food had been sent across the Urals since the Bolsheviks came to Ekaterinburg, which lies close to one of the richest agricultural districts in the world; and, though there had been a White Army in the town when I was there last, the civilians could nevertheless get plenty of food. The reason for this stoppage lies in the Socialist theory which insists that the State should feed everybody, and that there should be no private restaurants, no shops, and no middle class at all. This kills all private enterprise as surely as a tree is killed by the cutting away of its roots. I had to go into this question very carefully, and the results of my investigations are embodied in a

series of reports I made to the British Government and which would be too long to give in a book of this nature, so that I shall confine myself here to one instance of how the Communist theory works. When I was in Ekaterinburg there were thousands of tons of frozen fish at Tobolsk, but they were left to rot there because the Government had no time to distribute them, and because no individual would do so. An enterprising man would, under any other sort of régime, have hired sleighs, brought these fish in forty-eight hours to Ekaterinburg, and sold them there to the advantage of the population and of himself. But, under Bolshevism, no private individual would do so, as (1) he would be stopped by the local Extraordinary Commission at Tobolsk; (2) if he overcame difficulty No. 1, his fish would be seized by the local Extraordinary Commission at Ekaterinburg; (3) if he overcame difficulties 1 and 2, the money he got for the fish would be taken from him and he would be imprisoned for "speculation." This triple barrier prevented anything being done by private initiative, and consequently the fish all rotted. The same objections applied to trade in grain and every other kind of foodstuffs. There existed, it is true, a Government Provisioning Department, but I know that in Moscow it is extremely corrupt, so that I assume that it is even more corrupt in Ekaterinburg. Farmers will not grow grain if it is to be handed over to Government Departments which do not pay them for it, and which persecute and imprison them if they make any complaint. The peasants will not rebel, but the passive resistance of this great dark mass of over one hundred millions causes profound disquiet to the Soviet Government, much greater disquiet than that caused by all the Allies put together. The *muzhik* is the sphinx of the situation. Lenin storms at him and calls him a capitalist. Trotsky takes his sons and makes Red soldiers of them, and sends them back to the villages to preach the Gospel of Karl Marx. The sphinx smiles and says nothing, but Lenin likes neither that smile nor that silence.

There was a market-place in Ekaterinburg to which some peasants came with their carts, but they only sold cran-

berries, a very limited number of potatoes and carrots, and occasionally some butter and cheese. The crowds round their carts were so great that I was never able to buy anything, but, finally, after a week's search, I discovered a little shop, where one could buy butter if one entered a secret door and traversed dark passages and observed the precautions generally taken by thirsty people in America. As I was having quite enough adventure as it was, I did not investigate this mystery, but turned my attention to a sort of booth about the size of a newspaper kiosk, where a frightened old man sold butter and cheese, which he weighed with the exquisite care of a jeweller weighing diamonds. As his whole stock did not consist of more than six pounds of butter and twelve pounds of cheese per day, and as he charged R.1,200 for a pound of butter, he could hardly be said to go on the rule of "small profits, quick returns." In Moscow, I might add, butter fetched R.3,000 a pound.

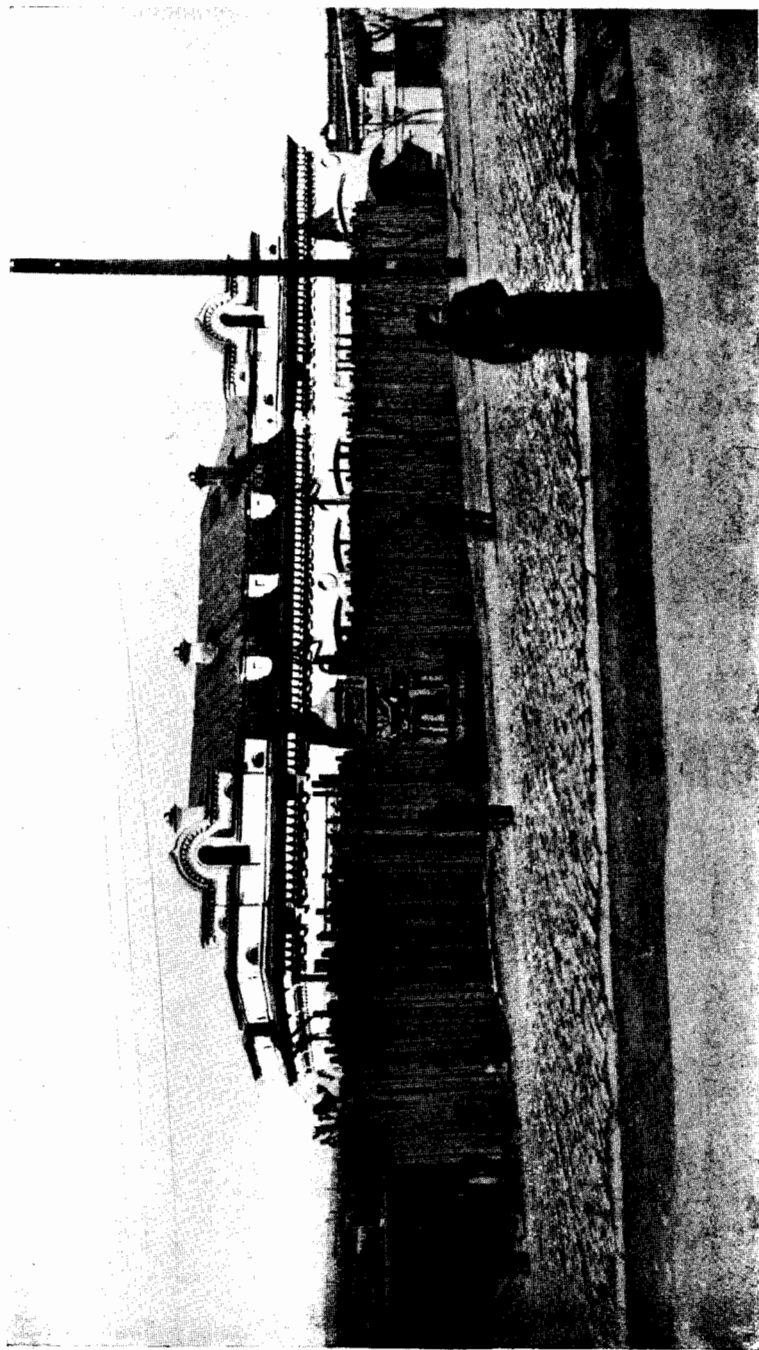


## CHAPTER XIII

### THE MURDER OF THE TSAR

No structural changes have been made in the house which the Tsar occupied in Ekaterinburg, and which is now used as the office of the Bolshevik Political Department. The Red flag flies over it as it did when the Emperor lived there; but high up on the front of it, near the roof, is a new feature in the shape of a huge painting representing in lurid colours the defeat of Kolchak by the Red Army, which is depicted as charging across a frozen steppe through battle-smoke and falling snow.

Built by a merchant called Ippatiev and consequently known as Ippatievsky Dom, it is a substantial-looking edifice of brick and white plaster of a rococo style of architecture, and is situated halfway up the long street leading from the railway station to the town and not far from the British Consulate. East of it is a large open space called "Ascension Square," but now renamed by the Bolsheviks "the Square of National Vengeance." On the east side of this square stands the Church of the Ascension. On the west side and fifteen yards off the street is Ippatievsky House, from which the ground slopes sharply downwards to a lake six hundred yards distant. Owing to this steep fall of the ground, the roadway is flush with the second-storey windows, and a steep bank five feet in height falls from the road to the level on which the house is built. On top of this bank and near the south-east corner of the house there still stands a little wayside shrine of St. Nicholas, surmounted by a gilt dome and a cross. Owing to its peculiar position on a slope, the house has a sunken appearance and seems to have only one storey. The main entrance leads to the first-floor, and the room on the ground-floor, wherein the Tsar was killed, served as a cellar. Mr. Ippatiev was allowed by the Bolsheviks to live in the other ground-floor



IPPATIEVSKY DOM, EKATERINBURG.

rooms, but preferred to live in the country, and was absent from the house when the murder took place. On the south side of the house is a short street, Ascension Lane, leading down to the lake; and on the other side of this street from Ippatievsky, is another house which was used as a barrack for the thirty-six soldiers who guarded the Tsar. In this house there also lived one civilian Bolshevik who, in accordance with the loose military system that prevailed among the Reds at this time, commanded those soldiers with the title of Sergeant of the Guard, though not himself in the Red Army, which he joined, however, after the murders. His name was Paul Metvietev, and he had formerly been a workman in the Sysertsk factory. Metvietev, a repulsive individual with whom I afterwards travelled from Ekaterinburg to Moscow, was the right-hand man of Yurovsky, a shopkeeper and civilian, who was "commandant" of Ippatievsky House and, as such, responsible for the "safety" of the Tsar, whom he ultimately murdered with his own hand. The evidence against him is overwhelming and conclusive. Not only did all the trustworthy testimony collected by Admiral Kolchak's Government indicate that it was Yurovsky personally who had fired the fatal shot, but all the Bolsheviks whom I consulted on the subject, while I was living last March in Red Ekaterinburg, unanimously pointed him out to me as the Tsar's murderer. I had, by the way, a strange and terrible interview with him which I will describe later.

On the north side of Ippatievsky House a large wooden gate leads into an ample courtyard. The front door, which faced east, was known by the Bolsheviks as Post No. 1, and was always guarded by some of the Lett soldiers who lived in the house. Post No. 2, on the balcony, was also guarded by Letts, but how verses in Russian came to be written on the wall there I cannot explain except on the supposition that Russian soldiers went there also. Posts Nos. 3 and 4 were guarded only by Russian soldiers from the house opposite. Post No. 3 opened into the yard, and was the door through which the dead bodies were carried into the yard after the massacre. Post No. 4 was the name given to the side entrance from Ascension Lane.

A steep flight of steps descended into the cellar from the dining-room. The cellar is now used as a Bolsheviki club, and the entrance to it is from Post No. 4. Over this entrance is a large Bolsheviki signboard giving the name of the club, but containing no reference to the murder, which the Reds seem anxious to forget. The only reference to it in Ekaterinburg is contained in the name of the square, which I have already given.

When the ex-Emperor was first brought to Ekaterinburg, Ippatievsky House was surrounded by the Bolsheviki with a high wooden fence to prevent the inmates from looking out and outsiders from looking in. All that the Tsar could see from his window was the cross on the lofty dome of the church opposite, and, beyond that, the sky—a symbolism that probably did not escape that superstitious mind, ever on the lookout for omens. But, to such as cared to look for them, there were plenty of omens. From the roof of the church, for example, several Bolsheviki machine-guns were permanently pointed at the Tsar's place of internment. The little stone shrine in the street outside the bedroom of the Emperor was dedicated to his patron Saint, St. Nicholas. Lastly, the name of the house, Ippatievsky, was the same as the name of the monastery where the boyars had elected Michael, the first of the Romanovs, to rule over Muscovy.

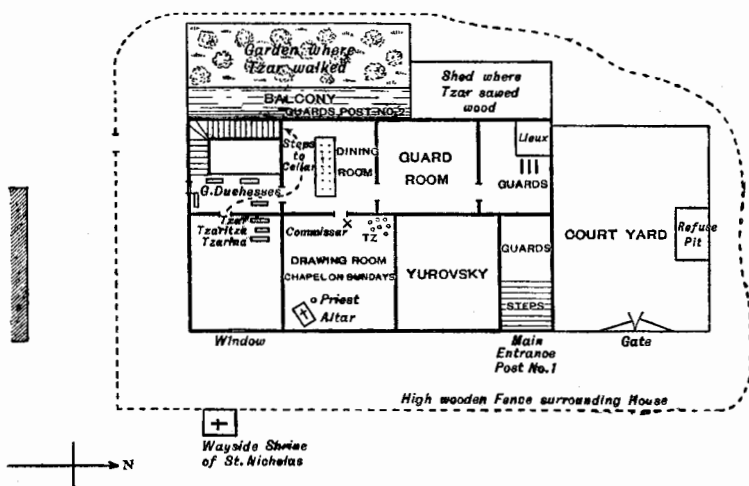
The house looked fairly large from the outside, but really contained, on the first-floor at least, only four or five living-rooms reached by six stone steps at the end of the vestibule. There was a balcony at the back of the house, but the Imperial party were not allowed to use it. Several soldiers were always there, and it is probably to them that we owe the lascivious verses and pornographic drawings which still adorn the door and walls of the balcony. A large room near the entrance was occupied by Yurovsky, who slept there every night, though he had elsewhere in the town a shop and a house of his own, where he lived with his mother, his wife, one son and one daughter. A small room at the south-east corner was assigned to the Tsar, the Tsarina, and the Tsarevich, who slept in three beds, which were as many as the room could hold. The one door in this room led into the bedroom occupied by the four Grand

# THE IMPERIAL QUARTERS

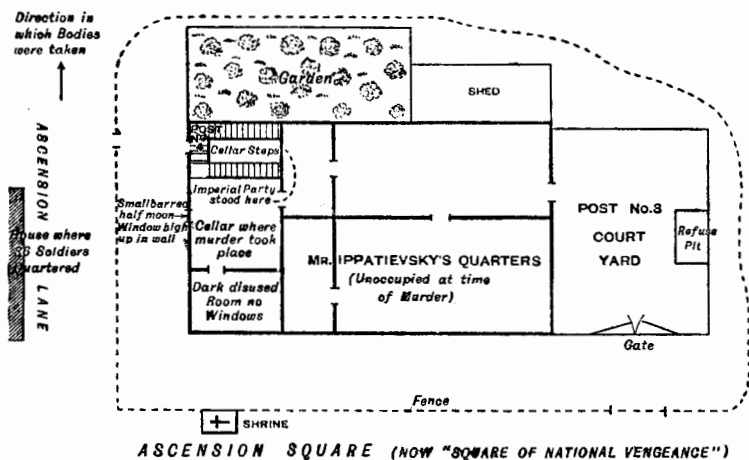
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First Floor

Plan A.



Ground Floor



## ROUGH PLAN OF IPPATIEVSKY HOUSE, EKATERINBURG

*Drawn from Memory*

Duchesses and their maid Demedova. Dr. Botkin, the medical attendant of the Imperial party, and the other members of Nicholas the Second's sadly diminished suite,

slept with the guards in another room, so that the Tsar and his family had only two small rooms to themselves, and the use, in the daytime, of the dining-room and of a drawing-room which was used on Sundays as a chapel. Guards, all of them Lettish, slept in the room next to the dining-room, and no Russian slept in the house, Yurovsky being a Jew. The thirty-six soldiers who were quartered in the house on the other side of Ascension Lane were not forbidden to enter Ippatievsky Dom, and they frequently passed through the dining-room; while the Commissars and the Lettish soldiers were in the habit of entering the bedrooms of the Imperial Family as often as they liked, day or night. This privilege they exercised very frequently during the week before the murder, so that the prisoners got very little sleep. The girls were sometimes heard to scream at night, but there is no evidence that any assault was ever committed on them, and the most likely explanation of their screams is that they woke up at night frightened at finding somebody in their bedroom. The back room, which was used as a dining-room by the prisoners, was always rather dark, as it opened on to a covered balcony.

The only records left by the Imperial prisoners were childish scribblings on the bare, whitewashed wall of the Tsar's room; a mass of hair, mostly cut from the heads of the Grand Duchesses, and found in a stove; and, in the cellar underneath, tragic evidences of the final butchery. The Crown Prince had written with a pencil the date of his arrival in Ekaterinburg, and, in another place, the name "Jesus Christ" thrice repeated, once in French and twice in Russian. In another place he wrote in French the words *Les Anges Gardiens*; and, near the door, he had marked the height of his parents with a pencilled line on the wall, adding after one line the words "Maman," and after the other "Papa." Papa seemed, however, from this record to be much higher than he really was, but probably he insisted in fun on wearing a high Cossack busby. As is well known, he was extremely fond of children, and, in the days of his greatness, called down on himself the reproaches of the Grand Dukes for the familiarities he always encouraged their infant children to take with him—familiarities which

sometimes went so far as their riding on his back while he went around the nursery on all fours. The only references to the Tsar's daughters were contained in the lascivious doggerel spoken of above, doggerel illustrated by a number of rude and extremely indecent sketches drawn in pencil on the walls.

Mr. Thomas, who was with the British Consul, Mr. Preston, in Ekaterinburg when the tragedy occurred, told me that as the Czechs drew nearer in July, the alarm of the Bolsheviks grew greater, though they tried to reassure the people by printing proclamations to the effect that they would never leave the town, and by shooting men who remarked casually in the street and elsewhere that they probably would leave, since they were certainly sending away trainload after trainload of gold and platinum.

Meanwhile the very air around the sunken house became heavy with a sense of impending tragedy. According to all the neighbours this feeling reached its climax on the night of July 16, 1918, the night of the murder. Although all traffic on the streets was not stopped till midnight, the obvious nervousness of the sentries and the fact that machine-guns were being placed all around the villa as well as on the roof and on the balcony drove most people indoors, where they cowered till daybreak. All of them heard firing inside the house during the night, and some of them heard screams as well. Late in the evening, as Mr. Thomas passed Ippatievsky on the way to his Consulate, which is only three hundred yards further on, he was ordered by a sentry, who seemed to be labouring under some strong emotion, to walk on the other side of the street, and was nearly shot because he did not obey the order quickly enough. This excitement of the guard was in strong contrast to the absence of all military precautions at the same point next day and to the deserted appearance of the house, but the reason for this change was soon apparent.

The Reds had been in the habit, at this crisis in their history, of keeping up their courage by holding Communist Revival meetings, as I may call them, in the great municipal theatre; and on July 19 Goloshokin, the leading Commissar of the town, was the principal speaker. He did not conceal

the gravity of the situation. "The Czechs," he said, "those hirelings of French and British capitalists, are close at hand. The old Tsarist Generals are with them; the Cossacks also are coming; and they all think that they will get back their Tsar again. But they never shall."

He pronounced these last words slowly and solemnly, and then paused for a moment while a deep hush fell on the audience. Mastering himself by a strong effort, the orator then shouted out at the top of his voice those terrible and historic words: "We shot him last night." This was the first public and official announcement of the fact that Nicholas Romanov, the last Tsar of Russia, had ceased to exist, but its effect on his audience was so different from what Goloshokin had expected that he quickly added: "And we have sent his wife and family to a place of safety." Taking their cue from Goloshokin many of the Bolsheviks then circulated reports of the Tsar and all his family having been sent to Perm, with the result that many simple people were deceived, and that, until quite recently, some of the relatives of the Tsar refused to believe that he was dead.

The following account of how the Emperor and his family were murdered is put together from the evidence of various eyewitnesses seen at different places in Ekaterinburg and from Russian official reports never before published. These accounts all corroborate one another on the main facts, though they differ sometimes on minor details, so that the description here given may be taken as, on the whole, authentic.

At about 1 o'clock on the night of the murder Yurovsky entered the bedroom of the Tsar, awoke him, and told him that the Czechs were expected in the town before daybreak. "Get up," he said, "and dress. It would be better for you and your family to come down into the cellar, as there may be fighting in the streets, and stray bullets may come through these windows. I will wake up the others and wait for you all outside."

Yurovsky then added in a lower tone something that could not be distinctly heard by those in the dining-room. The Tsar, who seemed to have immediately jumped out of bed, spoke disjointedly to Yurovsky and to the Empress as he dressed himself. Most of what he said was inaudible, but



he was understood to say "Are they so near?" and then to thank Yurovsky twice, with the great courtesy which he had shown all his life to everybody around him. He afterwards asked if all were going below and if, in that case, it would not be better for them to bring their personal belongings with them. To this Yurovsky answered "No. It is not necessary, but you can take your cushions if you like. It would be just as well." What those cushions contained I shall tell afterwards. The story is one that would be incredible were not this an epoch when nothing is incredible.

Yurovsky, who seemed to have become unusually nervous and polite, then brought to the Grand Duchesses the same message as he had brought to the Tsar, and, having done so, waited in the dining-room where several Lettish soldiers were standing with rifles and fixed bayonets. Along with them were five civilian Bolsheviki, Commissar Goloshokin, Commissar Mrachkovsky, Paul Metvietev, "the Sergeant of the Guard," and two others whose names I cannot ascertain. They had come, at the request of Yurovsky, to carry out the execution themselves in case the soldiers failed them; but only Yurovsky, Mrachkovsky, and Metvietev went into the cellar, the others remaining in the dining-room until word was brought them that the deed was done. Though Mrachkovsky was present at the butchery he does not seem to have taken part in it.

After leaving the Grand Duchesses' room Yurovsky took up a position apart from the others, who were grouped in the centre of the chamber. He stood close to the door leading into the Imperial apartments, his head bent, listening in deep silence and with trembling limbs; and when I visited him on March 8, I was horrified to see him standing waiting for me at the end of a dark passage in exactly the same attitude. All the rest of the party were equally silent, and the scene was lighted up by several stable-lanterns, some of them held in the shaky hands of the soldiers, some of them resting on the dining-room table. Seeing that something unusual was afoot, several Russian soldiers of the outer guard had drifted into the room and stood looking on, open-mouthed.

Finally all the party, eleven in number, came out into the dining-room, fully dressed, the Tsar coming first. With him came his wife, son, and four daughters, Dr. Botkin, Demedova the maid, one male servant, and lastly the cook. The former Autocrat of All the Russias was so thin and haggard as to be hardly recognizable. I have this description from the priest who said Mass in the house a few days before. He wore a khaki-coloured military blouse belted at the waist, loose blue cavalry breeches, soft leather high boots, but no cap. The Bolsheviks had deprived him some time before of his epaulettes and his George's Cross, so that he had no badges of military rank. A few days previously the Empress had cut his hair owing to the verminous condition of the house and to the great difficulty the prisoners experienced in getting water for washing purposes, and he himself had trimmed his beard so that it was shorter when he died than it had been for twenty years. All the others had had their hair cut close for the same reason, the Tsarevich having had his locks shorn off by his mother, and the Grand Duchesses having cut off each other's luxuriant tresses. As it was wellnigh impossible to get the rooms cleaned out, all this hair was collected into a bundle and stuffed into a disused stove, where it was afterwards found by the Whites, and identified by former servants of the Imperial Family.

The Tsarina held her little crippled son by the hand, and the Grand Duchess Tatiana carried in her arms her little Pekingese dog. The Tsarevich had also had a dog, but, as if it had some foreknowledge of the impending tragedy, it had deserted the house on the previous day and was lost for some time. An officer of General Knox's Mission afterwards found it and brought it to England with him.

All the party then descended into the cellar in silence, one of the Grand Duchesses carrying her little brother in her arms as, owing to his lameness, he could not easily descend the steps, the Grand Duchess Tatiana raising her dress with her left hand as she stretched one foot cautiously downwards in the darkness while holding in her right arm the little dog, which affectionately licked her face.

It was a pathetic procession mainly composed of helpless

women and of a crippled invalid child of fourteen years, the most helpless of them all. There were two women among them and four gentle girls, who, if they had not been born in the purple, would nevertheless have been celebrated for their great personal beauty even in that land of beautiful women. There was Tatiana, twenty-one years of age, a talented and kindly young woman already destined by Court gossips to be the future Queen of England; Olga, twenty-three; Maria, nineteen; and Anastasia, seventeen; the last named fragile and lovely as an opening flower, serene with the divine innocence of childhood and radiant with the bright charm of girlhood and health. It was a procession such as always makes any man, no matter how humble, sincerely desirous of assisting in some way, of carrying something, of rendering some little unselfish service, a tribute of the male sex to that sex which God has made delicate, soft, and dependent. One of the soldiers held up his lantern to light the way down those dark and narrow stairs which led to death, but none of them made any other attempt to help their victims. The Tsar gave his arm to his wife, the last time he was ever to perform that act of courtesy. Even in that appalling descent to darkness and doom, the Imperial party automatically preserved the order of precedence which long practice had made a second nature with them, and which even the inconveniences of prison life had never caused them to neglect. The Emperor and his wife went first, arm-in-arm, dignified but trembling, as if to meet a greater Monarch than themselves. Then came the little Tsarevich, carried by Olga, his eldest sister. Then Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia; then the others in due order of their respective rank, with the humble, faithful cook bringing up the rear. The cook, the manservant, and the maid Demedova would have been spared if they had not exhibited in all their conversations with the Commissars an unalterable fidelity to the doomed family which they had served so long. Let us honour the memory of these poor people, though, except in the case of Demedova, their names are unknown to us.

After the cook came the representatives of a different world, headed by Yurovsky, gloomy and preoccupied, his

brow dark with thoughts of murder, his right hand in his coat-pocket, grasping a revolver. He was followed by the Russian soldiers whom I have already referred to, and whose numbers had now been increased by the arrival of several others who were on guard at Post No. 4 and had come to the door of the cellar to see what was going on, little expecting, however, to find that their special duty at Ippatievsky had come to an end and they would never again be called upon to mount sentry over their imprisoned Gosudar. These soldiers saw through the open door everything that afterwards took place, and it is the testimony of several, especially Anatoly Yakimov and Steokin, that I am principally using. They corroborate one another in the most remarkable manner, though they sometimes differ on minor details, and their evidence is confirmed by that of other witnesses.

The Tsar and his party clustered together at one end of this underground chamber, Tatiana still holding the little Pekingese in her arms, while the Lett soldiers, as well as Yurovsky, Mrachkovsky, and Metvietev, remained in deep silence at the other end, the soldiers looking with strained and expectant eyes, now at Yurovsky, now at the Tsar. Mrachkovsky and Metvietev drew their revolvers; and it must have been at once evident to the victims that something terrible was going to happen. It is a significant fact that there were only two Russians present amongst the executioners, and that there was not a single Russian soldier.

The cellar is about seventeen feet long by fourteen feet wide, and has one little half-moon window, protected by iron bars, high up in its outer wall. It had previously been frequented by the soldiers, some of whom had drawn on the walls indecent pictures of the Empress and Rasputin, with the names written underneath so that there should be no mistake. These rude and filthy drawings were the last pictures of any kind that the unfortunate Tsarina saw. In her simple bedroom at Tsarskoe Selo, where she had probably expected to die at a green old age, her dying gaze would have been fixed on mediæval Madonnas painted by the very greatest of the Italian masters. She never

imagined that her death-chamber would be ornamented with caricatures so hideous and so obscene that they might have been the handiwork of degraded and impure demons from the lowest pit. If she was imprudent, she has suffered for her imprudence. But perhaps it was better for her soul that she died as she did instead of in her bedroom at Tsarskoe Selo, surrounded by the highest ecclesiastics and the holiest relics in Russia, for, according to the testimony, not only of the priest who frequently said Mass in the house, but even of a hostile witness whom I shall quote hereafter, she led a very exemplary and religious life during her imprisonment. May Christ have mercy on her even as in His lifetime He had mercy always on the afflicted.

The Empress took one swift, frightened look at those dreadful pictures, then at the revolvers in front of her and the pitiless countenances behind them, and her eyes dilated with horror. Crossing herself, she bent her head and covered her face with her hands. I may add that those pornographic representations were still to be seen on that wall when I reached Ekaterinburg two months later.

Meanwhile Yurovsky, whose face had become white, had drawn forth a paper and begun to read it by the light of a lantern which one of the soldiers held up. He grasped the paper in his left hand and clutched a revolver in his right. The reading did not take more than three seconds, for the document was very brief. It was simply an order of the Soviet Republic to execute "Nicholas Romanov, the Bloody, and all his family." Yurovsky shouted it out rather than read it, and, while doing so, he hardly glanced at the paper, the contents of which he knew by heart, for he and Goloshokin had written it only an hour before.

Crossing herself again the Empress now fell on her knees, and was followed by all the rest of the doomed party, who also crossed themselves devoutly. The Emperor alone remained standing, and while Yurovsky was still shouting out the final words, "By Order of the Soviet of Workmen's, Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies," he stepped quickly in front of his wife and children as if to shield them with his own body, at the same time saying something which was drowned by the sound of Yurovsky's voice re-echoing dread-

fully in that small chamber, then pointing to his little ones, crouching together, terror-stricken, on their knees, but his words were quite inaudible. Yurovsky who, as I know from personal experience, is extremely quick in his mental processes, saw at once what that gesture meant, and instantly determined to prevent all possibility of Nicholas Romanov making such a moving, human appeal for his young girls and his little crippled boy as might touch even the hard hearts of the executioners and lead to the lives of those innocents being spared. His right hand rose like a flash: he fired; and at the same instant the Emperor reeled and fell, shot through the brain.

The Tsar had undoubtedly meant to beg that his wife and children might not be butchered; but now, as ever, he was too late; and, though the noble gesture came, the words had not time to follow. The grisly shape that had dogged him all his life rushed on him like a thunderbolt, and the greatest historical tragedy that Europe has seen since the execution of Louis the Sixteenth was consummated. The extraordinary prophecy made by the Tsarevich Alexis as he was being tortured to death by his own father, Peter the Great, was fulfilled. The last of the Tsars had died in his own blood.

This fatal shot was the signal for the others to begin shooting, which they did, wildly; and in five minutes from the time Yurovsky had begun reading the death-warrant, all of the Imperial party save the Grand Duchess Tatiana and the maid Demedova had been killed. Tatiana, who was wounded, had fainted and lay on the floor like one dead, her little dog standing on top of her and barking furiously at the soldiers until one of them killed it.

After having shot the Tsar, the chief assassin began discharging his revolver into the terrified group huddled close together in front of him with faces expressing the extremity of human fear. Only he and God know whether or not he also killed the little crippled Tsarevich and some of his young sisters; and it was this dreadful secret, I think, which weighed on Yurovsky when I met him. Those who watched at the door could not tell exactly what happened in this brief space of time. Their minds were

paralyzed by the swiftness and the appalling greatness of the tragedy. The lamps crashed on the ground, where some of them were broken and some of them flared up, filling the cellar with a yellow, smoky glare. The close, murky atmosphere was lit by flashes of firearms and, in the confined space, the noise of the explosions was deafening. From the descriptions given by eyewitnesses, the soldiers were mad with rage and drunk with blood. They not only bayoneted bodies already dead, but beat in the skulls of corpses with the butt-ends of their rifles. One of the soldiers, who was there as a spectator, says that "the murder was so cruel that it was difficult to watch it, and I felt so faint that I had to go out many times into the open air to recover." Even by the evening of the next day, July 17, Yakimov, one of those soldier-spectators who came to say good-bye to his brother-in-law, Gregory Agafonov, before running away from Ekaterinburg for ever, was described by Agafonov as follows: "He was haggard, the pupils of his eyes were dilated, and, while he talked to me, his lower lip trembled. It was easy to see that during the night he had been through a terrible experience. On the same day he went to the railway station and has never been heard of since." Yakimov's last words were, "The killing was done by Yurovsky, some Lett soldiers, and the Sergeant of the Guard."

Until she fell dead herself the maid Demedova used her cushion vigorously to beat up the muzzles of the rifles which were pointed at the children, so that half a dozen bullets struck the upper part of the wall or ricocheted from one wall to another, making marks which are still visible. One of these stray bullets took off the tips of three fingers of Yurovsky's left hand, and the Commissar then moved towards the threshold, where one of the Russian soldiers standing there bound up the wounds with a dirty handkerchief. Yurovsky seemed on the point of mounting the cellar steps to have his hand better attended to upstairs, when suddenly there was a shriek from the beautiful Grand Duchess Tatiana who, having suddenly regained consciousness, sat up, shouting "Mother! Mother!" Two or three of the soldiers instantly jumped towards her, and, while

some of them ran their bayonets through her, others beat in her head with the butts of their rifles. There were seventeen deep dents made in the cellar floor by bayonets. There are sixteen bullet holes in the wall, and sixteen bullets were extracted from them by the Whites after they arrived. Some of those bullets must have gone through the bodies of the victims before embedding themselves in the plaster. Several, which had penetrated for a short distance into the floor, must have passed through the corpses as they lay on the ground. Nearly all the bullets struck the wall low down, showing that they had been fired at people who were on their knees.

The bodies were then wrapped in white blankets taken from the beds of the murdered, carried upstairs, brought out through the kitchen door, and thrown into a military motor-lorry which was waiting in the courtyard. Four other lorries were waiting outside the yard gate. It may seem strange that the corpses were not carried out through Post No. 4 and that the lorries were not made to wait in Ascension Lane, but the explanation is that the entrance through the barricade in Ascension Lane was too narrow to permit of a lorry passing through it, and that Yurovsky was morbidly afraid of prying eyes from the surrounding houses. The lorry chosen to bring Nicholas the Second on his last Imperial progress was in charge of a workman from the Zlokazov Factory called Lukhanov, and his assistant was Leonidas Labashev. Of Lukhanov and his lorry I have a strange story to tell later. Even the blood-stained cushions and the body of the Pekingese dog were also brought in deference to Yurovsky's frenzied appeals not to leave the slightest clue behind. Ever since the murder had been decided on, the Commandant of Ippatievsky had felt very much the appalling isolation of his position and the supreme magnitude of the crime which he was commissioned to perpetrate. Hence, despite his extreme hatred of the Tsar on racial and political grounds, he had insisted on all the members of the Ekaterinburg Soviet signing the death-warrant, and this document he afterwards brought with him to Moscow and showed to Lenin, who, however, only laughed at it—one of his hard



and mirthless laughs. Yurovsky felt very keenly that he belonged to a race which is held in detestation by the great majority of Russians, and that he was surrounded by a hundred million people who would regard the killing of the Autocrat as not only murder but also sacrilege. Consequently, even before the crime was committed, he had declared that he would do what murderers always manifest an overpowering desire to do, though they seldom succeed in their object even when they have blast-furnaces and pools of molten lead at their disposal—that he would destroy the corpses so completely that not the slightest trace of them would remain any more than if they had never existed. He therefore mapped out beforehand a scheme by means of which this could, he thought, be done. On July 16 he asked Gorbunov, the Commissar for Supplies to the Front, to send that night to Ippatievsky five motor-lorries and two barrels of petrol: and Gorbunov, who knew what was afoot, immediately passed on the order to Peter Alexeivich Lenov, who had charge of the Bolshevik garage. Yurovsky provided at his own expense a large quantity of sulphuric acid, for a purpose which will be revealed hereafter. Despite all these precautions, however, Yurovsky, like nearly every other murderer who has tried to annihilate absolutely the mangled bodies of his victims, did not quite succeed, for, as will be seen, portions of the corpses were afterwards found.

While the lorry was being filled with its ghastly freight, Yurovsky was getting his injured hand attended to. Being badly shaken by his wound and by the events of the night, he was pressed to remain behind as the work had been done, but he refused, declaring fiercely that he must see with his own eyes that the bodies were utterly destroyed and that not a shred of evidence against him was left in existence. With many oaths and blasphemies which shocked even his companions and were rendered still more terrible by the feebleness of his step and the death-like pallor of his face, he said that he would trust this work to no one, that he would see it carried out himself. The determination to annihilate those mute witnesses of his crime had grown into a mania, an almost insane obsession.

As to the exact time at which the motor-lorries left Ippatievsky there is a difference of opinion among the witnesses. Some say 6 o'clock on the morning of July 17, but Victor Boivoud, a Russian of French descent who lived near Ippatievsky House, says that, on hearing the sound of firing evidently proceeding from the cellar of Ippatievsky, he went out into his own courtyard to listen and, twenty minutes later, heard the gate of the Ippatievsky courtyard open and a motor-lorry come out. He was evidently afraid to go outside his own courtyard, however, and had to trust entirely to his ears, so that what he heard was probably Lukhanov's lorry entering the yard. Most likely the ghastly funeral procession of the dead Emperor left Ippatievsky at about 3 o'clock on the morning of July 17; and it is certain that Yurovsky, Goloshokin, Lovatnykh, Partin, and Kostusov, as well as a number of soldiers, probably Letts, took part in this last terrible parade, travelling in four motor-lorries. It was broad daylight when they set out, but there was not a soul in the street save the sentries, who had had strict orders to keep every civilian indoors and to shoot anyone who disobeyed. Needless to say, no rifle rose to the salute as the Imperial cortège rushed past, though, four years earlier, the death of the Tsar would have caused millions of soldiers all over Russia to march in funeral processions with arms reversed and muffled drums. The Red Guards, who were touched by the tragedy, but whose names it would be inadvisable to give, remained indoors, pallid and trembling, till the noise of the motor-lorries had died away in the distance.

One is led to surmise whether if, on his way down into the cellar, the Tsar had appealed to those Russian soldiers on behalf of his family, they might not have saved at least some of the children. But Nicholas the Second had evidently no very strong suspicion of the fate to which he was being conducted. He had made a special study of premonitions and spiritualistic phenomena, and is even said to have once spoken to the ghost of his own grandfather, summoned by unlawful incantations to that tragic room in the Winter Palace where that grandfather had died, shattered by a bomb, summoned in order that he might unveil for his

grandson the secrets of the future. But now, when a warning from the other world should have come, if ever, no warning came. And perhaps it was as well, for an appeal on the Tsar's part could have done no good either way. It would probably have failed, for the minds of the Russian soldiers have been poisoned and brutalized. The men who could cover the walls of the balcony with filthy drawings in the hope that the Tsar's innocent children might see them, and who could carry on indecent conversations in the dining-room while the family were at table, could never be touched by any appeal to their manhood. Had it not failed, a fate worse than death would have overtaken those innocents. It was a mercy of God that they all died together.

I might here add that the horrors which I have just described are tame in comparison with the other horrors which have taken place all over Russia for the last two years, and of which thousands of humble families have been the innocent victims. The murder of a poor workman or shopkeeper with his wife and children excites my sympathy more than the murder of an Emperor and his family, for the mighty enjoy great privileges if they are, on the other hand, exposed to great perils, whereas the poor, who have few privileges, should be safe at least from butchery; but as descriptions of wholesale massacre are not read by the public, and as the murder of Royalty excites special attention, I confine myself to this one typical case. The personal drama of the individual has always a greater appeal for the public than massed horrors. The people of England now understand thoroughly the awful realities of war, but I do not think they all realize the no less awful realities of Revolution.

Yurovsky and Goloshokin returned to Ekaterinburg three days afterwards, both of them in such a state of extreme exhaustion that they had to go at once to bed. Yurovsky was apparently satisfied that he had left not a trace of the bodies in existence, but he has since developed an intense fear of vengeance. This dread of future vengeance, mixed perhaps with feelings of remorse and horror, and the dreadful consciousness of having committed a crime which has placed

him apart for ever from all other men, has been the predominant trait in his character ever since. . . . "The Man who murdered the Tsar." . . . Till the day of his death he will hear these words whispered as he passes people in the street. In restaurants and public places men and women will make way for him with a readiness savouring of panic. Children will look at him speechless and round-eyed, and he will think of that gentle crippled boy of fourteen weltering in blood on the cellar floor. Innocent girls will shudder when they meet his eye, and he will see the limp, white corpses of those four young women who never did him any harm. He can never talk again to any human being who knows him without reading in their eye an unspoken query. I feel sure of this, for I have talked to him myself.

I was surprised to notice that even the Bolsheviks shun him. They have given him a good house, money, food, everything he asks for; but they avoid him and do not like even to speak about him. The Government post they have given him is the Inspectorship of Life Insurance for all Ekaterinburg Province. The house they have given him, one of the best houses in Ekaterinburg, is situated in Karl Liebknecht Street, opposite the former British Consulate, and only three hundred paces from the house in which the Tsar was butchered. Yurovsky can see that ghastly mansion every time he looks out of his drawing-room window. What superstitious or supernatural force is it that so often drags murderers back to the scene of their crime though, like Yurovsky, they loathe the sight of it? He could have had a post anywhere in Russia that he wanted, but unseen hands brought him back to Ekaterinburg and placed him in a house nearly opposite Ippatievsky. He told me that, after leaving Ekaterinburg, he fled at once to Moscow. He stopped for a time in Perm, but, afraid that the Czechs would follow him thither, he continued his journey. Not quite sure of how he would be received in Moscow he hastened to see Lenin in order to render him an account of his stewardship. What a dreadful picture for an historical painter would be the meeting of these two men! Russian artists need no longer go back to the reign of Ivan the

Terrible for scenes of unimaginable horror, nor need they leave the sinister precincts of the Kremlin. The gorgeous barbaric costumes of the Tsars and the boyars are not there now, but the well-worn tweed coats of the Red leaders cover hearts as inhuman as any that ever beat beneath the embroidered *kaftans* of savage Muscovite Princes. One can imagine Comrade Lenin's bare room in the Kremlin and the Red Dictator seated on his stiff, wooden chair before a desk piled with papers, while he listens with emotionless unconcern and an occasional hard laugh to the tale poured forth in a husky whisper by the travel-stained and hysterical Tsaricide. The Red Leader is little interested, as he has already got the main facts from Trotsky. He is thinking most of the time of more pressing matters, and is twice interrupted by the tinkle of the telephone on his desk. But he does notice with rather contemptuous amusement that his visitor seems to have lost his nerve and is making excuses where none are necessary. They make a strange pair: Yurovsky leaning forward, eager, red-eyed, and dishevelled; Lenin with his comfortable stoutness; bald head; broad plebeian face; eyes far apart, and a trick of occasionally closing one of them and bringing the other to bear like a gimlet on Yurovsky; appearance, dress, and mannerisms of a small but respectable shop-keeper; habit of tilting himself comfortably back in his chair, crossing one leg over the other, and inserting his thumbs in the arm-holes of his waistcoat while giving vent at the same time to that terrible mirthless laugh. He reassures Comrade Yurovsky as a benignant father-confessor might reassure a scrupulous but unblemished penitent; and, as he is rather bored by the interview, gets up at last, shakes the hand of the murderer warmly and shows him out at the door. Then, when the door closes, Lenin stands close to it for a fraction of a second and—chuckles.

Yurovsky afterwards fled to Petrograd, he told me, but he seems to have thought that Petrograd was hardly safe enough for him as he again returned to Moscow. Haunted with the curse of murder, he has been almost constantly in motion since the night of the butchery. "Does he hear voices?" I seriously asked myself, after having seen him.

“Is he driven from place to place by the ghosts of his victims? and is it they who have dragged him hither?”

He could, if he had liked, have lived in Moscow unknown and under another name, but he must needs come back to a little provincial town where everybody knows him. And yet he hates to be pointed out, and has tried to change his appearance by shaving off his beard.

No record has been found to show that the Bolshevik Government ordered the murder, which was probably due to Yurovsky's fear that the Tsar might be rescued by the Czecho-Slovaks. The last telegram received from Moscow warned Goloshokin and Yurovsky that they would answer for the Tsar's safety with their heads, and both Goloshokin and Yurovsky probably took this to mean that, if the Tsar were rescued, they two would be put to death. Then came the rapid advance of the Czechs. The whole Bolshevik organization seemed to be breaking up; communication with Moscow was interrupted; and the Ekaterinburg Soviet was in a state of great anxiety about their prisoner. If they took him away by railway, the train might be captured. In that case the Tsar would perhaps be released, and, whether his keepers were captured or not, their lives were in any case forfeit. Long conferences took place in the Soviet's headquarters at the Amerikansky Dom, not that there was ever any opposition to the proposal that the Tsar should be put to death, but because there still remained the questions of (1) Where the deed was to be done? (2) How many of the Imperial Family were to be slaughtered? (3) Could the Red Russian soldiers be trusted to do the killing?

When the death-warrant was at last signed and Yurovsky entrusted with the task of executing it, he had a moment of horrible fear. He felt that he was going to do a deed that would shock one hundred millions of Russians, and all the civilized world outside—he, a Jew, not sure of being supported even by the Bolshevik Government, which might feel itself obliged to disown him and punish him. And, to crown all, that Government was actually tottering: it might already have disappeared.

On March 8, 1920, Yurovsky had, like everybody else in

Ekaterinburg, decorated his house in honour of Trotsky's visit, but all the decorations had been blown off save a single circle of melancholy evergreen, looking exactly like a funeral wreath, which hung from the knocker of his front door. Even before I had learned who lived in it I felt that there was something uncanny about that house, for the door on which that ominous sign hung was never opened, and at night the windows remained darkened, only a feeble, mysterious glimmer like that of a nightlight coming from the far interior. I was not surprised when a prominent Bolshevik said to me, "Do you know who lives there? Yurovsky, the man who murdered the Tsar." "Then I must visit him," said I, remembering that I was supposed to be a journalist. "Won't you come with me?" But he very hastily declined, with a shudder. I asked others to come, but they one and all declined. "No, I would rather not go," said one. "It was a horrible business," said another, "I wouldn't like to go near that man." They would accompany me anywhere else I liked, and they went to great pains to show me everything, but the mere mention of Yurovsky's name always caused a shadow to pass across the faces of the most bloodthirsty of them, and they suddenly remembered that they had an engagement elsewhere. Sergiev, the hunchbacked war correspondent of the *Pravda*, and one of the most callous and thoroughgoing Bolsheviks in Russia, came all the way from Moscow to see Yurovsky, but, when he arrived in Ekaterinburg and was pointed out that shunned and darkened house, he decided to send his assistant to photograph the regicide, and never once crossed the threshold himself. I saw the photographer in question, and found him to be a young ex-sailor of the Black Sea Fleet, a poor photographer but fanatical Bolshevik, who must have taken part in the brutal murder of many naval officers, and who regarded Yurovsky as the greatest hero in history. But even he refused to go again, and he warned me that the regicide would not speak to anyone of his crime, and had not spoken about it even to him. Everyone else who knew Yurovsky told me the same thing. He has a morbid dislike of saying anything on the subject; a look of horror crosses his face

when any reference is made to it, and he becomes perfectly silent.

In these circumstances I became rather reluctant to go myself, but I felt that, as a chronicler, however humble, of the tragic history of man, it was my duty to enter that dreadful abode and probe that terrible secret. Was it right, however, that I, an officer of the King, should grasp that hand? But, after all, it would not be as a British officer that I would visit him; and handshaking meant nothing. If I refused to shake hands with murder, to what Bolshevik could I give my hand? Nevertheless I found it hard to go. On at least a dozen occasions I set out from my railway carriage with the determination to get it over, but the sight of that gloomy building so unnerved me that I always walked on past it. Having gone past, I frequently summoned up sufficient courage to retrace my steps, but those blank windows and that closed door with the sinister funeral wreath hanging on it were always too much for me, and I continued my walk as far as the railway station. Finally one day, knowing that my stay in Ekaterinburg was rapidly drawing to a close, I approached the front door and knocked loudly. The sound reverberated through the house, but though I waited a long time and knocked again, nobody came to open the door. Then I came into the yard on the side of the house, and, finding a side-door ajar, I walked boldly in and found myself in a thoroughly up-to-date kitchen provided with a cooking-range on which a large variety of dishes were fizzling and boiling. I had only just time to glance at these unaccustomed delicacies, when a middle-aged woman who was standing in the middle of the floor with a spoon in her hand and who was apparently the cook, asked me in a tone of deep suspicion what I wanted. I replied cheerfully that I wanted to see Comrade Yurovsky, whereupon she shuffled into a passage opening off the kitchen, glancing distrustfully at me over her shoulder as she disappeared. She was away some minutes, and meanwhile I noted mechanically the culinary preparations that were going on and the appetizing odours that filled the air. Among the dishes that were being cooked were *borsh*, *kasha*, chicken, vegetables, pudding, and coffee. Not even



Trotsky's table was as good as Yurovsky's—yet nobody visited Yurovsky. When the cook returned, her face was still gloomier than before, as if she had been communing with some dark spirit, and she asked me sharply and with the air of one repeating a lesson learnt by heart, what precisely was the business I wanted to discuss with her master, what was my name, and who had sent me. Recollecting an official report on his Life Insurance activity for the previous six months that Yurovsky had published in that morning's paper, I replied that I was a journalist, and wanted to speak to Comrade Yurovsky on the subject of Life Insurance. I also mentioned the name of a powerful Bolshevik who had given me permission to say that he had sent me, though he had refused emphatically to accompany me, and I gave of course my own name and some particulars about myself. When she left again, still unmollified and once more glancing at me darkly over her shoulder, it suddenly struck me that the regicide might see something sarcastic in a request to be consulted about life insurance; but luckily it was not so, for the cook soon returned with a smiling face and invited me to "Step this way, please."

It was with a certain amount of constriction at the heart that I accepted her invitation and walked into the passage, making no noise in my Canadian felt boots. The passage was long and dark, but led into a well-lighted room, and in that room at the end of the passage a man stood, slightly bent and in a suspicious and expectant attitude. From his photographs I at once saw that it was Yurovsky the Tsaricide. It was in exactly the same attitude that this terrible monster had waited outside the door of the Tsar's bedroom at 1 o'clock on the night of July 16-17, 1918.

I knew beforehand that he was a man of about forty years of age, but as I came nearer I saw that he was greyish, wrinkled, and looking much older. He wore an unkempt, greyish moustache and uncombed brown hair, and from the stubble on his cheeks and chin I saw that he had not shaved for some days. His face was sallow, square, and not distinctively Jewish; and his eyes were greenish in hue and filled with a hard look of distrust. He wore a great black fur coat or *shuba* which reached to the ground, and under-

neath it were pyjamas, for apparently he had not dressed. On his feet he wore cloth slippers, and his whole appearance gave me the impression that he had been asleep when I knocked; for, perhaps, like Cromwell, he does not sleep well o' nights. I tried to overcome a strong feeling of repugnance which suddenly swept over me as I reached out my hand and clasped the limp, clammy, and rather unwilling hand which hung by his side, the hand which had murdered the Tsar.

I introduced myself and began to speak with rather hectic haste about his report, trying at the same time to convey the impression that I took a deep and expert interest in Life Insurance—a subject of which, by the way, I know absolutely nothing. About some obscure points in his report I was extremely anxious, I said, to get further information.

For about two minutes he continued to stand and did not invite me to sit down. But gradually his distrust began to diminish, though it never quite disappeared throughout the course of our interview and flared up several times in an ominous manner. He talked to me about the Bolshevik whose name I had used as a talisman, said he knew him by sight, but complained somewhat wistfully that they had never spoken. Then he recollected that he had heard of me, and asked me to sit down.

He himself collapsed heavily into an armchair from which he had evidently risen when I was announced, and remained silent for a few seconds. Then he apologized for his costume; saying that he was ill, suffering from heart disease. I was going to ask him since when he had suffered from that complaint, but refrained in a sudden panic, just as the words were on the tip of my tongue, for I felt that it was probably since the night of July 16. To judge from his face, he is not long for this world. He may be dead even now, and, if so, one of the last of the men who took a leading part in the murder of the Tsar and his family will have gone to render an account of his deeds. He told me that his former colleague Goloshokin, the Commissar who had signed the Tsar's death-warrant, had died of typhus in Samara on the 7th of March, and that, only a week ago, his own mother had died in the house where we were sitting. Sergiev,

the war correspondent of the *Pravda* whom I have already mentioned, had shown me the photograph of this old lady, whose face looked like that of a prematurely aged young man, and had made my blood curdle by telling me how savagely proud this old Jewess had been of the fact that her son had now a secure place in the history of the world, and that the humble name Yurovsky will be till the end of time linked with the mighty name of Romanov. The Tsaricide spoke for a long time and with evident feeling about his mother, whose death seemed to have given him a great shock. He had left her behind in Ekaterinburg when he himself fled to Moscow, and the Whites when they came had arrested her; but, when they evacuated Ekaterinburg, they had forgotten to take her with them as she happened to be lying ill of typhus at the time in a local hospital. The disease to which she finally succumbed was also typhus, of which she had had a second attack.

Yurovsky then began to speak of the atrocities committed by the Whites throughout Ekaterinburg Government and in Perm. He was very vehement on this subject, and I know that there was truth in what he said. He told me incidentally that the first post he had held in Ekaterinburg when he returned to it was that of President of the Extraordinary Commission, and he said that in that capacity he had put to death sixty White suspects. "What are sixty men?" he asked contemptuously, and this terrible question made me suddenly realize what I was beginning to forget, that I was in the lair of a human tiger, that I was face to face with a devil incarnate. I thought of a graveyard near Ekaterinburg where they are buried—most of them in their everyday clothes, some of them wrapped in blood-stained blankets, very few of them in coffins—hundreds of victims of the Bolsheviks, executed during the first half of 1918, and of the awful tales told by a family living in a lonely farmhouse close by. Every night after dark they used to hear the creak of cartwheels bearing a fresh burden of dead bodies, and this went on for hours; while many executions took place against the cemetery wall. On one occasion a man who was thought to be dead got up and staggered away in the early morning. He was a well-known inhabitant

of the town and is still alive—but not in Ekaterinburg. What monstrous children will grow up in houses like these ! I have seen Siberian infants playing among the naked, frozen corpses of Kolchak's soldiers, stripped by their comrades for the sake of their warm clothes. What a monstrous generation is growing up in Russia ! How much has he to answer for who, without the most extreme necessity, kindles the fires of Revolution and Civil War !

I had not heard before that the regicide had been head of the Extraordinary Commission. He had, it appears, been too bloodthirsty in that capacity even for the Bolsheviks, and had been transferred, evidently by someone with a grim sense of humour, from the department of death insurance to the department of life insurance.

But though Yurovsky speaks lightly of large numbers done to death, he cannot bear to speak of the eleven deaths about which I was anxious to get details. He always referred to his Imperial victim as the "Autocrat," and a baleful light came into his eyes every time he used the word. But he has the same reluctance to speak of the murder in the cellar as a man suffering from partial insanity sometimes has to speak of his delusions. Approach the subject and he trembles with rage or horror or incipient insanity. As my own precarious position made it impossible for me to probe too deeply into that festering mental wound, I got no information on the murder from him during the whole course of this strange interview. I got a great deal of information from him, however, about the Life Insurance system which the Bolsheviks have established, and which embraces Old Age pensions, maternity benefits, workmen's compensation, and a number of allied subjects. Among other things he talked about the maternity classes that had been started by him in the town, in order to teach intending mothers how to care for their children, and thus to reduce "the high infant mortality." When he used this phrase I started and looked at him. He looked at me and read my thoughts. Then he raised himself slowly to his feet and said that he would go into another room to get me some statistics which he had compiled. While he was gone I looked around me for the first time since I had entered

the room, and saw that it was well and tastefully furnished. The house had belonged, in fact, to a wealthy Jewish newspaper proprietor whom I had known, and who, though he was a Social Revolutionist, had fled with Kolchak. It contained a large piano, open, and with some sheets of Russian music on the holder.

When he had shuffled back again he handed me some papers with his left hand and, as he did so, I noticed that he had lost the tips of three fingers. As if he again read my thoughts he at once held up his hand for my inspection, and explained rapidly that this mutilation was due to an accident which had happened to him while he was a *subbotnik*. *Subbotniki*, I should explain, are workmen who work on Saturday (*Subbota*) for the benefit of the Government: there is quite a large *subbotnik* movement in Russia. I said, "Yes, yes," without listening to a word that he was saying, and tried to look sympathetic, but my voice sounded hollow and unnatural and my face was strained. I looked up from his hand to his eyes, and he looked at me and saw that I knew all. The papers which he had given me seemed to vanish like things which one receives in a dream, and I probably left them behind. . . . He told me that he was a Siberian, born in Tomsk, and that he had served his apprenticeship as a watchmaker. He is an intelligent man, has studied Bolshevik "literature" a good deal, and evidently peruses the Bolshevik newspapers very carefully. He looks at foreign politics from the extreme Bolshevik point of view, and cannot understand how the workmen of England allow themselves to be duped and exploited by the *bourgeoisie*. He has only contempt for what he considers to be the extreme moderation and self-restraint of men like Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Mr. J. R. Clynes. To him this moderation is only servility, and there is no salvation save in violence and terror, bloodshed and revolution, "red ruin and the breaking up of laws." In short, he is the quintessence of Bolshevism, an infernal machine charged with diabolical forces of destruction; and his frightful theories were only rendered all the more frightful by reason of the contrast between their violence and his own physical weakness. We talked about

indifferent subjects, but the thoughts of each of us were in that dark cellar, and we hardly heard what we were saying. He saw in my mind the question: "Did *you* kill the little boy also?" as clearly as if I had spoken it aloud. Suddenly I became aware that a little boy was standing motionless beside me, and jumped hastily to my feet. He was about fourteen years of age. If he had been also lame I would almost have lost my reason. But it was only Yurovsky's son, a dark handsome lad of marked Jewish type, and not lame. Would it not be terrible, I thought, if I asked his age, and it turned out that he was really fourteen? Then a very handsome girl, also of strongly Jewish type and of about seventeen years of age, came into the room. She was Yurovsky's daughter, a very energetic Bolshevik and a fluent public speaker. She is head of the local branch of the League of Communist Youth, an organization which the Bolsheviks have started all over Russia with the object of bringing up all the rising generation in strict Socialist and anti-Christian principles. A few days later she spoke from the same platform as Trotsky at a great meeting of her neophytes, but her father did not come and Trotsky never saw him during his stay in Ekaterinburg.

Glad of this interruption, I hastily took leave of the Tzaricide, who was so fatigued that he could not rise from his armchair. And I was fatigued, too, though the interview had been the most barren that I had ever had in the whole course of my life. It was an interview in which both parties used words only in order to conceal their thoughts; but in which they were so unsuccessful that the entire sitting had been like a hair raising spiritualistic *séance* at which men read each other's thoughts written on their foreheads and see corpses rise from their graves.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE BURIAL OF THE TSAR

THE beautiful little village of Kopchiki is situated about a dozen miles to the north-east of Ekaterinburg and close to a magnificent forest. Despite the vicinity of the railway, Kopchiki was, in the middle of the year 1918, a comparatively secluded place, for it only contained a small number of inhabitants, and the forest, formerly frequented by miners, who had driven about a dozen shafts into the ground at various points, had been left entirely to the hares, foxes, and wolves. Early on the morning of July 17 in that year Kopchiki Wood presented an appearance of primeval calm. The sun shone down the glorious forest glades, the hares ran about among the trees, and there was not a soul in sight. Suddenly there was a disturbance, trifling probably in the opinion of the elders among the forest animals who remembered the days when miners used to come, but really of supreme and permanent importance, for it meant that Kopchiki Forest would henceforward be one of the tragic places of the world. This disturbance was caused by the appearance of five carts and one motor-lorry, the former filled with Red soldiers and some kind of baggage wrapped in white blankets, the latter containing also soldiers, five civilians, and two barrels. Instead of continuing straight on to the village, this strange procession turned off the road and on to the grass, for there was no side-track, and entered the beautiful sunlit recesses of the forest. The heavy lorry stuck fast, however, in a swamp near the road; and, after several ineffectual attempts to dislodge it, the civilian passengers got out and led the carts further into the wood, until they reached a birch-tree, on which the following words were carved: "Mining Mechanic I. A. Fesenko, 11th July, 1918." Close by this tree was a disused shaft, known

locally as the "Isetsky Mine," about fifteen feet deep, with water and mud at the bottom. Near the tree the five civilians consulted together: their names were Yurovsky, Goloshokin, Lovatnykh, Nicholas Partin, and Alexander Kostusov. Meanwhile, in obedience to Yurovsky's orders, the soldiers moved outwards into the forest in a circle, with ever-widening intervals between each man, until they halted at a distance of about 500 yards from the marked tree. Their object was to prevent any intrusion, but none took place, though the villagers soon became aware of their presence. The first peasant to notice that something mysterious was taking place in the wood was Andrew Sheremetievsky, who, while on his way into Ekaterinburg, was stopped on the road by the soldiers who were trying to extricate the lorry, and turned back, with fierce injunctions not, on peril of his life, to venture out of his village till the Reds had gone away. Andrew, on his return, told the other villagers, with the result that several of the bolder spirits amongst them crept cautiously for some distance into the forest, but, seeing that sentries had been posted there, returned promptly to their houses. The curiosity of the whole village was now roused to the highest pitch, but their fear of the Red Guards was greater than their inquisitiveness, more especially as they knew that they had made themselves liable to terrible punishment at the hands of the Bolsheviks for sheltering in their hamlet a Tsarist officer, Captain Pometkovsky, who was living amongst them dressed as a *muzhik* with the object of getting in touch with the Imperial Family in Ekaterinburg. Feeling sure that this strange invasion of their forest was connected in some way with the presence of Pometkovsky, they urged that officer to flee, but he refused, pointing out that the Reds could not possibly have come on account of him, as, if they had, they would have marched straight to the village. The peasants remained awake all that night in a state of great trepidation, for the wiping out of villages by both Reds and Whites is unfortunately a common incident of the present Civil War in Russia. They did not go outside their houses, but they could see from their doors the reflection in the heavens of a great fire which the Bolsheviks had kindled in Kopchiki Wood. Many were the



speculations in which they indulged as to what unholy rites the Terrorists could be engaged on at that hour of the night, most of the villagers being inclined to believe that it was human sacrifice, a practice to which the Russian *muzhik* believes the Jews to be peculiarly addicted. How near they came to the truth !

Next day the soldiers were still in the forest, but, though their curiosity increased daily, the villagers made no further effort to ascertain what they were doing there. On July 19 a peasant boy reported that the Reds had all gone, whereupon Captain Pometkovsky, accompanied by Andrew Sheremetievsky, Michael Alferov, and several other peasants, walked down the road to the point where the lorry had stuck, and found that all the soldiers had indeed disappeared. Seeing that, from the above-mentioned point, a freshly trampled path had been made by the Reds into the forest, the peasants followed it up until they came to the marked tree, the Isetsky Mine, and, two paces from the mine, a very large pile of ashes, evidently, judging by the *débris* that had been left unconsumed, the remains of a burnt-out fire of sticks, boards, and branches of trees. There seemed to be nothing very mysterious in all this. The fire had doubtless been used for cooking food, though certainly it must have been a huge fire. Captain Pometkovsky first examined the inscription on the tree: there was nothing suspicious in it. Then he turned again to the fire. Siberians light small fires for boiling kettles of water, but never fires of such dimensions as that. And why should they have come out from Ekaterinburg, where they had all the kitchens they wanted, in order to light such an enormous bonfire with great secrecy in a lonely wood ? They had evidently been burning something. Pometkovsky at once sprang forward and began scattering the ashes with his stick, and the peasants, who had been looking in astonishment at the fire from the beginning, helped him vigorously. A moment later Alferov picked up, from the blackened ground underneath the ashes, a Maltese Cross set with green stones, and handed it to the officer, who grew pale as he examined it, for it was a decoration that could only have been worn by a high personage in the Imperial service. And, for

Pometkovsky, there was only one such personage in Ekaterinburg. "Good God!" gasped the officer. "*Did they burn him alive?*"

By the time he had recovered himself the peasants had found a number of other things, four corset steels, a brass buckle, burnt slippers, buttons, dress fasteners, and four beads, all indicative of the fact that women had been burnt there as well as men. "God Almighty!" exclaimed Pometkovsky, turning a ghastly face to heaven, "Merciful Christ! Can they have burned the whole family alive?"

The peasants heard him, but, though they did not fully understand, they felt they were in the presence of a horror beyond conception, and continued their gruesome search in tense silence, broken only by whispers. The next place for them to examine was obviously the shaft, whose mouth, fringed with recently disturbed weeds, gaped black in the sunlight. One of the peasants was lowered by means of a rope into the mine, but the discoveries he made were not important, being, to quote his own story, "floating sticks, pieces of bark, boards, fresh pine-needles, and a spade." Then the surrounding ground claimed examination, and a close search revealed further evidence of crime. Under a pile of ashes and half-burnt sticks close to the shaft, and evidently thrown over there from the main pile, they found a lady's handbag, old and charred. Eighty-four feet from the shaft they found burnt rags, bits of lace, and "some sort of bright, black fragments." Whether or not these latter were precious objects that had been melted by the heat of the fire I do not know. Captain Pometkovsky discovered, however, an object which was undoubtedly precious, and which confirmed his worst suspicions. It was described, not very clearly, by the peasants as "a very dirty stone, the colour of water," and they added, still less clearly, that "it was of considerable size, with a flat centre and with a white setting, in which there were a number of small, sparkling stones." These stones, I may say, were afterwards examined by an expert jeweller, who declared them to be "diamonds of great value, worth at least one thousand pounds sterling." Not far from the spot where Captain Pometkovsky found this beautiful but terrible piece of evidence, the peasants

picked up "two small and dirty fragments" of ornaments set with "emeralds and pearls, also a torn piece of dress material with a strong smell of paraffin."

Here ends the testimony of the peasants of Kopchiki. These humble men, all of them Imperialists, not in an active and modern but in a passive and mediæval sense, went back to their work filled with a great sorrow for "Nicholas Our Tsar," to whom, judging from the grief of Captain Pometkovsky, some evil had apparently befallen. That burnt patch in the forest they regard with superstitious awe, for though two springs have passed since then, the grass refuses to grow on it, all the roots having, as will be seen hereafter, been destroyed by the sulphuric acid which the Reds poured over the corpses, but the *muzhiks* refuse to accept this explanation, and maintain that the place is under a curse. They kept none of the jewels that they found, but it is doubtful if the same can be said of the peasants from other villages and of the workmen from the Isetsky factory, who, having heard wonderful stories of this amazing pile of ashes, came to examine it for themselves and found more jewels in it. There are in Russia to-day, as a result of the Ippatievsky tragedy, Commissars, Red soldiers, and peasants, with Crown Jewels worth an Emperor's ransom in their possession, but without the possibility of disposing of those treasures either inside or outside Russia. And I might here remark that there are also many Russians with hidden hoards of valuables from other sources, which for a long time past they have been trying to smuggle out of the country. One man whom I know, and who is at present starving, has concealed in a secret place over nine hundred thousand pounds' worth of money and valuables, without which he will not go abroad, and which he can never take with him, for I happened to learn, after I was arrested a few months ago in Moscow by the Extraordinary Commission, that the eye of that terrible organization is fixed on this man. All the romances that I have read since I was a child pale into insignificance before the tragic romances of present-day Russia.

It may be asked how this jewelry came to be in the ashes. The answer is furnished by M. Peter Gialliard, the

Tsarevich's French tutor, who has testified before a Court of Enquiry that, at Tobolsk, "the Empress concealed her jewelry in the hats, buttons, and dresses of the Grand Duchesses and the members of her household." And, according to a Bolshevik authority, the cushions which the Imperial party had brought down into the cellar with them, where they became so soaked with blood that Yurovsky insisted on their being thrown into the lorry with the corpses, were found to be stuffed with diamonds and paper money of very high denominations.

The following is a list of the objects that were discovered when, later on, a more systematic investigation was conducted by order of Admiral Kolchak:

Several strips of cloth from a petticoat; more steel parts of ladies' corsets; a number of brooches and pearl earrings; pearls, diamonds, and other precious stones; and Dr. Botkin's false teeth. A small decoration belonging to the Emperor was found in the presence of an officer of General Knox's Mission who knew the Emperor personally, and who identified the decoration as belonging to him. This officer also saw in the wood the skeleton of the Grand Duchess Tatiana's dog with a bullet-hole through the skull, and he heard that the dead body of the sailor Derevenko who attended on the Crown Prince had also been found in the wood.

The following human remains were found: (1) Several small, charred bones and a piece of the lower part of a human spine; (2) a finger which the Bolsheviks are supposed to have cut off in order to remove a ring and to have then thrown aside.

These meagre relics are all that is left of the mighty Romanovs; and, as such, they were given solemn burial. The finger was supposed to be that of the doctor, and afterwards to be that of the Empress; but, as a matter of fact, neither it nor the bones could be identified, and, if I may say so reverently—and God forbid that I should treat this awful subject with anything but reverence—they may all have belonged to the cook or the housemaid. The bones of the very humblest among the Tsar's menials may thus, in the event of a successful Reaction, be buried with the

Russian Emperors in the fortress church of Saints Peter and Paul, while the steels from a servant-girl's stays, buttons from her clothes, and strips from her petticoat may be enshrined in gold and regarded with almost religious veneration by generations of restored Romanovs. And they will deserve this veneration.

To give now, from the Bolshevik side, a description of how the bodies were disposed of. Accompanied by the Reds whom I have already mentioned, they were first brought to the Isetsky factory,\* where the corpses were transferred into carts. From the Isetsky factory the carts set out along with one motor-lorry carrying Yurovsky, Goloshokin, Lovatnykh, Partin, Kostusov, some soldiers, and the two barrels of petrol. The other lorries remained in the factory till 5 o'clock the following morning, July 18, when one lorry returned to town with a number of prominent Bolsheviks who had walked from Ekaterinburg to Isetsky during the night of July 17 in order to learn how the work was progressing, and who were accompanied back to town by the lorry which had brought Yurovsky to Kopchiki and which now carried to Ekaterinburg four of Yurovsky's companions and a number of Red soldiers, as well as two empty petrol barrels. The chauffeur of that lorry had left word at Isetsky that Yurovsky wanted the lorry which had carried the dead bodies—"the one with the blood on it"—to be sent on immediately and without fail to Kopchiki as he wanted it for his own use. On July 18, during the course of the day, most of the soldiers who had gone to Kopchiki arrived at Isetsky in carts and went from that place to Ekaterinburg in two other lorries. Early on July 19 Yurovsky himself returned to Ekaterinburg along with Goloshokin and the remainder of the soldiers, all of them travelling in that blood-stained lorry—wherein the principal murderer was particularly anxious to travel as he wanted to see with his own eyes that all traces of blood were removed from it before it was sent back to the garage.

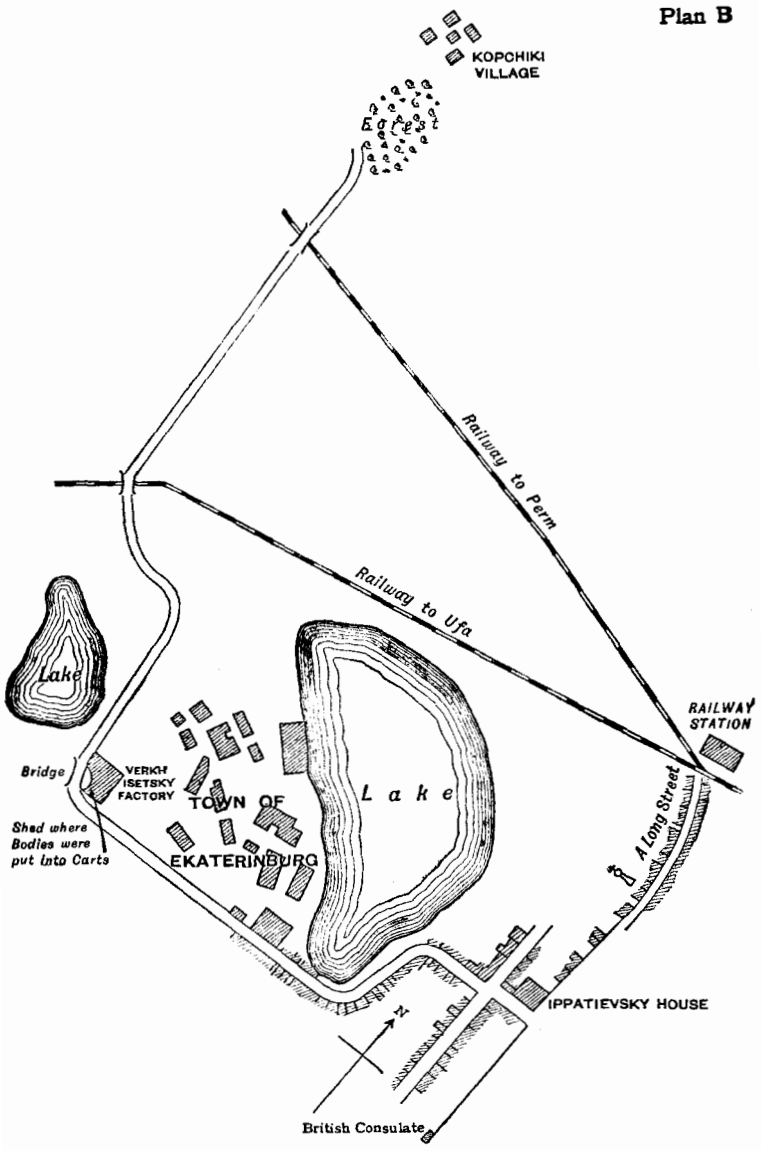
To return, however, to the journey with the bodies from Isetsky to Kopchiki, Yurovsky was in such a state of nerves that he could not decide where to bury the bodies. He

\* The full name is Verkh (Upper) Isetsky Factory.

stopped once on the way and even had the bodies removed from the carts, only to come to the decision, immediately afterwards, that the place was too exposed. After he reached the Isetsky Mine in Kopchiki Wood, he wanted to go further into the forest, but, as time was being lost and the soldiers were becoming impatient, Goloshokin finally insisted on the cremation being carried out at the Isetsky Mine. A pile of wood was then collected and the bodies were placed on it, that of the Tsar being on the top. The carcass of the dog was thrown down by a soldier into some bushes, and was afterwards discovered and identified by a former domestic of the Imperial family. Yurovsky then made one soldier fill with sulphuric acid a jug which he had brought, while another uncovered the anointed head of Nicholas, once Autocrat of all the Russias, Ruler of the Russian Church, Holy Orthodox Tsar, exposing the ashy face, the glassy eyes, the hair and beard stiff with blood. Bending gently down like a priest in the act of performing a solemn religious rite, Yurovsky carefully pressed the lip of the jug against that cold brow, slightly tilted the bottom of the vessel upwards, and then poured the burning and obliterating liquid over the dead man's features.

Had this frightful scene been presented to the Emperor in the days of his greatness, when he followed with intense interest all attempts of wizards to unveil the future by unlawful and forbidden means, had a seer warned him as Lochiel was warned in the Scots poem, he would, like Lochiel, have scoffed at the prophecy. The seer might have said: "I see a mighty forest and a man lying in a blood-stained shroud on a pile of wood. He is very white and still, but his features are hidden from me. And I see a Jew bending over him with a vessel, while a circle of Russian soldiers look on with a strange indifference. Is that Jew some Good Samaritan with refreshing drink? Is he going to pour precious ointment or cold, reviving water on that pallid brow? Good God! No! The fiery liquid that he pours out burns the fizzling flesh. It is a Black Baptism of Hell. And, lo! before the features are obliterated for ever, that face is revealed to me. O Tsar! O Father! that face is thine!"

**Plan B**



**ROUGH PLAN SHOWING POSITION OF  
VERKH ISETSKY FACTORY AND KOPCHIKI VILLAGE**  
*Drawn from Memory*

Yurovsky left the obliteration of the other faces to one of the soldiers; and, when this revolting part of the ghastly work was done, the two barrels of petrol, which had been brought from the lorry in a cart, were emptied over the corpses, soaking their clothes, and wetting the ground and the funeral pyre. A soldier suggested that they should burn the barrels as well, but, with the shopkeeper's instinctive dislike for waste, Yurovsky declined this suggestion and said that he would return the barrels to Ekaterinburg.

Everybody then stood back and the pile was lighted, the flames shooting up to a height of twenty feet. After the corpses had been all but consumed, Yurovsky noticed that one blackened and grinning skull was distinguished from the others by a callosity due to the wound which the Emperor had received in Japan; and, fearing that this would lead to subsequent identification, he smashed the skull to pieces with a spade and threw the fragments back on the fire, where they were entirely reduced to ashes. Before treating the other skeletons in the same way the soldiers made themselves some tea, for it was now late in the afternoon, and none of the party had had anything to eat that day. In order to boil their kettle, they removed from the fire with a spade a pile of burning and unburnt sticks among which a lady's handbag was afterwards found. They drank vodka as well as tea, ate bread, and then the soldiers who had had their tea relieved those who were on guard in order that they also should eat. After that the whole party lay down on the ground to rest and smoke, and some of them fell asleep. Night was coming on when they resumed their ghastly labours by piling fresh fuel on the fire in order to consume some bones which still remained; and several of the soldiers who went to collect wood were scared on more than one occasion by dogs and prowling nocturnal animals probably attracted to the spot by the smell of burning flesh. By the red flames of this mysterious fire in the forest, Yurovsky moved about ceaselessly, like a restless fiend by the fires of Hell, his left hand in a sling, and his right constantly occupied in picking up bones, jewelry, human teeth, trinkets, bits of cloth, and buttons, all of which he threw into the flames. Noticing that one of the objects



which the chief murderer threw away glowed like a ruby, Lovatnykh began to assist him in his search, and Partin, Kostusov, the chauffeur, and several of the others soon did the same. Becoming very interested in the work, they even raked the ashes and the heart of the fire, ostensibly for the purpose of finding bones to destroy, but really with a different object in view, for the pockets of all of them were soon bulging with precious stones. Neither Yurovsky nor Goloshokin noticed anything, however; the former being like a man moving about in an hypnotic trance, and the latter being asleep.

About 3 o'clock in the morning the fire had burnt itself out, after having apparently effaced every trace of the great crime; and Lovatnykh as well as the other diamond-gatherers expressed a strong desire to go home, the chauffeur asserting that his machine, which had by this time been extricated from the bog, was in need of immediate repairs. Yurovsky, still like a man in a trance, agreed, but then, as if struck by a sudden thought, asked the chauffeur if it was his lorry that had brought the bodies from Ekaterinburg. When the chauffeur answered in the negative, Yurovsky said: "Oh, yes, I remember. It was Lovatnykh's. Then tell Lovatnykh to bring his lorry here. No other. The one with the blood on it."

Accordingly, at about 3 o'clock in the morning, Lovatnykh, Partin, Kostusov, and as many of the soldiers as the lorry would hold, went to Isetsky, while Yurovsky, Goloshokin, and the rest of the soldiers remained behind owing to Yurovsky's determination to stay in the forest all next day in order to see by daylight whether any traces of the bodies still existed. As a matter of fact, he was there till the following night, and even then Goloshokin had to drag him away from the unhallowed spot, which seemed to have a horrible fascination for him. During the daytime he lighted the fire again in order to burn several pieces of cloth, a slipper, and other things which he discovered; and, towards nightfall, he and his companions began shovelling the ashes down the shaft and scattering them about in the forest. Yurovsky found at the last moment many human teeth, with which he walked long distances into

the forest in order to conceal them in the brushwood or to cast them into far-off shafts, where they still lie. Then they all left together in Lovatnykh's lorry, "the one with the blood on it."

Peter Alexeivich Lenov, manager of the Bolshevik garage in Ekaterinburg, has testified that two of the lorries which he supplied on the order of Yurovsky, given through Gorbunov, returned to the garage on the morning of July 18, and that in them were the empty petrol barrels. Two of them returned later the same day, and the last returned in the following circumstances. Gorbunov ordered it to go to the Amerikansky Dom, a large hotel near the Roman Catholic church, which was the H.Q. of the Extraordinary Commission, as it became, later, the H.Q. of the Czechs. Lukhanov the chauffeur and Labashev his assistant were sent straight home, and a new chauffeur from the Amerikansky Dom brought the motor-lorry to the garage. There Lenov saw at once that it had been recently scoured with sand and washed with water. Curious to know why this had been done he examined the machine closely, and found distinct traces of blood on it. He does not seem to have ever met Lukhanov or Labashev again. These men were probably sent away from Ekaterinburg as they knew too much, and great secrecy had been observed in preventing the identification of the bodies. Only one chauffeur, Lukhanov, had been allowed to enter the courtyard of the Ippatievsky house, and he only saw bodies wrapped in white blankets being put into his lorry. The other chauffeurs had waited outside. Similar secrecy had been observed at the Isetsky factory, where the chauffeurs were separated from one another and guards placed over them, but it was impossible, of course, to prevent most of them, and especially Lovatnykh and the man who drove to Kopchiki, from learning everything.

Before returning to Ekaterinburg to describe what was going on there all this time, I shall stop half-way, at the Isetsky factory, in order to give an account of a terrible scene which took place there during the night of July 17. But, first of all, I must introduce to the reader Comrade Prokofy Kukhtenkov, a Red soldier, one of the few Red soldiers whose hands are not red with blood.

Prokofy had been one of the guards at Ippatievsky in May, 1918, but had been allowed to retire from military service in the same month, and had been given the post of secretary and manager in the Red Workmen's Club at the Verkh Isetsy Factory. At 4 a.m. on the morning of July 18 a number of prominent Bolsheviki from Ekaterinburg came to the Club, roused Prokofy from his bed, and asked him to prepare the samovar and make tea for them. They were:

1. The President of the Executive Committee of the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, Sergius Pavlov Mamyshkin.
2. The Military Commissar, Peter Ermakov.
3. Alexander Kostusov.
4. Basil Lovatnykh.
5. Nicholas Partin.
6. Alexander Krivtsov.

Three of these, Lovatnykh, Partin, and Kostusov, had just taken part in the cremation and the others had come out from Ekaterinburg to see how things had gone. Kukhtenkov was unaware of this at the time, but his curiosity was excited by the wild appearance of Lovatnykh, Partin, and Kostusov, by the fact that so many of the leading Bolsheviki had met in such an out-of-the-way place, and by their evident desire to keep their conversation from reaching the ears of the Club secretary. They went into the Committee-room of the Club, where they would not be likely to be disturbed by other visitors, and when Prokofy brought them the samovar he found, to use his own words, that "they were secretly discussing something." Krivtsov was eagerly questioning the three men who had come back from Kopchiki Wood. Partin and Lovatnykh were answering him. The Club secretary overheard the words: "They were thirteen in all\*—the thirteenth was the doctor." Then they conversed in low tones for a while, glancing suspiciously from time to time at Prokofy, who was pretending to be very busy at the other end of the room; but

\* I can only account for eleven who were shot in the cellar. Two others may have been taken out in the lorries and killed in Kopchiki Wood. Several soldiers say that Madame Vyrobova was shot in the cellar.

finally, being afraid that the secretary overheard them after all, they rose from the table, went out into the garden, and continued their conversation there. Prokofy "being," as he said himself, "interested in their conversation," followed them unnoticed, on all fours, through the long grass and the shrubs. Then he heard distinctly the following extraordinary sentences:

KOSTUSOV: This is the second time that we have had all this bother. We buried them yesterday, and we buried them again to-day.

*(Partin then speaks callously and brutally, boasting of what he had done.)*

LOVATNYKH: When we came . . . they were still warm. I myself . . . I can now die happy, for I have . . .

KRIVTSOV: How were they dressed ?

PARTIN: Oh, they were all dressed in civilian clothes, and in their dresses were sewn jewels and diamonds.

MAMYSHKIN: How many did you say there were ?

LOVATNYKH: I told you before that there were thirteen. The doctor was the thirteenth.

ERMAKOV: Were they pretty ?

PARTIN: There was not a pretty face among them.

A MAN (*whom Prokofy could not identify from his voice*): You cannot find beauty in the dead.

From the subsequent conversation Prokofy gathered that they had been buried in two places. First they were buried in one place beyond Ekaterinburg, and then taken up and buried in another place, where it was not stated. As a matter of fact, however, they were not buried the first time, but only taken out of the carts, and on the second occasion they were cremated. One of the speakers enumerated the names of the Tsar, the Tsarina, the Tsarevich, the Grand Duchesses and Madame Vyrobova (?). He could not catch the names of the others, but the list ended with the phrase which had already been used: "The thirteenth was the doctor."

According to Prokofy all the Bolsheviks who took part in this strange conclave fled from Ekaterinburg before it was taken by the Czechs. Metvietev was the next to flee, then Yurovsky and Goloshokin. But I am anticipating

events and must now return to Ippatievsky House, where Metvietev, who had been left in charge by Yurovsky, was entrusted with the work of destroying all trace of the crime in the villa itself. It was a hard, nay, an impossible task, for not only had gallons of blood congealed on the floor, but large quantities of blood had dripped through the bullet-holes as well as through the interstices in the planks and soaked into the ground beneath, where it was afterwards examined and identified as human. Metvietev had the cellar floor covered with clay and sand taken from the garden, and then he had all this clay and sand removed after it had soaked up all the blood. Finally he had the floor of the cellar washed thoroughly with water. When I reached Ekaterinburg two months later, the hole from which the sand was taken could still be seen, and the small quantities of soil which yet remained in the corners of the cellar corresponded exactly to the soil which composed the ground where the hole had been made.

While Metvietev was supervising this work in the cellar, the soldiers upstairs were, by his orders, collecting into the dining-room all the effects of the deceased. Among those engaged on this task were two brothers, both Red soldiers, Kouzma Ivanovich Letemin and Michael Ivanovich Letemin. On ripping open a cushion with his bayonet, Kouzma found it stuffed with banknotes of high denominations and also with diamonds. This amazing discovery led at once to a wild scene of looting. The ikons which the Emperor always carried about with him and which he had inherited from his grandfather were found to be studded with precious stones, which were all removed, the pictures being then thrown away and subsequently shot, along with a number of other objects which were regarded as valueless, into a rubbish-pit in the courtyard. They were afterwards found there by the Whites, and with them were found the Tsar's epaulettes, a little flag of his regiment which he always carried about with him, and a number of unimportant letters of the Tsarina. Some of those letters were in English, and were addressed from Ekaterinburg to the Crown Prince in Tobolsk. In one of them she went into such minute details about the way to wear a certain ikon

as to indicate that, though she only entered the Greek Church on the occasion of her marriage, she had become, at the time of her death, what even religious Russians would regard as a distinctly superstitious votary of it. She frequently referred to herself pathetically in those letters as "an old, old woman."

A homely touch is lent to the tragedy by the evidence of two Russian charwomen, Staroduma and Vassa Dryagina, who turned up at Ippatievsky on July 19 to get paid for having washed the floors there on July 15, the day before the tragedy. The town was then in a state of excitement on account of the further advance of the Czechs, and such of the murderers as were not trying to repose after their debauch of Imperial blood were dispatching to Perm as many trains full of gold and platinum as they possibly could before the time came for them to run. Staroduma and Vassa took as a rule no interest in high politics: the murder of Emperors and the disappearance of dynasties left them cold. But even as the drummer-boy in the novel comes for a moment into the cyclonic orbit of Napoleon, so do these two old charwomen hobble rapidly across that gory stage in Ekaterinburg which will be a theme for so many writers yet unborn and a subject for so many future painters. Having heard rumours to the effect that the Imperial Family had been sent away and that Yurovsky had fled, they decided not to wait as usual till the end of the month for payment, but to go at once for their money. They knocked in vain, however, at the door of Ippatievsky, then tried the door and found that it was locked. The sentry who ordinarily stood there was absent; but there were some Red soldiers standing close by, and to these Staroduma and Vassa spoke of the money that was owing them, and of the necessity of their getting it at once owing to the price of bread having gone up, and to the fact that they had, between them, eleven small children to feed. The soldiers said that the house was empty, as "everybody had been taken away to Perm"; and so Staroduma and Vassa Dryagina both disappear, grumbling, from history.

Meanwhile the Bolshevik leaders, who were all suffering from a reaction of fright after the terrible deed they had

done, began feverishly to circulate reports to the effect that the Imperial Family had all been sent to Perm. They feared a rising in the town if the truth got about. They feared that they might be cut off and captured by the Czechs. They feared that such of their own Red soldiers as were Russian might revolt against them. Consequently the word went forth from the Amerikansky Dom: "Say that the Tsar and his family have all left for Perm."

Despite the fact that, in the absence of Goloshokin, Yurovsky, and the other Red leaders on July 17, the local Bolshevik newspaper had imprudently come out with an "extra" announcing the "execution" of "Nicholas Romanov," this rumour that the Tsar had simply been sent to Perm was vigorously circulated by the Communists in various ingenious ways. Knowing that a barber is the most talkative of human beings, Gulyaev, the Bolshevik Commissar at the railway station, went on July 16 into the shop of Feodor Ivanov, a "tonorial artist," as he describes himself, whose little shop still stands, with Feodor inside it, close to the railway station, and found it as usual pretty full of customers, some reading the newspapers and smoking, some being professionally attended to by Feodor and his boy-assistant. After exchanging the usual greeting with the barber, of whom he was an old customer, Gulyaev complained that he was getting very much work to do during those last few days.

"What sort of work is it?" asked Feodor.

"Well, for one thing, we are sending off Nicholas Romanov and his family to-day," replied the Commissar in a casual tone.

He did not say where the ex-Tsar was being sent to, and the barber did not like to ask him "as there were people in the shop," although, as a matter of fact, it was mostly for the benefit of those people that Gulyaev was speaking.

The curiosity of Feodor having been aroused to the highest pitch, he took an opportunity, later on, of getting the Commissar aside, where he could not be overheard, and asking him if the Tsar had already been sent.

"He cannot have been sent from this station," quoth the

barber, "for I have seen every train that went out for the last two days."

"Oh," replied Gulyaev, "he was sent from station No. 2"—the old Ekaterinburg station, situated at some distance from the present one. The loquacious barber hungered for more information on the subject, but Gulyaev, who is not an imaginative man, could not think of anything else to add. "He gave no particulars," said the barber, who promised to keep the matter quiet as the Commissar hurried off, rather afraid that Feodor would keep it quiet. He had no reason for fear on that score, however, and the tale was all over the town before evening. Some people who heard this and similar stories not only believed them but passed them on with amplifications of their own, and even averred in some cases that they had actually seen the Imperial train.

These rumours, spread by the Bolsheviks, made very difficult the subsequent work of investigation, and carried the investigators off on side issues which always proved in the end to be blind alleys, leading nowhere. But it is extraordinary to what an extent they misled for a long time the royal and imperial relatives of the murdered Emperor. Even when I was in Copenhagen on my way from Moscow in June, 1920, I was told that the Tsar's mother still believed implicitly in these unfounded tales, and I was asked to write a statement which put an end, alas! to all her hopes.

Alexander Samoilov, a conductor on the Omsk railway, said that he asked Alexander Varakovshev, a soldier of the Red Army who occupied part of the flat in which he lived at Ekaterinburg, if there was any truth in the rumours that the Tsar had been shot. Varakovshev replied that there was no truth in those rumours, which had been circulated, he said, by "that dog Goloshokin."

"As a matter of fact," said Varakovshev, "Nicholas Romanov as well as his wife have been put in irons and taken to the station to be sent to Perm."

"What!" exclaimed Samoilov. "Is that really true? Can I see them?"

According to Samoilov's story Varakovshev then accompanied him to the railway station, where he showed him



a train made up of first and second class carriages, and standing on the fifth or sixth track.

One of the carriages had black blinds which were drawn down, and the carriage itself was surrounded by Red soldiers. "In that very carriage," said Varakovshev impressively, "is the man Nicholas Romanov and his wife."

That carriage, as a matter of fact, was the one in which Countess Gendrikova, a lady-in-waiting to the Empress, as well as Prince Dolgoruki and Count Tatishchev, who had both been in the suite of the Emperor, were afterwards sent off to Perm, where they were all murdered three weeks later along with the Grand Duke Michael.

Only two members of the Imperial party were left alive—the Tsar's valet, who was taken to Perm (and probably murdered there), and a little boy of thirteen who assisted the cook. This boy was driven from Ippatievsky by Yurovsky just before the murder, and though at the time the boy probably thought it very cruel treatment, it was the only act of kindness which the Reds showed on this occasion. On July 17 the soldier Kouzma Ivanovich Letemin, of whom I have already spoken, entered the guard-house opposite Ippatievsky and went into the room occupied by Metvietev, who was working at the time in the cellar of Ippatievsky. He found in the room two soldiers and this little boy, whose presence in that house astonished him, for he knew that the lad belonged to the Tsar's household, and was never, therefore, allowed to leave Ippatievsky. Turning to one of his comrades, Kouzma asked, "What is the meaning of this? Why is this boy here?" The soldier to whom he put the question "brushed it aside with a wave of his hand, and said nothing"—to use Kouzma's own expression—but another soldier called Streokin, who had been on duty during the night, told him that "the Tsar, together with his wife and children, his footman, his cook and the ladies-in-waiting were shot last night in the lower room of Ippatievsky," adding afterwards that "the Tsar was shot by Yurovsky."

Kouzma maintained that this was the first news he heard of the murder as he had not been on guard during the night; and he seems, after this, to have immediately gone to

Ippatievsky and started looting the murdered Emperor's belongings.

The boy, I was told, is a very simple peasant lad who knows nothing of what happened except what he heard the soldiers say. He is now living in the Tsar's former palace of Tsarskoe Selo, which has been converted into an orphanage, where he is being carefully brought up as a Communist with an intense hatred of Christianity and the middle classes. The mercy that spared him was therefore the mercy of a demon who saves the body in order that he may ruin the soul.

Before I leave the subject of the murder and go on to give some details of the life the Tsar and his family led before their assassination, I should like to say that, though the death of Nicholas the Second and his wife and children at Ekaterinburg on the night of July 16, 1918, is as well authenticated as the death of King Charles the First of England, there are minor discrepancies in the evidence.

Anatoly Yakimov, a soldier of the Red Army who was on guard at Ippatievsky on the night of the 16th of July, said that "Nicholas Romanov, all his family, his doctor, the ladies-in-waiting, and the Imperial servants were killed that night. Towards 1 o'clock they were awakened and asked to go downstairs. The former Emperor and his son were killed first. The others were only wounded at first and had to be shot at again. They were also pierced with bayonets and struck with the butt-ends of rifles." The rest of his evidence corresponds to what I have given elsewhere save that he says it was the Grand Duchess Anastasia who fell in a faint, and not Tatiana. "The shooting was done by Lettish soldiers, by some Red Russian soldiers, and by five of the leading Bolsheviki. There was much blood" (on the floor). Another soldier, Streokin, says that "the killing was done by Yurovsky, some Lett soldiers and Metvietev, the Sergeant of the Guard." Streokin was on duty at Post No. 4 on the night of July 16 and witnessed the massacre. According to Yakimov the motor-cars went off with the bodies at 6 a.m. on the morning of the 17th of July, but it is improbable that they went so late. They probably went off at

about 3 a.m. A Russian soldier's ideas of time are seldom accurate.

Now for a few facts which I gathered in Ekaterinburg as to the treatment meted out to the Tsar and his family by their jailers during the first two weeks of July.

During those two weeks the Imperial party were badly treated by the Reds, who used to come into the dining-room, put their fingers on the Empress's food and eat from her plate, saying, "There is too much here for you." The Red soldiers used also to sit in the dining-room, often in an intoxicated condition, while the prisoners were having their food, and used to tell disgusting stories. A priest whom I afterwards met said Mass in the house every Sunday, but only on the understanding that he would never speak to any of the prisoners. This priest said that the Emperor was always very calm and that all the family prayed very much and very fervently. They were not allowed to confess, but presumably the priest gave them each time he said Mass a general absolution which was, in the circumstances, of equal efficacy to the absolution given in the confessional.

According to this clergyman, the Emperor had changed very much, having become very thin. His beard too had grown rather long; and this, combined with his pallor, gave him the appearance of a man who had had a long illness. He trimmed his beard a few days before his death.

The Tsarevich could not stand owing to his lameness, which was evidently getting worse. He sat all the time during Mass and always looked very ill. "He looked," said the priest, "like a child who could not possibly live long." According to other accounts the Crown Prince had got over his illness and even his lameness at the time of his murder.

The Commissars told the priest that, if ever he spoke to the Emperor or made any sign to him, he himself as well as the Tsar and all his family would be shot. He always said Mass, therefore, under most trying conditions, for the various signs and movements of the hands which are prescribed in the rubrics of the Mass might easily have been

misinterpreted by the Jewish Commandant who was always present, always watching intently, and who knew nothing of Christian ceremonies. The last time this priest said Mass was two days before the Emperor was murdered, and this was also the last occasion on which he saw the family. As he was leaving the room, after Mass, the four Grand Duchesses were standing near the door, and one of them said: "Thank you, Father, for saying Mass." These were the first and the last words he heard from any of the family; and, though they were few and unobjectionable and remained, moreover, unanswered, they brought down Yurovsky's wrath on the poor clergyman. "Why did you let these people talk to you?" growled the Commissar; "they had no right to do so."

Several of the Red soldiers always attended Mass as well as Yurovsky, but it was to curse and jeer, not to pray; and in the first place, of course, to keep a sharp watch.

They used to laugh at the Tsar for attending the service, and the clergyman heard them asking him on one occasion: "Why do you want to have all this nonsensical rigmarole? Your God won't help you." On other occasions they mocked at all religion, but the Emperor never answered them or took any notice of what they said. They used to sneer at the priest during the service.

Some nuns from a neighbouring convent were allowed to bring milk to the Imperial Family, and certain members of the Tsar's suite sent letters with these nuns, but those letters never reached their destination.

The members of the Imperial Family never had an opportunity to get a bath, though baths were very desirable owing to the heat of the weather, for June and July are always hot months in Ekaterinburg. When they asked for water, dirty water was brought to them and they could not use it.

When he first came to Ekaterinburg the Tsar was much better treated, and I was also able to collect some information in Ekaterinburg about those happier days.

In conversation, I was told, he never expressed any regret for the past, but was apparently quite convinced that everything which he had done during his reign was perfectly

right, that he had been right in summoning the Duma, right in the way he had treated the Duma, and right in abdicating. The only exercise he got was in a very small garden, where he sometimes walked and sometimes sawed wood with a saw mounted on a wooden frame. I saw a photograph of him engaged in this work; and I walked in the garden, which was no larger than that attached to many a poor man's house in Battersea.

The different Commissars who had charge of the ex-Emperor were much impressed by his politeness and formality. Whenever a new Commissar appeared in the house the ex-Tsar always introduced him to the members of his family as if he were still Emperor and were presenting an ambassador. The scene would be one for a great painter—the small darksome dining-room, so different from the spacious halls of Tsarskoe Selo; the plain deal table with a pile of unwashed plates, cups, and saucers on it, but no tablecloth; the shaggy Bolshevik envoy, standing half awed, half defiant, in the centre of the room in muddy high boots; the Emperor in faded uniform and with the courtly manners which had become natural to him during fifty years passed in Imperial courts and twenty-three years passed as the most powerful autocrat on earth; the pale nervous Empress who had been the immediate cause of all this ruin sitting half frightened, half indignant, holding her little son by the hand; the daughters, clustered together, wholly frightened, in the background.

#### THE OPINION OF ONE OF THE TSAR'S JAILERS ON THE TSAR AND THE ROMANOV FAMILY.

It has not often occurred in recent history that a monarch born in the purple has been subjected for months together to the unrestrained scrutiny of an ordinary working man of strong republican sympathies and in a position to speak openly of all that he has seen, or that a rough and half-educated miner has found himself in a position to see at close quarters the intimate, everyday life of a very exclusive Court. I, for one, cannot recollect a similar instance even during the last few years of runaway Royalties

and escaped Emperors. The last Tsar of Russia was watched over, however, in Tobolsk by a revolutionary Commissar called V. S. Pankratov, and I propose to give here the result of his observations. Pankratov was, as will be seen, naïve, prejudiced, and often grossly unjust; and if it is very evident that he could not speak quite freely owing to the strong feeling against Nicholas the Second that prevails among the Revolutionists in Russia, it must be borne in mind that few people can speak or write with perfect freedom in any part of the world at the present critical stage of human history.

The story of Pankratov is very piquant; and, like the self-confident, semi-educated workman that he is, he misses altogether the greatness of the tragedy and, while coarsely criticizing the Imperial Family for their attention to minutiae, gets lost amid a mass of unimportant minutiae himself. His narrow-mindedness and illiberality are shown by the fact that he gives us, unconsciously it is true, more about his own character than about the character of the illustrious persons of whom he had charge. He seems to have studied some selections from Pushkin and Lermontov as well as two standard Russian histories at school. In later life, he evidently read some stories by Chekhov and committed to memory some poems by the democratic poet Nekrasov. He apparently thinks, however, that this exiguous amount of scholarship fits him to pass judgment on the educational qualifications of the Tsar and his children, who were, as a matter of fact, highly cultured. Those children seem, however, to have been unable to refrain from having their little joke at the expense of the horny-handed and dogmatic miner, and one can hardly blame them, for the temptation must have been irresistible.

In some places Pankratov is glaringly and, I am afraid, consciously unjust, as, for example, where he attacks Mr. Gibbs, the Tsaritz's English tutor, a Cambridge graduate whom I happen to have met and whose scholarship, industry, and high character need no testimonial from me. If he is utterly wrong in this matter, as I know he is wrong, his evidence with regard to other matters is of little value save that it gives the Russian revolutionary workman's

view of the Imperial Family, which, after all, it is important that we should know. Pankratov, it will be seen, found his intellectual level among the lower servants of the Imperial household, including the sailor Derevenko, on whom he makes a long and violent attack. Derevenko was undoubtedly an ignorant man, but, in point of character, he was far above the Commissar, and his unselfish devotion to the little Tsarevich is one of the few bright spots in the whole sordid tragedy. The Commissar accuses Derevenko of having been animated by purely selfish motives in the efforts he made to join the Crown Prince. Well, the old sailor seems to have succeeded in those efforts, and the only reward he got was death. Colonel Rodzianko, a Russian officer attached to General Knox's staff, tells me that Derevenko's body was found in Kopchiki Wood with a bullet-hole in the head. The other members of the Tsar's suite also deserve some credit for having allied their fortunes to those of their fallen master when they might very easily have gone abroad and lived comfortably to this day.

Russian history is full of dramatic situations, but I do not think that we can find in it any more dramatic situation than that of this workman philosophizing, wrongly as a rule, but sometimes not inaptly, about those cloaked and belted figures which have, up to the present, played such a great part in the history of man, those mysterious beings who wear crowns and sit on thrones and are brought up in a manner so different from other mortals. Much of the glamour that surrounded them has been destroyed by the Great War, and for the last half-century there has been a strong tendency in European historical literature to minimize the influence which Kings have had in the past, but there can be no denying the fascination they have exercised from the earliest times over the imagination of mankind, and in particular over the imagination of our own Shakespeare.

But it is now time to let Comrade Pankratov speak for himself.

*Commissar Pankratov's Statement.*

I found the tutors in the Romanov family incompetent and ignorant; and, when we provided the children with a plain, sensible female teacher, she was astonished at their ignorance and asked: "How on earth have these children been brought up?"

Alexis, a lad of fourteen, who, according to Russian law, would have reached maturity in two years and become automatically, in case of his father's death, Autocrat of All Russia, did not know the simplest arithmetic. When I asked him where the Volga was, he said: "Volga, Volga. What joke is that you are trying to make?" He knew absolutely nothing of Russian history, absolutely nothing of geography, and nothing at all of literature. No wonder the new teacher said to me: "How on earth have these children been brought up?"

She questioned them about Pushkin. Now, even in working men's families the children who attend school know about Pushkin, but these Romanov children had not got the faintest idea of him. She read them a piece out of Lermontov's "Demon": they had never heard it in their lives before, and did not know who Lermontov was. Then she asked them about the poet Nekrasov. They were astonished to hear that there was a Russian poet of that name. Well, when she told me this, I could not restrain myself any longer. "I am going to read to them," said I, "Nekrasov's 'Russian Women' and 'Moroz Krasny Nos.'" Now you know, I suppose, that "Russian Women" gives a description of the wives of the Dekabrist, aristocrats but our first revolutionists; and that the other is a poetical description of scenes from Russian peasant life. Well, then, one evening I read them "Moroz Krasny Nos," and I can assure you that they were absolutely delighted with it. "How is it," they asked me, "that nobody ever told us before that there was such a poet in Russian literature?" Next I read them "Russian Women," and they were amazed at the beauty of it.

I was with the children every day: I asked them about all sorts of things: I talked to each of them individually; and they were astonished at everything I said, for they had lived an unnatural life like hermits and knew nothing about the world. Now, I have travelled a great deal; and, in order to get them to talk, I told them a lot about Siberia, of which they knew absolutely nothing. They were surprised at every word I said, though I told them nothing that every child in Siberia does not know. I told them about the climate, the different races that inhabit this country, and so forth; and I told them all this in the presence of Nicholas himself, who had travelled a good deal in Siberia, and was even, according to his own account, in Tobolsk, but "only passing through." In order to find out how much he really knew about Russia generally, I often conversed with him about Russian history, and discovered that he did not know much about it. In fact, his knowledge of Russian history was dis-



tinctly bad, and was mostly taken from the historian Ilovaisky. I questioned him about his own private estates—Cabinet lands or Crown domains they used to call them, if I mistake not—in Nerchinsky district, in Kuznetzk, in Omsk Province, and in the Altai Mountains, where I had myself worked as a prospector.

Now you know that in the Kuznetzky basin there is an unlimited supply of the best coal. Well, when I told him about this, and about the great mineral wealth of that district, and about the way the local peasantry lived, he was amazed, for he had only "passed through" those estates of his also. I must admit that in those districts the peasants live pretty well: I only wish that our own peasants were as comfortable. They have a splendid soil, magnificent forests, and they only lack one thing—education. In all that enormous *uyezd* (district) there are only from ten to fifteen schools, and there is general illiteracy. The whole district is run by Germans or by their agents, and they have the entire control in their hands. As it would not be to the advantage of these Germans for the villagers to be educated, absolutely nothing is done for education. When I was last there myself, in 1915, I saw several schools that had been burnt down ten years earlier and which nobody had taken the trouble to rebuild.

But to return to the subject of the ex-Tsar's family, I also spoke to them about foreign parts, for you know that they have often been abroad. I asked them if they had been in the museums, picture galleries, etc., in the strange countries they had visited, but—would you believe me?—they had never been in one of them. Why, they were never once in their lives inside the doors of a public museum or picture gallery even here in Russia. There are, as you may know, some rare pictures in the Winter Palace. I asked the children if they had ever seen them, and it turned out that they had not and didn't even know that the Winter Palace belonged to them.

I asked them what they read, and found that it was mostly English and French novels. They knew nothing of Russian history. Olga and Maria had not even begun to read Russian history. In order to excite in them an interest for general knowledge, I told them about the Polar Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk, where I had been myself. This interested them, but it was clear that their teachers had never spoken to them about this and had taken no pains whatever with their education. The more I got to know them, the more I saw that their minds were absolutely empty of all useful knowledge, and that their schooling had been shamefully neglected.

Pankratov was horrified at all this and conjured up a picture of these Imperial children, whose father was the wealthiest man and the most powerful autocrat on earth, unable, owing to fear of kidnappers or assassins, to see works of art which were accessible to the very poorest

children in Petrograd, and displayed in one of the Tsar's own palaces which was open to the public.

There may be an element of truth in this picture, but on the whole it is false, for the Tsarevich was a clever and well-educated boy, as his notebooks, which were found and are now preserved by members of his family in this country, amply testify. He was certainly only joking when he pretended not to know where the Volga was; and the Grand Duchess Tatiana was also joking when she affected ignorance of the best-known Russian poets, for she herself was a poetess of some talent, and her compositions, which are at present in England, are said to show a considerable acquaintance with Russian literature.

As for the children having never been in the Winter Palace, and being ignorant of the fact that it belonged to them, I am doubtful of this, though it is possible that some of them were never in the Hermitage, though that famous picture gallery is connected with the Winter Palace by a bridge.

Nothing could persuade Pankratov, however, that the Imperial children were not badly educated, and he asked how it could be otherwise considering the inefficient teachers they had—Petrov, an aged man "who was nearly always asleep"; Kendrikova, a young lady of the Court who was supposed to teach the Tsarevich arithmetic and geography, but who was herself a woman of no ability; "Countess Schneider, an old Court lady of sixty, who taught Russian grammar, though she herself spoke Russian badly and had the most grotesque ideas about Russia; Gialliard, who taught French, but, like all the foreigners who found themselves in the same position, thought of nothing but earning enough money to return to Switzerland and live there like a lord." It never struck Pankratov apparently that there were worlds in which the Grand Duchesses were at home and in which he was a comparative stranger. One was the world of music, for several of the Tsar's daughters were accomplished musicians.

The Emperor himself, according to the same hostile authority, taught his little boy history; but the Commissar complains that he used only the compilations of Ilovaisky

and Bogdanov, and that he imagined Russian history to be simply a list of Tsars and wars. "He did not understand the life of the Russian people, and had no clear idea in his mind of the different periods in the growth of the Muscovite race."

Of Dr. Botkin, the Tsar's medical attendant, he said that "he was the son of a famous savant known all over Europe, but he did not take after his father. He was an honorary General metamorphosed into a typical courtier. He had got all the tricks of an Imperial court; he would never say anything that his master did not want him to say, and he knew well how to flatter and how to gain adroitly little favours for himself."

Of the faithful old sailor who had long attended on the Tsarevich, Pankratov said:

In addition to these, Alexis had in attendance on him a man whom he called "Uncle"—I mean the sailor Derevenko, a cunning, churlish, and even insolent bluejacket who regarded himself as the boy's tutor. This sailor was half educated, as I concluded after reading the letters he sent me requesting permission to join Alexis. Greedy and sly, he of course did all he could to gain all the material advantages possible from his privileged position. When the Imperial Family were sent to Tobolsk they were allowed to bring with them any attendants whom they liked. The people I have just mentioned were selected, and Alexandra Feodorovna, the Empress, told Krensky that Derevenko was a most disinterested man and had attended on Alexis for nearly ten years. Before the Imperial party left, however, Derevenko handed in to Colonel Kobylinsky, commandant of the ex-Tsar's train, a claim for 700 roubles which he had paid for boots supplied to Alexis during the month of July. The Colonel returned the account to him without comment. The sailor said he would speak to Alexandra Feodorovna, but the Colonel said he did not care whom Derevenko spoke to, and that, furthermore, he would not be taken to Tobolsk. On hearing of this Alexandra Feodorovna complained, almost with tears in her eyes, that, though she had been given the right to choose her own servants, this concession had already been annulled. "Are you convinced that Derevenko has not swindled you?" asked the Colonel; and when Alexandra replied that she knew Derevenko to be a thoroughly honest man, he told her about the preposterous claim for 700 roubles, and added that a man who began his connection with their party by making such a claim could on no account be allowed to travel with them to Tobolsk.

The Imperial Family was very angry at this imposition on the part of Derevenko: nevertheless, a few days later, Alexandra Feodorovna

again began asking that the sailor should be allowed to accompany them, but her request was refused and they left without him. Though thus left behind, Derevenko did not lose hope, but continued sending letters to the Romanov family. These letters all came into my hands.

To what an extent all these "faithful" retainers fooled and deceived the Romanovs, who maintained no discipline whatever over them, is shown by the following incident: Alexis fell sick, and a doctor called Derevenko—not Derevenko the sailor, but a very good doctor of the same name who attended on the Romanovs and at the same time looked after all the rest of us when we required his services—well, this doctor ordered a bath to be prepared for the boy in the evening. When evening came Alexis waited for his bath, but was told that something had gone wrong with the heating apparatus, and that, consequently, it could not be got ready. But the boy's teacher told me next morning that Madame Tattelberg had used the bath and that Alexis had complained to her, the teacher, saying: "Tell me, Klavdiya Mikhailovna, why they deceive us? Vladimir Nikolaevich (the doctor) told me that there would be a bath ready for me. In the evening they said that something had gone wrong and that it could not be got ready, and now I find that Madame Tattelberg has gone and washed herself in it."

As soon as I heard this, I took measures to prevent any such thing happening again. In the same way all the servants, flunkies, etc., did whatever they liked, and nobody had any control over them. They tried to steal food, and after breakfast, dinner, and supper every one of them brought away a parcel of food with him from the table. I had to stop this practice, of course, and they were very surprised when I did so, for they had never been treated in that way before. They even tried to steal the plates, and when a plate disappeared they said that it had been broken. All the loss fell on the Romanovs, who paid for all this out of their own private purse, but nevertheless I could not allow this robbery to go on.

In conversation with the Romanovs, I tried to ascertain how each of them accommodated himself to his new position. Everything was certainly very new to them. Olga and Maria often told me that the life they were leading in Siberia was healthier and more useful than the life they had led at Court. They said they were glad that all etiquette had been done away with so far as they were concerned, and that now they lived their own lives. They were pleased with their new teacher.

Their former life was arranged so. In the morning they got up and their maids-of-honour dressed them in the manner required that day by the etiquette of the Court, each bow being fastened in exactly such and such a manner and not a hundredth part of an inch otherwise. For dinner they had to put on other dresses; and if they were to receive visitors or to go out anywhere, they had once more to change their dresses. Literally all their time was wasted on these

fiddle-faddles, so that you can guess how little time was left to them for work and self-improvement.

This reminds me of a Little Russian anecdote, rather witty, and with a hidden meaning. A soldier once came to me in Little Russia in a clean *rubashka* (shirt, belted and worn as a coat), and boasted that soldiers change their *rubashki* once a week.

"And what about officers?" I asked.

"Officers three times a week and Generals every day," was the reply.

"And the Tsar?" I asked.

"The Tsar," promptly replied the soldier, "undresses and dresses, undresses and dresses."

This anecdote has a profound meaning and a deep significance.

Just imagine to yourself how a family develops when it is constantly surrounded by such incompetents as all these Kendrikovas, Count Tatishchevs, Schneiders, and so on; and half the day being dressed like dolls by *valets-de-chambre* and maids-of-honour who can think of nothing but costumes. Judging by the letters of the Romanovs to those maids-of-honour whom they permitted to be most intimate with them, the latter had no other occupation in life than to look after bows and flounces, lingerie and dish-cloths. I read all those letters and never came across anything serious or striking in any of them.

The Romanov girls told me that in their former life at Court they frequently held what they called receptions in honour of somebody's birthday or name-day or something of that kind; and every time these days came round they had to dress and smile at people. Though there were any number of tutors for the children, the children studied as a rule very little. Their father Nicholas, though a man of very limited capacity, and in fact, I must say, an ignorant man, might himself have taught his children, but unfortunately he was a heavy drinker.

But now I must come back to my description of the life led by the Romanovs in Tobolsk. After coffee in the morning they used to walk in the courtyard or play skittles. To give Nicholas his due he was very strong physically and a splendid hand at skittles. His opponent was usually Prince Dolgoruki, a very powerful man too, but Nicholas beat him every time. Then Dolgoruki's place would be taken by Count Tatishchev, but he was not so good a player as Dolgoruki, and was beaten in no time. After that the children began to play and then Gialliard. Nicholas tired them all out, and was himself as fresh at the end of the game as when he started. When they went walking the children marched after him like soldiers, Nicholas going first. If one fell out another would take his place. Finally all would fall out, but Nicholas never. They also sawed wood, at which Nicholas was best of all. It is necessary to have practice at this work.

Of Alexandra Feodorovna I must say that she kept terribly to

herself, rarely walked even with the children, and spent most of her time airing clothes, making crochet-work for *ikhons*, or reading the Holy Books. The children walked either with their father or by themselves. At 10 o'clock all went to have breakfast, and after that they began again to play skittles or saw wood. In this manner the whole day passed; and in the evening they collected together in the common hall where one of them read aloud while the others listened. Alexandra Feodorovna generally knitted. It was the children who told me this, for I did not care to disturb them by joining their company myself at this time. I asked the children what kind of books were read generally—was it anything in the style of Chekhov or Nekrasov? It seems that while this reading went on some of them slept, others dozed, and others talked to one another. I was told this by Dr. Botkin, who had to pass the evening with them as a rule, but was generally the first to fall asleep. And this is what they called "reading aloud."

Now I am going to tell you of their piety. Mass used at first to be said for the ex-Tsar's family in the hall, which was about the largest room in the house. They invited a priest to say Mass for them, and four monks to sing in the choir. Alexandra Feodorovna used to make all the arrangements herself. She embroidered the altar-linen, she put up the ornaments, she placed the *ikhons* and the flowers in their proper places. It was a parade service. All ranged themselves according to their rank, the *valets-de-chambre* nearer to the members of the suite, and so on down to the cook's humblest assistant. Nicholas occupied the first place; next to him was his wife; then Alexis; then the daughters arranged according to age, and so on. It was interesting to see how all these grand people prayed like automata, keeping their eyes all the time on Alexandra Feodorovna. When she knelt down, all knelt down. When she stood up, all stood up. It was terrible to see how strict they were about precedence even at the *Miropomazanie*.\* God help Alexandra Feodorovna's *valet-de-chambre* if he went up to the altar for the *Miropomazanie* before Nicholas's *valet-de-chambre*!

I paid particular attention to this point, for it greatly amused me, and it was typical of the worship of minutiae which prevailed in the Romanov family. Alexandra Feodorovna never went to the *Miropomazanie* before Nicholas. After her, Alexis had to go, and so on. Little things like these filled their whole lives. Every time that Mass was said they all tried to wear something new, and that also was a waste of time.

Now from what I have said you can form an idea of what that family was like. First of all it was surrounded by stupid and ignorant people who were only looking out for their own personal advantage. There was not a gifted person in the whole crowd.

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\* Being signed with the sign of the cross in holy oil on eves of festivals.

The foregoing gives one a clue to the state of things which brought about the Russian Revolution. It has always been the misfortune of the Tsars that most of their subjects have regarded them as more than human, one section looking upon them as gods, another section looking upon them as demons. This misfortune threatens to follow the unfortunate Nicholas the Second even into his grave. Some of his followers, frank Imperialists, have already evolved a legend according to which his death was due to his refusal to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and they persuaded the world to believe that his dying words were a declaration that he gave his life for Russia, though not a single witness has borne testimony to that effect. They have also put into his mouth long speeches expressive of his loyalty to the Entente, though it is doubtful if he ever made such speeches, which were in any case unnecessary, as his loyalty to the Entente was never for a moment in doubt.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE CITY OF DREADFUL HUNGER

I DID not leave Ekaterinburg by the train in which I had come thither. I left by another train belonging to the Ministry of Communications, and which was one of the good old trains of the International Sleeping-Car Company in which, before the war, I had travelled in every part of Europe. In Russia such trains used generally to contain well-to-do people, officers and Government functionaries of high rank, landowners and wealthy merchants. The servants were very attentive, the wine was good, and everything went smoothly. The contents of the train by which I travelled were very different, the dominating type being the Russian mechanic or chauffeur type with high boots, peaked cap, dirty clothes, and unpleasant manners. One of the four men in my compartment was a Red Finn, by trade a carpenter, and by nature very gentle and obliging, who was being sent to Finland by the Bolshevik Government in order that he might help to stir up trouble there.

Another of my travelling companions was a Commissar who had been in charge of the Omsk railways, but who had lost that post because of differences he had had with the other Commissars at Omsk. He expected to get a better post in Moscow, but when he arrived in that city, he so little liked the looks of it that he asked for an appointment in Kharkov instead, and, I believe, got it. What interested me chiefly in him was the fact that he knew Yurovsky very well, though he did not go to see him on this occasion, and had, I am convinced, been one of the persons who had taken part in the murder of the Tsar. But about that terrible tragedy he maintained absolute silence, and I never even learned his name. It was probably Metvietev,



Lovatnykh, Partin, or Kostusov, but I shall call him Metvietev. He was pot-bellied—an inexcusable offence in a man of only about thirty-five years of age—he habitually read, in a Russian translation, the filthiest of Zola's novels; and he sponged in the greediest and most shameless way for food on the Red Finn. I slept in Metvietev's compartment one night, as there was a typhus case in my own compartment, but I went back again to the typhus case next day, as Metvietev was so very restless in his sleep that I feared he might accidentally shoot me during the night with a loaded revolver which he kept under his pillow.

The carriages in Russia are not now divided into classes, nor are there first and second class waiting-rooms at the railway stations, nor any other outward evidences of there being more than one class of people in the country. Travellers by train or tramcar never buy tickets. They manage to get permission to travel from some Commissar, and, if they are not Bolsheviks or employees of the Bolsheviks, they find it practically impossible to get such permission. All who travelled with me were either Communists or employees of the Communists—which is not quite the same thing—and they were looking forward to lucrative posts in Moscow or in the provinces, even as faithful adherents travelling to Rome with Cæsar after Pharsalia might have looked forward to governorships in the East, Spain, Gaul, and Africa.

We went to Moscow by way of Yaroslav, and our entry into the Red Citadel of Bolshevism was extraordinarily impressive, almost as impressive, though in quite a different way, as if we had entered that ancient city immediately after Napoleon's retreat from its blackened walls. Moscow is the dead heart of a burnt-out conflagration. Ekaterinburg and Krasnoyarsk are fresh wood on which the fire has seized practically for the first time, and the tongues of Red flame that shoot up from them seem at first glance to be a beautiful and inspiring sight. But in another year Siberia and the Urals will be, like Moscow, a pile of dust and ashes covering the grave of lost illusions.

At 9 o'clock in the morning we were passing through a delightful piece of rich country. The deep white snow

contrasted sharply with the dark pine-woods, above which rose the bright blue domes of village churches; and the whole scene, painted just as it was, would have made a striking, soothing, and delightful picture. Then we suddenly entered a scene of indescribable desolation, the desolation of a ruined civilization. I am not drawing on my imagination, or even on my memory, for what I saw. I am transcribing, with a necessary change in the tenses, the notes I wrote in the train with the scene I described before me. I came to Moscow with an open mind, quite prepared, if the facts justified it, to draw as flattering a description of Red Moscow as I had drawn of Red Krasnoyarsk or Red Ekaterinburg. But the scene made a more dismal impression on me than had ever been made by any of the war-wrecked cities I had visited.

When still about fifty miles from the capital, we began to pass large numbers of "sick" engines and abandoned trains, until, finally, we ran at full speed for hours at a time between a double row of derelict waggons and locomotives. There were in all about one thousand ruined engines and twenty times that number of deserted waggons, but this is only a very rough estimate, as it was impossible for me to keep count owing to the speed at which we travelled; and to the fact that we sometimes ran between triple lines of abandoned rolling-stock. The engines were cold and rusty and far beyond all hope of repair, while the trucks were in a similarly pitiable condition, with their sliding-doors wrenched loose and hanging down like broken arms, their interior half full of snow, and their woodwork in many cases torn away, presumably for firewood.

The Bolsheviks were apparently making no attempt to repair or utilize any of these railway waggons. They confined themselves to painting on them in huge letters their eternal inscription "R.S.F.S.R." (Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic); as if it were not clear enough, without that inscription, that such derelicts could not possibly belong to any other kind of Government. They have painted the same letters in red across the map of Russia, with the result that Russia is to-day in the same condition as those abandoned trains.

To add to the hopelessness of the scene, there were several wrecked and upturned trains lying along the track, and they also have the same initials. That all these wrecks could be accidental I cannot believe, for I know that the railwaymen sometimes go on strike, that these strikes are repressed with relentless severity, and that the men who take part in them are branded as traitors to the Republic and prevented from giving the public their own version of the dispute either by word of mouth or through the Press. That they should, in their madness and despair, deliberately wreck their trains and perish with them is just what I should expect a Russian Bolshevik to do under the circumstances. He can no longer obtain sympathy from Socialist workmen abroad as he could when he was persecuted by the Tsar, so he hurls himself to destruction, sacrificing at the same time as many other lives and as much property as he can.

The whole effect was appalling, especially on me who had last been in Moscow in 1914 when that great city was bursting with life and with all kinds of supplies. Many of my readers have doubtless been accustomed, during the last six years of universal frightfulness, to entering ruined cities and seeing tens of thousands of abandoned trucks, but this was the capital of a great European Empire that we were approaching. Imagine how an Englishman returning from abroad would feel if he found most of the track between Southampton and London crowded with deserted trains and cold, rusty engines; if he saw the grass growing on the deserted platforms of great railway stations; found overturned rolling-stock and abandoned machinery littering the fields on both sides of the line; and, worst symptom of all, discovered that the English people looked on at this ruin with complete apathy and unconcern.

That this can ever happen may seem unlikely, but, if there is any truth in the teaching of past history, it is certain to happen, for our present form of civilization is as frail as the many forms which have preceded it, and has no more chance of permanence than the Egyptian or the Babylonian. As surely as trees grow up and delight us with the beauty of their youth and the majesty of their maturity, and then

decay and disappear, so surely will the great capitals of the world pass away. Formerly the signs of desolation in a mighty metropolis were the cold altar-stone, the roofless hut, the deserted palace; but in future these signs will be hundreds of miles of grassy railway tracks covered with abandoned trucks, gigantic masses of rusty machinery amid which the birds will build their nests and the spiders weave their webs, and underground passages once reverberating every minute of the day and night with the thunder of electric trains, but now solitary as those underneath the Great Pyramid.

The extraordinary change which took place in the whole scene on the day I entered Moscow could not have been more striking, had it been a representation on the stage with a quiet but convinced anti-Bolshevik of extreme artistic and organizing ability as stage-manager. The very snow, dazzlingly white in the morning, had everywhere become soiled, wet, and trampled in the evening, and all the beauty of the dawn had passed out of the sordid and melancholy earth. At the dilapidated suburban stations which we passed, we saw gangs of wretched and sometimes villainous-looking men and women setting out into the country with bags to collect food and fuel from the villages. Among them were schoolboys, editors, teachers, poets, sculptors; so that, instead of leaving genius leisure to pursue its bent, Bolshevism will make every manifestation of genius impossible by the necessity it imposes on all of spending their whole time satisfying the elementary craving for food and warmth. This is a rebarbarization, a return to the condition of the cave-man and the Ice Age; and it may quite possibly be the malady of which all our modern civilization will perish.

We passed, it is true, some live but unhealthy-looking locomotives drawing trains laden with firewood for the Red monster which once was Holy Moscow, the dead heart of this typhus-stricken, Bolshevik-ridden land. Moscow had nearly been frozen out, as well as starved out, during the winter. Water-pipes had burst in every house, because they could not be kept warm, and wooden houses had to be pulled down to supply the inhabitants with fuel. At

every verst or so we now saw piles of timber which the peasants had been made to collect along the line, and from which the trains were loaded up. At about twenty miles from the city began a stately avenue of splendid villas, formerly the residences of Moscow's merchant princes, each surrounded by its forest of pine or birch, each with its summer-houses and rustic bridges. They all looked neglected but were not all deserted, as some of them had been converted into orphanages and children's hospitals.

We entered Moscow late in the afternoon, but, owing to my very anomalous position, I did not venture into the city. I had no papers; and, if arrested, anything might occur to me. Five years earlier I should, immediately on arriving in the Nikolaevsky station, have entrusted my baggage to one of the many sturdy porters, who then offered their services clamorously and for a ridiculously low price, and afterwards have taken a "taxi" to the National or the Hôtel Métropole. But there were now no porters and no hotels. The National had been nationalized, and the Métropole was the headquarters of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, as well as of a large number of Communist leaders. I had known some Moscow people in the old days, but was quite certain that they were not in Moscow now, unless they were in some prison or cemetery. Even if I succeeded in getting rooms somewhere, I should immediately be asked for my identification papers and my permit to reside in the city, and I had neither. I remained, therefore, in the train, but all the others went out in great haste, for Moscow was the goal of their ambitions, the centre from which they would radiate over Russia to rule provinces as large as Great Britain. They were extremely anxious, therefore, to be favourably impressed by the capital and to make all allowances for its shortcomings. All were consequently enthusiastic, but there was none so enthusiastic as Metvietev, who, having lived all his life in Siberia, had never been in Moscow before.

The loss of a battle or of a throne is sometimes indicated on the theatrical stage by messengers from without, bringing the dread news to the General as he sits trembling in his tent or to the King as he cowers in his palace; and

the frightened faces of these bearers of evil tidings tell the tale as eloquently as their words. Such bearers of disastrous news were my travel-companions, who came back towards nightfall in ones and twos with very lugubrious countenances and terrible stories about conditions in Moscow. Metvietev was the gloomiest of all; his very face was a tragedy, being white as that of a child who has seen a corpse for the first time. For some moments he could not speak. Then he opened his lips and told us of his experiences.

"I engaged two sleighs, one after the other," he said, "and in both cases the horses fell and could not rise again. They were weak for want of food. I had to walk most of the way on foot, and the streets were terrible. They cannot have been cleaned for the last year; they are knee-deep in mud and water. Sleigh-drivers will not move a single step for less than one thousand roubles. Ugh! I couldn't possibly live here for anything. It's a terrible city, and the people look famished, as well as the horses. No lights. No trams. It's a nightmare——" and he waved his hands as if warding off ghosts.

The second messenger of woe was an old engineer from the Urals, who had not been in Moscow for years. There was a wild stare in his eyes as he came in. "My God! My God!" was all he could say for some minutes, and I was never able to get a very connected account of his impressions. I took his remarks down in shorthand, however, such as they were; and here they are: "This is no place for a man to live in. . . . My God! What a change! . . . The trams don't run any more. . . . Impossible to find a sleigh. . . . The people are like walking skeletons. . . . I do hope they won't want me to stay here: I couldn't do it."

All the others told a similar story. Not one of the new arrivals could get accommodation in the city, and even those who had families there preferred to return to the train. That alone is eloquent testimony to the condition of Lenin's capital. Imagine travellers on their arrival in London rushing back wildly to sleep four in a carriage, attached to a train side-tracked about half a mile out of Victoria Station; for we could not get into Nikolaevsky

Station owing to the block of trains, some of them abandoned, some of them belonging to Commissars. It would not be much of a testimonial to the accommodation provided by the Ritz and the Savoy or by any of the thousands of London's humbler hostelries.

I deal with this matter at some length because, of all the Britishers who arrived in Moscow during the last year, I am probably the only one who arrived unexpectedly and without having had preparations made to impress him favourably. When, about a month later, the Bolshevik Foreign Office accidentally learned of my presence in town, it almost wept tears of blood in its chagrin at my arriving by the back-door, so to speak, and seeing things for myself. In all other cases it had sent a smooth-tongued interpreter to meet the new arrival, to keep him clear of all objectionable sights and persons, and to stick to him like a leech during his stay in Russia. An account of the minuteness of the care taken by the Bolsheviks to ensure that a favourable impression was made on British journalists and members of British Labour Deputations would be amusing but hardly credible.

After a few days I ventured out of the train and began renewing my acquaintance with Moscow, always returning to sleep in my carriage at Nikolaevsky Station. It was a dismal experience if only on account of the food question, for I could get no food whatever till 6 o'clock in the evening, and I had to go on foot all the time, wading mostly through icy water. As I had only one pair of boots and could not get them dried, I developed a disease resembling trench foot. Let a Londoner imagine the tram, bus, underground, taxi, cab, and all the other passenger services to be completely broken down, so that he is compelled to walk every day from Hampstead to his office in the city. He would find it hard enough even if he had not to contend with insufficient food, frequent pools of water, and masses of half-melted snow. Many of the Moscovites have to walk fourteen miles a day. They get food in their offices or in the public eating-houses, but it is only black bread, weak cabbage soup, and imitation tea. I say "their" offices, but all offices in Moscow are governmental, and everybody is a

Government servant. It is one of the strangest sights I have ever seen, this great mass of wretched-looking people drifting into the centre of the city every morning like the *débris* of a broken army, and then drifting listlessly home again in the evening. At other times there are not many people on the streets. The Kuznetsky Most, the Bond Street of Moscow, and also the adjoining streets had at one time consisted almost entirely of magnificent shops. These were nearly all closed, and sometimes soldiers stood on guard at the doors. Those of them that were open sold milk or honey at impossible prices, but as they never seemed to have more than a quart of milk or a pound of honey in stock, it seemed difficult to understand why they remained open at all. In shop-windows as large and as stylish as the best in Regent Street, I have seen nothing in the window save a small plateful of carrots or about a dozen frost-bitten potatoes; and these were being sold at the same price as the diamonds which they had replaced.

Across the whole front of the Métropole and the National were painted in enormous letters the words " Dom Sovietov " (House of the Soviets). Both buildings were occupied by Government offices or by the Commissars or by foreign guests of the Reds. Over the domed Court of Justice in the Kremlin flew the Red flag, and underneath that emblem of Terror lived Lenin. Trotsky had rooms in the Cavalry Barracks close by; and it was much more difficult to enter the Kremlin now than it had been in the time of the Tsar. All the gates were guarded by Red soldiers, and nobody could enter without a pass, which it was practically impossible for a non-Bolshevik to get.

Many of the British Labour men and others who have visited Moscow during the last year were never there before, so that they cannot appreciate the lamentable change that has taken place in this typical and original Russian city. I was in Moscow in 1906 and again in 1914; and on both occasions I was struck by its abundant and genial life, and its superabundance of food and drink. Something of the pleasure which it gave me may be got by the reader if he goes to see a Russian company play " Boris Gudenov " with its crowds of *muzhiks*, peasant girls, boys, and boyars,



all of them big-limbed, handsome, and endowed with those powerful and melodious voices which are one of the many great gifts of nature to the Russian race—all of them dressed in the long-skirted, startling, and semi-oriental costumes of their time and country. It was the carnival season when I first visited Moscow, and the superabundance and super-excellence of the food, as well as the healthy appetites of the people, would have rejoiced the heart even of a dyspeptic. In one huge popular restaurant under the shadow of the Kremlin the waiters were sturdy boys in old Russian dress, with long, bright-coloured *kaftans* fastened at the waist by leathern belts studded with glittering silver rivets. Huge *muzhiks*, whose long beards gave them the same massive masculine dignity as its noble antlers give to an old stag, consumed more pancakes than I could count. Philippov's famous tea-shops were piled high with truck-loads of exquisite confectionery, and if you visited a friend at any hour of the day or night a steaming samovar was immediately placed on the table, and enough bread, Siberian butter, caviar, cheese, delicious home-made jams, and cakes to last one for days. And, having done justice to all this, one discovered that it was merely intended to stay the appetite until a larger meal arrived with its soup, meat-patties, meat, *kasha*, vegetables, sweets, Caucasian wine, and tea. (The reader will, I hope, excuse all these gastronomical details, for I wrote these words in a famished and cheerless Moscow.)

Nor was all this plenty confined to the upper classes, for the peasants and workmen were not worse off. Sheep were so plentiful in the country that, in the heart of Siberia at least, they could be bought for half a crown each, while fine horses were so numerous that, even when one was sufficient, three were harnessed to a sleigh or carriage and driven by a brilliantly dressed *izvoshchik* who cracked his whip and laughed from sheer joy of life as he sped along the street or across the steppe. In comparison with the peasant of Western Europe the *muzhik* had an enormous amount of land, and he seemed to me, for I had also lived in the country districts, to be by far the happiest of his class in all the world. He had two holidays on an average every week, and he enjoyed those holidays ideally, watching

the young people dance light-heartedly, if he were no longer young himself, and listening to the beautiful old folk-songs sung to the accompaniment of the *balalaïka*.

The change that has taken place now is the change from joyous life to a condition of torpor not far removed from death. Philippov's is closed, and throughout all this City of Dreadful Famine not even a crust of bread or a cup of tea can be had. Six years ago the cheap tea-houses for the workmen were very "jolly" and comfortable places, where you could get as much tea, bread, and butter as you liked for about twopence—I have eaten in them myself. Almost all of them are now closed, and the contrast between their cheerful blue-and-yellow signs and the emptiness of the desolate and locked interior strikes a chill to the heart. The few that are open only sell hot water coloured with strawberry leaves, and are as melancholy as a charnel-house. The bakers' shops once filled with bright and willing assistants in long white aprons have been replaced by huge bare Government offices as uninviting as crematoria; and even these only give out bread on tickets. Their very signs have all the dreadful uniformity of Socialism: "Government Provision Store No. 29," instead of the cheerful Russian equivalent for "John Smith, Baker." Instead of finding inside these gloomy mausolea honest John and his sons, proud of their little shop, sure that their bread is the best-baked bread in Moscow, and always busy arranging their window attractively, you find a venomous and overbearing official of the Soviet Government who knows nothing about baking, takes no interest in it, is under no obligation to please his customers or to make his shop look attractive, and is in a permanently embittered state of mind because the Soviet Government has not given him a better post.

Of all the mistakes which the Soviet Government has made, the greatest, to my mind, is the killing of ambition, private initiative, legitimate desire for gain, praiseworthy parental anxiety to put a little money by for the education of the children. This is cutting away the roots of the tree, and will make the Russian people wither from off the face of the earth. But, bad as this system is in Russia, it would be worse in England. Russia is a huge country in a

primitive stage of civilization, and dwellers in remote steppes will not be affected by Bolshevism for years. Great Britain on the other hand, is a compact and complicated piece of machinery which would be irretrievably ruined by a Soviet Government in six months. Moreover, the national character of the Englishman would rapidly degenerate under Bolshevik rule, for he owes almost everything he has to individual initiative, and when he becomes a Government servant he often becomes a nuisance. Those who remained at home during the war can speak with more authority on this subject than I can, but in the Army I found that the dentists, tailors, clerks, and other civilians who were employed to carry out their old work under military direction and with an assured salary, lost in most cases all their courtesy, all desire to care for the instruments entrusted to them, and 95 per cent. of their efficiency.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE MYSTERIES OF MOSCOW

How can I convey a just idea of what present-day Moscow looks like to an Englishman who has never been there? It is a town of mystery and misery; of secret executions and a lawless Government; of freedom to wave red flags and preach free love, and use language which would ensure one's instant arrest even in Hyde Park, but at the same time of an iron tyranny which will not allow a word to be said against itself. It is an inconceivable topsy-turvydom. You can do almost everything which would get you arrested in England, but if you do almost anything which we should consider praiseworthy, the Extraordinary Commission will at once get hold of you. You may stand on the altar of the Cathedral and deny that there is a God. You may advocate the murder of Kings, Dukes, Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, foreign officers and officials of every kind, mill-managers, bankers, merchants, and Bishops, but if you dare to suggest on the contrary that murderers of these different classes should be arrested and tried, you are sure to get into trouble with the police. If you try to start a purely religious revival, you will certainly be arrested as Mr. Plekhanov was in Petrograd. If you advocate the principle of private property, the right of trial by jury, the claims of the middle classes, you will soon be hauled before a revolutionary tribunal.

In London we have doubled the postage rate. In Moscow they have abolished it, and you can drop letters into a postal box without any stamp at all, but also unfortunately without much chance of ever getting an answer, for half the letters are never collected or delivered. In London they have increased the tramway fares. In Moscow they have abolished them, but unfortunately the trams do not run

any longer. In England the railway fares have been raised. In Russia they have been abolished and you can travel free, if you are able to discover an ordinary passenger train running, a discovery which I was never able to make. In England the price of newspapers has been raised. In Moscow newspapers are given away or posted up on the walls for everybody to read. In London the well-to-do resort to great and exclusive Clubs. In Moscow such Clubs have been converted into Children's Orphanages and Workmen's "Palaces," while the upper classes have fled or live miserably in the slums.

Some of the most whimsical things that have been written by Mr. G. K. Chesterton, the most mysterious situations that have been invented by Mr. Edgar Allan Poe, or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, or Mr. John Buchan, might have been founded on fact in Moscow. In one of Mr. G. K. Chesterton's romances we are introduced to an Anarchists' den, and one of the masked conspirators betrays by his gait the fact that he is a shop-walker. Now one of Chicherin's principal assistants has exactly the same walk, and I should say that he was employed in a large drapery establishment in London. But he is not a person to laugh at, for he is deep in the secrets of the Third International; and when he puts his head on one side, rubs his hands gently together, and asks "What can I do for you?" you may be sure that he *can* "do" for you if he wants to. He certainly held my life in his hands for some time.

Another assistant of Chicherin had been a tailor in London, where he might perhaps be described as a devil among the tailors, while now he is a tailor among the devils. In the East End he would press your clothes "while you wait" and "make them look as good as new"; now he will sign you a death-warrant while you wait. He is a dangerous, able, and fanatical man; he has charge of Bolshevik propaganda in England, and he also is not a person to laugh at. The Russian Communist has posed for fifty years as the injured innocent, the poor down-trodden victim of the Tsardom. Though he now rules one-eighth of the earth's surface, he still keeps up that pose, partly out of habit, partly out of policy. And, unfortunately, it is a pose that

makes a profound impression on the British working-classes with their traditional sympathy for the oppressed, though, as a matter of fact, the Bolshevik is now the oppressor.

A curious feature of Red Moscow is the number of people who have got lost in it. Members of good families are scattered in different parts of the city, and do not know each other's address. It is the same all over the vast extent of Russia. Cabinet Ministers, Generals, great landowners, able editors, girls of noble birth, are scattered throughout the country in isolated villages and remote farmhouses, without any of their relatives knowing of their whereabouts. When Kolchak's troops advanced in the spring of 1919, they discovered important personages hidden in the most out-of-the-way places. Among them were Prince Lvov, formerly President of the Russian Republic; Mr. Lvov, formerly Procurator of the Most Holy Synod; and several ladies of the Imperial suite, all of them marooned, far apart from one another, on sequestered islets in the great Bolshevik sea, as, in pictures of the Deluge, naked figures are represented as clinging to rocky peaks jutting up above the Flood. In the British Isles, with their small area and their excellent train and postal service, it is hard for one to realize the extent to which those unfortunate castaways were cut off from the world.

Little Princes are living to-day in woodmen's huts surrounded by forests large as England, and are playing with plebeian boys and girls as ragged as themselves. Strapping young Duchesses are earning their living as dairymaids; and, if all comes right with Russia during the next few years, the real love romances of these terrible days will supply story-tellers with material enough to last them for the next half-century. Unhappily there is much more of squalor and of tragedy than of romance, as probably was the case during those "old, unhappy, far-off days" which historical novelists make so desirable and picturesque. Emaciated young men in the tattered uniform of Guards officers sell matches in the streets. One distinguished General keeps a small fried-fish shop. A bank director is doorkeeper at a Bolshevik Club. Sometimes the first

announcement one gets regarding the whereabouts of old Russian friends is a brief note in the *Pravda* to say that they have been shot in some distant village "for counter-revolutionary activity." In most cases this accusation is probably false, but there always is counter-revolutionary activity in Russia. At Cheliabinsk, in 1918, the Czechs maintained a regular messenger service through Red Russia to Warsaw and Prague, and the messengers got in touch with anti-Bolshevik organizations in all the towns through which they passed, while, later on, Kolchak, Denikin, and Yudenich, communicated regularly with their supporters in Lenin-land; though I must candidly say that few of those supporters were sufficiently secretive to qualify for membership in the Carbonari, or Black Hand, or Freemasons, or Sinn Fein, or Ancient Order of Elks, or any other society which makes the faintest pretence to secrecy. To put it quite bluntly, Duchesses, rural deans, squires, and romantic young ladies make distinctly bad conspirators, especially when they are conspiring against professional revolutionaries whose brains, very keen as a rule to start with, have been sharpened to an amazing degree of acuteness by a stern apprenticeship in subterranean intrigue and by the severe mental training undergone in the long duel of wits between them and the sharpest police of the Tsar, a duel which ended with the revolutionary on top.

I consequently kept aloof from White conspirators during my stay in Red Russia, but on one occasion a lady of distinguished appearance brought me on a large tray two pieces of confetti, one white and the other red, and asked me with a mysterious look to choose one of them. Much to her disgust I chose the red: had I chosen the white I should probably have discovered that she was engaged in some fantastic monarchist adventure. These plots have extended to England, but I would not advise my countrymen to have anything to do with them, for they are all silly and will only lead to useless loss of life. For that reason, indeed, they should be suppressed by Scotland Yard as relentlessly as Red plots. The salvation of Russia will not be accomplished by foolish conspiracies like these. It *will* be rather a turning of the tables, however, if Scotland

Yard puts its hand on the shoulder of some Grand Duke plotting in a West End drawing-room against the red-capped Ishmael of the Kremlin.

In Tverskaya Street, the Strand of Moscow, there are two large Anarchist bookshops, and the books sold there denounce all Governments and all religions, and advocate anarchy as the cure for every human ill. I was surprised to find, however, that the Anarchists do not advocate complete individualism. They approve of little groups of persons engaged in the same business joining together for purposes of trade and work, but unfortunately their doctrine leads to little groups of men joining together for purposes of crime. In Petrograd, for example, five anarchists formed themselves into an association which they called "The Union of Five Oppressed," and seized a house which took their fancy by simply pointing their revolvers at the owner and advising him to go elsewhere. In the early days of Bolshevik rule there were many similar cases in Moscow, where an acquaintance of mine, an official of the Soviet, was turned out of his house one day by four youths, armed with revolvers, who said that they were Anarchists.

The Moscow Anarchists have also on the Tverskaya a large Club where, if introduced by a member, one can get food. Lectures on anarchism are given daily in their Club and are open to the public. It is somewhat strange that while political parties like the Mensheviks, who are almost the same as the Bolsheviks, are prohibited from holding political meetings or maintaining any sort of political organization, the Anarchists, whose doctrine is the very antithesis of Communism, are allowed a certain amount of latitude, being indeed the only political party which Lenin will tolerate. As a matter of fact, Lenin has a soft spot in his heart for the Anarchists, owing to the way they have been hunted and harried, like himself, by the police of "capitalist" countries. Recently, however, the growth of the Anarchist party has alarmed the Soviet Government, and a good many arrests of Anarchist agitators have been made, especially in Saratov. The Bolshevik propaganda was also directed towards proving that Anarchism was an unsound political theory; and that an Anarchist Govern-



ment could never resist Kolchak and Denikin as the Soviet Government had done.

There is in Petrograd a number of American Anarchists whom the United States Government dumped down in Russia, evidently on the assumption that Lenin was an Anarchist. These people, of whom the leaders are Emma Goldman and John Birkmanns, have now formed an association called "Russian Friends of American Freedom," of which I speak elsewhere.

Undoubtedly a great many Bolsheviks who want to go abroad are urged by a fanatical desire to preach the Gospel of Lenin to foreign countries. Mikhailov, the war correspondent of the *Pravda*, who writes in that paper under the name of Sergiev, is particularly anxious to come to England in order to evangelize the English workmen. Many of the literary men and journalists of the Rosta (Russian Socialist Telegraph Agency) are also anxious to represent that agency in foreign parts, generally in England. They consider this country to be the crux of the whole situation, and many of them are learning English in order that their missionary labours here may be fruitful. Employees of this great news agency speak every language in Europe, having lived abroad most of their life; and as they will be very well paid, will enjoy an official status, and will represent a greater and wealthier agency than Reuter, the American Associated Press, and Havas put together, they will probably exercise more influence on the foreign Press and therefore on the foreign public than the official representatives of the Soviet Government. Newspaper men who can afford to keep a Rolls-Royce and a suite of rooms in the Ritz will impress even their most hostile English colleagues.

Other Bolsheviks want to get to England because they are doubtful of the stability of things in Russia, and one Bolshevik of quite high position asked me once how long he would have to live in England in order to get naturalized. Another Bolshevik in an important military position confided to me his desire to flee to one of the British Colonies. His wife and family are the obstacle, however. The Soviet Government seldom allow even their highest officials to take their families with them when they go abroad, the

families being almost invariably detained as hostages. Technical experts, engineers, literary men, doctors, etc., are also busy learning English, in the hope of getting away from Bolshevism, which they detest; and if the Soviet Government ever relaxes its embargo on emigration, there will be a rush out of the country, comparable only to a rush out of a burning house. One man, who could not even speak English, talked to me about crossing the Pamirs into India. I expressed no opinion on the subject, but I am afraid that he would not be exactly welcomed by the British authorities in India. If this book happens to fall into the hands of British officials who find themselves in a position to succour any of these really honest and anti-Bolshevik refugees, I hope that those officials will make proper investigations before turning the fugitives back.

Of course there are fanatics who want to leave Russia for the purpose of preaching violence and revolution abroad; and in this connection there is a curious tendency amongst the Russian revolutionists, especially amongst the Jews from England and America, to get tired of the success which they have achieved in Russia, and to look out with intense eagerness and impatience for fresh worlds to conquer and fresh Governments to overthrow. Now that they have succeeded in establishing the ideal Socialist State of which they have so long dreamed, they are in a desperate hurry to get away from it. This craving, which I have often studied at close quarters and which seems to me almost a disease, is one of the most striking characteristics of the Bolshevik movement at the present moment. The Communists itch for propaganda, and their desire for the destruction of sure-established social formation is intense. That itch can no longer be satisfied in Russia, so they want to get out and do some demolition work outside. Up to two years ago their thoughts always ran on destruction and conspiracy, until they could not look on any Government or Creed without experiencing an irresistible longing to sap and overthrow it, a longing which they could only restrain at the cost of great mental suffering. They are still like infants who have grown accustomed to smashing things, and who are most unhappy when prevented from

doing so. Emma Goldmann, Birkmanns, Balabanova, and all the other exiles are most anxious to get out of Russia again. To give one instance of this disillusionment, Dr. Karlin, a Russian Jewess, who worked in the state of Detroit, came to Russia without a passport, with the hope of working in it after the Bolshevik revolution; three weeks in Russia sufficed to cool her enthusiasm, and though she had lost her American nationality, she still claimed to be treated as a foreigner and neglected to throw in her lot with the Bolsheviks. Three weeks before I left Russia she was suddenly seized by the Extraordinary Commission, and was in solitary confinement when I left Moscow.

## CHAPTER XVII

### MY LIFE IN MOSCOW

I do not propose to describe in detail my life in Moscow, as the reader will probably be more interested in hearing what I saw there.

At first I lived in the railway carriage in which I had come, and I found that other people were living there also. On these people I managed to "sponge," more or less successfully, but for some weeks I could not get anything to eat or drink till 6 o'clock in the evening. What this means I leave the reader to imagine. One can live without food for a long time if one lives quietly in a warm room and drinks plenty of water, but I walked a great deal about Moscow in cold weather and with the streets knee-deep in snow and slush. Later on, when the snow melted, great pools of water made some of the principal thoroughfares almost impassable. In some places there were stepping-stones, or one could creep along close by the sides of the houses where there was a broken margin of dry land about an inch wide; and it was strange to see long queues of people waiting at such places till they could negotiate these dangerous crossings slowly and in single file. As my one pair of boots was worn out, I soon began to suffer from "trench foot," which I had never known when in the trenches. My hair grew long, I ceased to shave, I could not even wash every day, I was only able to clean my boots once during the course of a month; what wonder, then, that when I made myself known to Mr. North he shook his head very, very dubiously? He gave me money, however, and with this I was able to buy some food. For food could be had, though at very high prices. At several places near the Kremlin, women sold a sort of rough porridge for one hundred roubles a cup—equivalent to £10 in the old currency—

and I used to stand in the street amid a crowd of famished derelicts who looked almost as disreputable as myself, eating out of a wooden porringer, with the aid of a wooden spoon this "grateful and comforting" food. The porridge was kept in a large wooden bucket like what cattle are fed out of; and, being carefully covered, it was always warm, though there was very little nourishment in it.

Tea made out of hot water and dried carrot scrapings was sold in many shops, and vegetable soup of a very poor quality could also be got. Workmen and their families were better off than I was, for their tickets entitled them to soup and black bread at the Soviet eating-houses which, being without documents of any kind, I could not enter. Nor could I buy bread in the Government bread stores, nor, in fact, anything at all, for I had no documents, not even a permit to live in Moscow, and was in fact an outlaw. Never in my life had I repeated with more fervour the petition in the Lord's Prayer wherein we ask for "our daily bread." The damp black bread which I managed occasionally to obtain was wholly insufficient to stay the cravings of hunger.

This system of food control places unprecedented power in the hands of the Government and makes all strangers visiting Russia absolutely dependent on the Soviet. There are no hotels save governmental ones; and private families cannot receive guests, as they have no food for them. I cannot imagine how such an arrangement can ever work if intercourse is resumed between Soviet Russia and the outer world. Ambassadors will be dependent on the Bolshevik Government for food, unless they get all their supplies from abroad, and foreign business-men, tourists, and newspaper correspondents will be in the same position.

I talked to all sorts of people, but found everybody intensely fatigued, suspicious, and unwilling to discuss Bolshevism, the only exceptions being the paid Bolshevik officials, male and female, who number in Moscow 230,000 persons against 100,000 working-men. Those who were not officials only spoke of the lack of food and fuel, and the innumerable difficulties of life; and they were all cowed and dispirited. I attended the French church and found that

I was the only male in the congregation, the others being a few frightened women. I spoke to the *curé*, a cultured and scholarly French gentleman with exquisite manners, but he could not have been more guarded in his answers if I had been a Commissar. He certainly looked on me, I think, as a Bolshevik *agent provocateur*.

The Polish churches, not only in Moscow but all over Siberia, were crowded with men as well as women; and I always felt better, physically and spiritually, after visiting them. They were calm asylums for the sane in a country which had gone mad. They were altars where one could seek sanctuary from the poisoned shafts of ideas more deadly than the spears of the feudal age, from Kropotkin's fascinating theories of licence, as well as from Lenin's stern dogmas of oligarchic tyranny. Even their severe Latin architecture and the plain, veritable cross of Rome on the steeple were a relief after the twisted Oriental style, barbaric colours, and distorted crosses of the Byzantine churches; while, on the other hand, the warm glow of life which animated them was an equally welcome contrast to the chill of death which pervaded the "Reformed" chapels. They were mute but eloquent symbols of a greater and an older International than Lenin's, of an Institution which had witnessed the fall of the Roman Empire, which had survived the dreadful menace of Islâm, which had seen many movements madder even than Bolshevism rise and rage for a season, and then disappear so completely that the man in the street to-day does not know their very names.

I had visited many of those churches during the course of my journey, and had found them open when the others were shut, had found the Catholic priest at his post when all the other ministers of religion were fleeing or had fled. The Red torrent had thundered down on them, the leaping spray had hidden them from sight, and the raging waters had cut them off, but when I came back they still stood like the rock on which they are built. I thought with awe of that tremendous prophecy which I had seen on the dome of St. Peter's: "The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

There was an indescribable comfort and reassurance in

seeing exactly the same service as is to be seen in Ireland, Tyrol, Westminster, the Vatican, France, Valparaiso, the Islands of the Outer Hebrides, and every part of the *orbis terrarum*. *Semper eadem*. One heard in all these different places exactly the same Latin words leading up to that stupendous sentence pronounced at the Last Supper, and followed by those simple, soldierly words of the Roman Captain which are engraven to the end of time on the memory of man. Yet in each place the Church was no exotic, hothouse plant, but a national growth with its roots in the hearts of the people. Even in Russia the congregations were made up not only of Poles but of Lithuanians, Ukrainians, White Russians, French, Germans, and Austrians. Meeting once in Siberia a gentle young priest who had remained behind to share the fortunes of his flock, and knowing that Poles do not like to speak Russian when they can help it (though he turned out to be a Lithuanian), I addressed him in the best Latin I could muster, and I shall never forget how his eyes lit up when he heard the sound of that stately tongue. Did it remind him of how Nero failed yesterday as Lenin will fail tomorrow? Nor can I ever forget the Masses I have heard on dark, frosty mornings in isolated Catholic churches far in the heart of Red Russia, and how astonishingly the calm and dignity of the noble service contrasted with the mad roar of revolution outside. The church was dark, save where the altar candles made the silvery hair of the priest shine like a nimbus and lit up the altar, evoking a picture of the same Sacrifice being offered in a dimly lit Roman catacomb in commemoration of Sebastian the Soldier or of Agnes the Virgin Martyr, while a tyranny as bad as Lenin's howled itself hoarse outside. To me the Catholic priests whom I met represented European culture, Christian civilization; and great indeed was the contrast between their scholarly discourse and the mad babble of the Bolsheviks into which I had again to plunge.

One Bolshevik journalist to whom I had an introduction I found occupying a big, cold, untidy room in a vast house which had once been divided up into flats inhabited by business people, but which was now in a state of decay.

The journalist was ill in bed the first time I called, his room in incredible disorder, and his wife out making speeches; but on my second visit he got up, made me some tea, and talked volubly for hours. He was an enthusiastic poet with entirely new ideas about poetry. Another friend whom I made was a Bolshevik functionary of what is called the political department, who dabbled in a multitude of things. I once heard him lecture in a theatre on an opera which was about to be produced before workmen who had never been to an opera before in their lives, his object being to make these workmen appreciate the music and the acting. He also lectured on literature, organized theatricals in factories and military barracks, taught *muzhiks* to write, wrote himself in the newspapers, and painted the whole front of a Bolshevik bookshop with mad daubs of every possible colour. This latter achievement he described as Futurism, but it seemed to me an attempt to epitomize on a surface twenty feet square all the wildest camouflage colour-schemes devised for merchant steamers during the war. The sturdy, old-fashioned house on which this outrage was perpetrated looked as outlandish as a cow with one horn painted black and the other sky-blue, the tail green, and the body in irregular patches of half a dozen different colours. I expressed no surprise, for, since my entry into Bolshevik Russia, I had quite lost the capacity for wonder.

The restless and chaotic activities of this enthusiast are typical. All the intellectuals among the Russian Bolsheviks are in a state of such indescribable ferment and agitation that it is sometimes difficult to believe they are sane. They take nothing for granted. The wisdom of the ages is nothing to them. Everything that is old repels them; every fad and every novelty appeals to them. If it were not for their lack of material they would be conducting the wildest experiments with regard to dress, cookery, clocks, town-planning, music, furniture, architecture, street traffic, and hundreds of other things. As it is, they are trying to combine painting and music, they are teaching what they call Marxian arithmetic, art, and metaphysics. They are so bursting with revolutionary ideas on everything that



no book ever printed would be big enough to contain half the nonsense they told me. They seem to imagine that in a few years they can lift up the entire population to such an intellectual height that everybody will enjoy and appreciate Chopin, Rodin, Shakespeare, Æschylus, and all the great artists of the world. They seriously maintain that by three years' desperately hard work any man of average ability can reach the intellectual standard of a finished University student. "In his ten years of college life," they say, "a student does not spend more than six months in actual study. Why should not a workman make the same progress by crowding those six months of actual study into three years at a Government University, where he will be free from all care?" And they put their theory into practice by filling the Universities with elderly men who merely impede the progress of the younger and more talented students, just as they impede the progress of dramatic art by filling the theatres with people who can never attain that high standard of taste which is confined to the small aristocracy of intellect.

All this is only part of the great camouflage and Propaganda of the Reds, which is based on false principles and, on the whole, profoundly insincere. They profess to think that in education the acquisition of facts and the formation of taste and judgment is everything, and the slow building up of character is nothing, a theory which is confuted by all human experience. They told me of a simple Ural workman who learned to read only two years ago and is now head of the Ministry of Mines; also of Budenny, their famous cavalry leader, who was a corporal under the old *régime* and would be a corporal still were it not for the Revolution. These two, I replied, are naturally able men who would rise to the top under any liberal system of Government. Under the obsolete and inefficient tyranny of the Tsar they would have little chance; under a *bourgeois* republic presided over by Miliukov or Lvov, they and men like them from other political parties would have quite as good a chance. The things most admired in Bolshevism are, indeed, borrowed without acknowledgment from Tsarist times and from the Republic of Prince Lvov, and,

two years ago, the pre-Bolshevik republican Government broke down all those barriers of class privilege for the destruction of which the Reds take all the credit. Lenin has, in fact, stolen the thunder of the Revolution, but this must not lead us to describe that particular thunder as the voice of the Devil when it is really the voice of the great Russian people. It was this mistake which ruined Kolchak and Denikin.

I have several times pointed out that all the Red propagandists work extremely hard. I have attended Red dinners where some guests had not time even to sit down or take off their overcoats or fur caps while they wolfed their food from plates, but I cannot say that I admire this feverish energy, especially in view of the ends to which it is being directed. Despite the self-sacrifice and the idealism of the Bolsheviks, those ends are thoroughly utilitarian. Even their literature, such as it is, strikes me as wholly utilitarian. The great street for bookshops was formerly the Kuznetsky Most, but all these shops are now closed and guarded by soldiers, all books, without exception, being national property. As there has been no time to sort out these books and place such of them as the Soviet approves of in the many popular libraries that have been opened, they litter the floors of these deserted shops in a disorderly pile which sometimes rises to the height of a man; and the circulation of books is now controlled as carefully as the circulation of dangerous drugs. The Caliph who burned all the books in the great library of Alexandria said: "If they approve of the Koran, they are unnecessary and ought to be destroyed; if they oppose the Koran, they ought also to be destroyed." The Communists do not go quite so far as that, but the universal application of their principles with regard to literature would be almost as great a blow to civilization as was the triumph of the Moham-medans in the territories of Byzantium. They encourage the study of classical literature, but on all the distinctively religious literature produced by Christianity they wage merciless war. They have seized not only the great ecclesiastical libraries, but even the humblest collections of religious books in country rectories and schools, and, so

long as the Bolsheviks rule in Russia, these books will never be reprinted. They have no use for the Bible, Dante, Milton, or Bunyan; and their hostility towards modern writers who treat social problems from a Christian point of view is very marked. Practically the only books which they print are Marxian or non-Christian books. So far they have only had time to publish a small number of pamphlets treating of the history of Russia, Germany, France, England, and Ireland from the Socialist standpoint, but it is their fixed intention to deal as soon as possible with all human history from this standpoint. The result has, up to the present, been disappointing, for their brochures are very inaccurate and one-sided, but if they remain in power long enough, their literary output will certainly have the merit of originality. The idea, for example, of writing the history of England entirely from the Socialist workingman's point of view is distinctly new, but the writer will be terribly handicapped by the dullness of his subject. He will have to confine himself to Jack Cade, the Chartist, and the modern Labour movement, and to draw most of the material for the early part of his work from very hostile sources. Of modern material he will have plenty, but for the general reader it will be insufferably tedious, and can never be fashioned into a work of art. It will have the aridity of the driest Blue book on the remuneration of factory workers; it will be filled with technical terms unknown to the general public and with Socialist jargon; it will have to be anti-national, so that, for example, the economic changes which took place here in the fourteenth century must be considered in the light of similar European phenomena; it will have to oppose, depreciate, or ignore all the pomp and circumstance of war, kingship, ecclesiastical life, and feudalism. Such literature will become the literature of specialists to the same extent as advanced technical treatises on surgery, engineering, weaving, hydrodynamics, or ichthyology, and "the man in the street"—if Socialism allows him to exist—will take no interest in it. Before the Reformation there existed a distinct Catholic tone in English literature; after the Reformation there was an equally distinct anti-Catholic tone; and in modern times there has been a sceptical

tone. But at all these periods the social system has been generally accepted. Bolshevism will, however, make an entirely new departure, for it will be fanatically anti-Christian, pro-Communist, anti-National, and materialist. It will tend to ignore all history previous to October, 1917, when the Bolshevik Government was established; hence its present craze for publishing all the forecasts of a future Utopia that have been made from the time of Sir Thomas More to the time of Mr. H. G. Wells. Communist literature at the present moment is consequently a strange mixture of fierce propaganda, wild theory, and heavy slabs of materialistic facts, though, indeed, these so-called facts are falser and more misleading than either the Propaganda or the theories.

The only outlet for imagination lies in descriptions of the future, but even these descriptions must make the future socialistic; and, like the majority of those writers who have tried to lift the veil which conceals the future, the Bolshevik prophets have failed lamentably. Practically all human literature deals with the present and the past; when literature tries to describe the future, it at once ceases to be human and ceases to be literature; and all the pictures which the Bolsheviks have so far given us of a future world constructed on the design of Lenin are so depressing that nobody would like to read about such a world, much less to live in it.

In literature, however, as in everything else, the Communists are inconsistent, for nearly all the plays and operas which they perform belong to what they would call the old-world era, and deal sympathetically with princes, pilgrims, monks, soldiers, saints, nuns, faithful retainers, and other classes which the Reds have sworn to sweep out of existence. Sometimes, in Bolshevik opera-houses, while watching the disguised Duke making love to the woodman's daughter, I wondered how the Communist audience could, if they were sincere, stand all this reactionary propaganda. They say that they will, in course of time, evolve a Communist drama of their own; but can they? Their theories are so opposed to human nature that they will never be able to weave them into drama or into any form of great

literature. The elimination from life of patriotism and the supernatural leaves a very shrivelled and unsightly skeleton behind.

Before leaving the subject of Bolshevik literature I should like to say that, in some respects, the clean sweep which the Bolsheviks have made of books and documents seems to be a wholesome and necessary clearance similar to that made by nature herself in expelling noxious matter from the human system. A mass of sycophantic and useless books had been published under the old *régime* in Russia about Tsars and Grand Dukes, while the accumulation of bureaucratic, military, and "religious" propaganda was enough to stifle the energies of any race. Some of us in this country can sympathize with the organizers of this holocaust, when we contemplate our own goodly collection of interminable lucubrations and insincere memoirs of tenth-rate politicians, preachers, and administrators, not to speak of our endless volumes by "Persons of Quality," old Club gossips and hangers-on of the Court, the aristocracy and the bureaucracy. But by far the greatest quantity of "literary" rubbish has, of course, been produced by the people themselves, or manufactured wholesale for them by writers and publishers who believe in catering to the popular taste.

The Bolsheviks have not gone as far, in this work of destruction, as has been represented. They have not, for instance, thrown Chekhov or any of the other Russian classics into the bonfire; and, in fact, none of the authors whom I saw waiting their turn at the incinerator brought a tear to my eye. Nor had I much sympathy with most of the defunct newspapers, despite the gigantic circulation which some of them had attained before the Revolution. They emphasized the crimes and the trivialities of life to such an extent that their continuance not only involved a prodigious waste of good paper, but would have been a positive evil to the community. All sensational newspapers of the "'orrible murder" type are now gone, not only because the Reds want to conceal their own wholesale massacres, but also because they are determined to give the public what they consider edifying and instructive reading-matter.

To pass from the newspapers to the official documents of the old *régime*, the accumulation of the latter in Petrograd and Moscow is so great that it would take a Gibbon all his life to deal with it; and it is on the whole of such little historical value that even the most reverent archæologist cannot help seeing that there is something to be said, after all, for the incendiary and the iconoclast. When one considers the length of time during which the bureaucracy have ruled Russia, and the voluminous reports which they have always been in the habit of writing, and the large proportion of those reports which are perfectly useless, one can realize the clog of printed paper which finally contributed towards bringing the Governmental machine to a standstill. The papers relating to decorations alone constitute a formidable collection, and not a single one of them is of the slightest value to the nation.

Such a deluge of decorations rained down during the war (but not always with the impartiality of that rain which falleth both on the just and the unjust) that many officers had no room for any more Orders on the breasts of their tunics, and would, had they worn all their decorations at once, have presented simply a ludicrous appearance. It was a veritable *reductio ad absurdum* of a system, and the congestion in this direction, typical by the way of the congestion in every other direction, was so great as to indicate that the bursting-point had been reached. On one of his visits to the Front the Tsar brought with him a bag containing 5,000 George's crosses, and one of the recipients, who was not a soldier, told me that he had got his for looking over the parapet of a fire-trench! When, after spending a year among Kolchak's over-decorated staff officers, I suddenly found myself among Red officers without any decorations at all, I felt that the revolutionary explosion had, after all, something to recommend it.

Even the papers relating to the Imperial Family and the Foreign Office are so numerous and of such little interest that most of them will probably be destroyed. Mr. Florinsky, one of the old diplomatists who has returned to Moscow, has been entrusted with the task of selecting such of those papers as will serve to discredit the Romanovs and the

foreign royalties with whom they corresponded, but it is doubtful if anything sensational will be discovered, for the Romanov letters simply disclose in the writers mediocre minds occupied in great times by trivialities. In 1905 a clever revolutionary published a volume containing the public speeches of Nicholas the Second—only that and nothing more—but those speeches were so unutterably vapid, that the book was at once suppressed as a seditious publication. The letters of the Tsar and Tsarina will, if published, convey a similar impression. I might remark, parenthetically, that it would not be a bad idea for other Governments to make a periodical bonfire of their *paperasses* after a committee of experts had summarized all the useful information which they contain, for if this is not done the “future historian,” who is so often spoken of, will be smothered in a superabundance of material.

Closely associated with the destruction of the independent newspaper Press is the annihilation of all private advertising. The railway stations and the public hoardings are no longer covered with the mendacious posters of soap-makers and patent-medicine quacks, the landscape is not disfigured by the blatant praise of foods which cause dyspepsia and pills which cure it, and the newspapers contain not a single advertisement.

In like manner the theatres are made to confine themselves to the production of masterpieces of the past or artistic and promising work of the present. I was surprised to see the streets of Omsk and Ekaterinburg placarded with announcements regarding the production of works by Molière, Æschylus, Racine, and Shakespeare; and one of the Bolshevik officials in Moscow commissioned me to send him a number of Ben Jonson's plays which had not yet been produced in Russia. Shakespeare is popular, and Shakespearean plays which have not been produced in England since the time of Queen Elizabeth are now to be seen on the stage in Moscow. Nearly all the beautiful Russian operas, excepting, of course, “A Life for the Tsar,” are still produced by good companies and before crowded houses. It is necessarily difficult to get the actors to speak frankly about their present audiences, but I have been told by one

of them that they are dissatisfied, that they feel that their shaggy patrons do not always understand or appreciate them as the old patrons did. Having seen both the old playgoer and the new, I am convinced that this is true. Formerly there was the nicest appreciation on the part of the public; at present there is a noticeable lack of understanding. Some provincial delegates with whom I sat during the progress of a delicate and artistic operetta reminded me of cows looking at a railway train. The natural effect is a general lowering of the artistic standard, save in plays of common life or low life like those of Gorky and Gogol, when the audience is keenly appreciative and the actors as good as ever they were.

All these sweeping changes are based on the Bolshevik theory that the Russian public is a child which must be educated by a handful of talented men; and I must admit that Lunacharsky, their Commissar of Fine Arts, is a very cultured and artistic official of liberal and unerring taste. He holds that if left to themselves, the public would tend towards circuses, buffoonery, sloppy sentimentality, and bad farce; that their taste must therefore be cultivated and directed in the right direction by men like himself; and that a few years of this wise dictatorship will make them prefer "Hamlet" to the "Girl who took the Wrong Turning." Part of this process of artistic education consists in the elimination of bad plays, which are simply not allowed to appear.

Lunacharsky believes that he can by this procedure lift up the whole Russian people in course of time to the artistic level of the small select minority which guides dramatic taste in every country and has always done so. But all he can do is to substitute one critical minority for another, though I admit that he will greatly raise the artistic standard of the masses, as there is at the present moment a positive craze for dramatic excellence and the study of dramatic masterpieces all over Russia, and even in the ranks of the Red Army. The dramatic and musical performances given by the Russian soldiers are so much superior to those generally given by our own troops, that one wonders sometimes if, in this particular matter, the Bolsheviks are not



right and we wrong. Is there not something slightly unsound in our theory about giving the public what it wants, a theory which places the interests of literature, music, and the drama in the hands of speculators who only want to make money? Is the modern music-hall an advance on the Shakespearean theatre?

Undoubtedly the Bolsheviks are wrong, however, in making use of literature and art, as they are doing, in order to teach Communism. If they have swept away a frivolous Press they have replaced it by a Press which is worse than frivolous. If they have prohibited the production of stupid films in the cinemas, they have produced films preaching an intense class hatred which will make Russia a centre of infection for the next half-century. One film produced in Ekaterinburg glorified the assassin of the Grand Duke Sergius, who was represented as weltering in his blood, while the murderer, who was exhibited as a model for all good boys to imitate, stood by with another bomb which he was preparing to throw. If they have burned the innumerable and tiresome records of the old bureaucracy, they are replacing those records very fast by the wholesale manufacture of Socialist records which are far worse in every way, and which will be likewise consigned to the flames by whatever Government succeeds the Reds. If they have made a clean sweep of Byzantine theology, they have replaced it by a Marxian literature which will have an equally petrifying effect on the Russian mind.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE RED TSAR AND HIS GUESTS

ON sneaking into the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs one day, in order to get the address of a foreign journalist then in Moscow, I ran into a Commissar who was specially charged with English journalistic affairs, who knew of my capture at Krasnoyarsk, and who had been anxiously awaiting my arrival in Moscow. I had a bad quarter of an hour explaining why I had not reported earlier, but I finally succeeded in shifting all the blame for the delay on to the shoulders of the Commissar in whose train I had travelled, and without whose permission I could not, I pleaded, call on Comrade Chicherin.

This Press Commissar insisted on my moving at once from my railway carriage to one of the guest-houses in which the Soviet Government accommodates its foreign visitors. This building had formerly been the residence of a German factory owner, and was situated in Mala Khartonovskaya Street, near the Red Gate. I moved into it next day, and some weeks later I was transferred to the Savoy Hotel, a similar establishment.

This change in my fortunes introduced me to a new world, the Under-world of the Third International, an institution which aims frankly at the overthrow of every Government in Europe, Asia, and America. Among the guests was a Korean Committee which is working hard for the independence of Korea, though it only contemplates the establishment of a constitutional monarchy there, not of a Soviet. The head of the Korean Committee is an intelligent and very pleasant young Korean called Pak-oi, who was educated at Moscow University and speaks Russian well. Under him are several other Koreans, as well as a Japanese correspondent of the *Osaka Asahi* who had been captured, like myself,

in Siberia, imprisoned in Moscow, and only released on promising to work against his own country. He is now translating with Oriental placidity all sorts of Propaganda matter for dissemination among the Japanese troops, and this Propaganda is credited with having caused the desertion to the Bolsheviks of about one hundred Japanese soldiers in Trans-Baikalia last spring. A Communist newspaper is printed in Japanese by the Third International, and is periodically dispatched to the Far East. Another Japanese journalist, Mr. Husie, representing the *Osaka Mainichi*, came from Reval with a safe-conduct signed by Chicherin, but the Extraordinary Commission, which insisted that he was a spy and had been living in 1915 with the Japanese military attaché at Petrograd, made a great effort to arrest him, but had not succeeded in doing so up to the time I left Moscow, owing to Chicherin's opposition. The correspondent in question was kept under domiciliary arrest, however, and, for all the news he got, might as well have remained in Esthonia.

There were some English and American correspondents, while, in other parts of the city, were several Italian newspapermen, a Rumanian journalist, and two or three French journalists. One of the latter, who had formerly been very *bourgeois* and militarist, had been purposely compromised by the publication of a pro-Bolshevik letter addressed to the French President which was found during a search made at his house, and which had only been written, I think, as "a blind." Unable now to put himself right with his own people, and unable to return to France, he is employed by the Bolshevik Foreign Office in the composition of Communist literature intended for French consumption, but he is carefully watched, at the same time, by the secret agents of the Reds. Several English correspondents have been compromised in the same way by the unauthorized publication in Moscow of pro-Bolshevik articles which they wrote for America, but which were distributed by the Reds as Propaganda matter among the English and American troops at Archangel. If a correspondent cannot be bought, he is compromised in the eyes of his own countrymen, and thus thrown entirely into the hands of the enemy.

Captain Sadul, formerly of the French Military Mission, and now a Red Commissar, was down in the south with the Army during my stay in Moscow, but his brother, also a Bolshevik, had arrived from France. Professor Barrakatula had come from India, and was assisted by a number of Indians, who spoke Russian, in planning a revolt against British rule in Hindustan. He worked in combination with an Afghan deputation dressed in the military uniforms supplied to the Amir by the Indian Government, and with a number of other Mohammedans from Persia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Turkey. A Pan-Mohammedan Congress was held at the Foreign Office in April, 1920, with the object of driving the English from India and Persia, and of creating trouble in Turkey, and one of the fruits of its deliberations was the attack on Persia which took place some months later. The Bolsheviks are convinced that the British *raj* in India is undermined, and will soon go down with a crash; they are equally convinced that chaos will soon prevail in Persia, Mesopotamia, and Asiatic Turkey, not so much because the malcontents in those countries are strong, as because (in their opinion) the English troops are tired of war, and the English people will be unable and unwilling to make the financial sacrifices necessary for the retention or reconquest of those immense territories. Constantinople is an important centre of Bolshevik activity, and an unusually energetic agent of the Soviet—Dr. Mansur, I think, is his name—oscillates between that city and Buda-Pesth. In the centre of this fiendish activity at Moscow, with Bolshevik agents arriving daily by some subterranean route or with false passports, with hourly announcements of strikes and Labour troubles all over the world, with revolutionary leaders coming from the ends of the earth to do homage to the Red flag which floats over the Kremlin, and to take counsel with the successful Arch-conspirator who sits underneath it, I felt as if the end of all things had already come. Cut off, like a leper, from all the Governments of the world, Lenin is nevertheless in daily communication with the most desperate and dangerous section of every people, and the best passport to his presence-chamber is the brand of Cain. He receives ambassadors not

accredited by Presidents or Kings, but nevertheless bearing terrible credentials from lawless associations which have sworn to carry out to the letter his decrees of violence and blood. While other rulers of States seek anxiously but in vain for indications which point to the slackening of the storm, Lenin listens triumphantly to the increasing fury of the tempest. Like a fiend in hell, instead of a man born of woman, he gloats daily over the world's ghastly chronicle of red ruin and the breaking up of laws. To the ends of the earth he sends forth envoys with a sword in one hand and a torch in the other, and nothing delights him more than the reflection that these nuncios of revolution contribute less to the general chaos than do the mad policies and blind reprisals of his panic-stricken enemies.

In April last he received frequent reports from Tashkent, which is the seat of a powerful organization, which is even now marshalling the forces of disorder in Central Asia for a grand attack on India; and as this organization complained that Bokhara was an obstacle in its path, he decreed that Bokhara should be swept aside by a Red revolution, and this has since been done. During the same month he sent envoys to the Amir of Afghanistan with the object of concluding with that potentate a treaty having for its aim, not peace and amity but the stirring up of insurrections on the frontiers of Hindustan. He authorized Trotsky to invade Khorasan, and to pour Red troops into Asia Minor so as to create in that infernal Deep of unspeakable memories a Deep lower still.

One day he signed an agreement with the American I.W.W., as King George might sign a treaty with France. Another day he received a deputation of "the Russian Friends of American Freedom"—an Association of expelled American Anarchists who aim at smashing the Government and the whole social system of the United States—as President Wilson might receive the heads of an Inter-Church movement. He dined in the ancient palace of the Tsars with a group of powerful and dangerous Mohammedans, whose object is to create chaos from Alexandria to Khartoum, and to deluge half Asia with blood. And yet he looks a most harmless, *bourgeois* person. At the Ninth Communist

Convention, which was the only public function he attended during my stay in Moscow, he spoke freely, monotonously, without the faintest trace of hesitation or nervousness, like the chairman of a London Tea-House Company reading out an unsensational annual report which most of his hearers know already. Dressed in rusty black, with trousers which were somewhat baggy at the knees and a general appearance of reasonableness and respectability, he looked at first sight a safe, unpretentious, middle-class person in fairly comfortable circumstances. His head was bald, but with a dull, mottled, and not a shiny, billiard-ball hairlessness. His beard was scanty and reddish; his eyes far apart, and with a cast in one of them; his cheek-bones high; his face broad, and with a dim, disturbing suggestion of Asia, which half prepared one for the monstrous theories he proceeded to set forth in his matter-of-fact voice. For some reason or other very little of his speech on this occasion appeared in the newspapers; perhaps because Russia was at that moment seeking recognition by "capitalist" Governments. In one brilliant passage, which was omitted, he declared himself unable to describe precisely the form which the Soviet Government would assume "until the volcanic explosions cease, and the smoke clears away, and we can see the new shape into which the landscape has hardened." According to Trotsky, the Red Tsar often lights up a debate with unpremeditated remarks like this, remarks in which the Commissars discover profound and prophetic significance. But he discounts even his most terrible sayings by the business-like evenness of his delivery, and by his habit of handling pens and other objects on the table in front of him and occasionally inserting his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat, a gesture which displays a comfortable and slightly protuberant abdomen. Looking at him on such occasions without knowing who he was or what he was talking about, one would feel inclined to say "Now, this is a safe, reliable man giving utterance to reasonable things."

Save that his sedentary life of the past two years has made him somewhat stouter, Lenin has altered little in appearance since the day when he presented himself at the Russian

frontier near Torneo, shabby, tired, and travel-stained, accompanied by a crowd of women and of disreputable-looking men, at one moment on the point of being refused admittance, and the next moment frantically organizing an anti-war meeting among the Russian soldiers, and winning their applause by his fierce denunciations of militarism. He takes so little care of himself in the Kremlin that a deputation of peasants which once came to see him insisted on sending him bread, butter, and eggs from their village; and this is only a continuation of the life which he led in exile. An intimate friend of his told me that when Lenin left his humble lodgings in Paris for still humbler lodgings in Switzerland, his furniture fetched only forty-five francs at an auction. A little-known side of Lenin's life is the domestic side. The Red Dictator is sincerely attached to his wife, whose health is, however, very bad; and he is passionately fond of children.

Despite his determination, when he entered Russia, of turning everything upside down, doing all the things that a "capitalist" Government does not do, and not doing anything which a "capitalist" Government does, he has found that the laws of human nature are too much for him, and that he is leading, outwardly, much the same kind of life as any conscientious, hard-working, and respectable Tsar, and a very much more regular life than was led by Peter the Great. His whole day is spent receiving deputations, signing papers, presiding over cabinet meetings, and getting through all the heavy routine business discharged by any King or President. Fanaticism in his case has cast out fear, but his *entourage* have as great and well-grounded an anxiety for his personal safety as had ever the bodyguard of a Tsar for the safety of their master. The display of military force on the occasion of the Convention I speak of was as great as when Nicholas the Second opened the first Duma in the Winter Palace. Lenin's future, too, is more uncertain than was ever the future of a Russian Emperor. With a wilderness of blood and horror behind him, with a highly volcanic soil trembling beneath his feet, and with clouds of inky blackness veiling his future, few human beings have ever been enveloped in more tragic

menace and mystery than this prosaic, common-looking man. Outlawed by every Government, anathematized by every Church, cursed by his millions of victims, he can never leave Russia alive; he cannot stay in Russia and live.

Among the guests of the Soviet were a number of Germans, sent secretly by the Ebert Government to consider the question of lending skilled Prussian mechanics to the Russian factories. Though themselves Socialists, these envoys of Berlin were very much disgusted by what they saw in Russia. The condition of the factories shocked them, but, curiously enough, they were even more shocked by the facility of divorce and the lack of reverence for the dead. They told of how one day they had met a Bolshevik lady twice. At lunch she was the wife of one Commissar, at dinner she was the wife of another, at whose table her first husband was a guest. As for funerals, they discovered that all corpses had to be handed over to the State, which interred them without religious ceremonies and without allowing the relatives to be present. The Germans also disliked the systematic and diabolical attempt which the Reds were making to destroy family life, by tempting mothers to surrender their children to the State. Children who spent all day in school got one free meal; children who lived day and night in the school got three good meals and were well clothed and cared for. Mothers were almost forced to spend most of their time at work in Government offices. If they insisted on remaining at home, they got no rations.

A large number of German mechanics did eventually go to Russia, but were bitterly disappointed by the treatment they met with there, and have all returned to Germany, where one of them has since published an extremely pessimistic account of the Russian industrial situation.

The gang of international concession hunters who were also guests of the Soviet and who had risked their lives in getting into Russia formed a curious contrast to the still larger gang of foreign capitalists who were ready to risk their lives for the sake of getting out of Russia. The former were the more interesting by reason of their bravery,



hardness, competence, will-power, diplomatic skill, and absolute unscrupulousness. They were "out" for "big money," for concessions which would make them multi-millionaires, and they would let no considerations of sentiment, religion, nationality, or civilization stand in their way. They represented the most inhuman and aggressive aspect of that capitalism which the Reds have sworn to destroy, yet they made friends with the Reds and hobnobbed with Lenin. The Soviet Government, which wants recognition by Europe and America, thinks that it can get that recognition by pandering to the greed of these capitalists, and it has accordingly dangled in front of them prizes of practically inestimable value—forests, fisheries, gold mines, islands, dozens of square miles of priceless ore.

The capitalists of California and South Africa will be paupers in point of wealth and cowards in point of courage compared to the hard-bitten plutocrats who may arise out of this Russian chaos. The dangers from Boers, Blacks, wild animals, and American "bad men," which figure in the exploits of pioneers in other parts of the world, are nothing in comparison with the dangers which these fanatical missionaries of Mammon run in Moscow, and I do not doubt but that histories and novels and perhaps even Kiplingesque poetry will be written about those who succeed. But I cannot say that I admire them. It may be a good thing to reopen trade with Russia, but some of the adventurers who will reopen it and get concessions and float companies in England and America will be inspired by greed, and also no doubt by that itch for colossal gambles and desperate adventures which one often finds in very great plutocrats who have once been poor. What I cannot forgive them in connection with this question of Russia's recognition is their cynical and contemptuous attitude towards the moral aspect of it. They would renounce their nationality, betray civilization, abjure their religion, and sell their souls, if by doing so they could attain their own selfish ends.

I have quite as much contempt, however, for the Big Money-Bags (mostly French) who loftily refuse to trade with Russia—till that country has acknowledged all the

debts of the Tsar's Government. These people also would compound any felony so long as they are paid enough for doing so. My sympathies are with those old-fashioned people, if any such there be, whose reluctance to trade with Soviet Russia is due solely to their high moral standard of international morality. The Reds fear and respect these idealists, for they are at bottom idealists themselves.

But even among the agents of materialist capitalism congregated in Moscow there were exceptions to the general rule, though their exceptionality was perhaps due to sordid motives. One American engineer called Keeley, representing the greatest captains of industry in America, told Lenin frankly that all the Russian factories and railways would collapse if run any longer on Bolshevik principles, with the result that he had great difficulty in getting permission to leave the country. A Dutch capitalist called Schmidt was also imprudent enough to express pessimism, with the result that he was refused permission to leave and may be in Moscow still.

The other group of capitalists, the old hands who had lost their nerve and were making for the nearest frontier, were, on the whole, an equally unlovely collection. Some of them were young men who had escaped military service at home, and who stayed in Russia on the chance of amassing great riches. When Bolshevism came they clamoured violently for British soldiers to be sent to their assistance. One man with a mine was excessively angry with the British Government for not having sent at least a hundred thousand men to Siberia. Though younger than I am myself, he had not stood by Tommy's side in France; nevertheless, he insisted very dictatorially on Tommy being sent, after he had done his "bit," to save *his* property in Siberia. Another man, with a factory, said, "I refuse to run this factory unless a British Battalion is sent to guard it."

British Capitalists in every part of the world have cut a sorry figure during these last six years. A British Minister in one place described to me how they establish offices abroad in order to escape taxation at home, and how, when any thief approaches their safe, they wave the English flag wildly, talk of our Imperial Mission and of the White

Man's Burden, and summon fleets and armies to their help. But worst of all is the Russian capitalist who now detests us more than he detests the Bolsheviks, because we did not spend a thousand million on him instead of a mere hundred million, because we did not send five hundred thousand men to his assistance instead of a few Divisions. White Russia is suffering from a nervous disease which I should call Revolution-shock, for it is akin to shell-shock. It makes no complaint about those of the Allies who have offered it practically no assistance, but on us who have stood by its side, ministering patiently to it, for the last two years, and giving it millions of pounds to which the poor of our own country had the first claim, on us it pours the bitterest venom. Some of the Russian Generals, whom we did most for, have now gone to Berlin and are our worst enemies.

The diplomatic and business guests of the Soviet did not, I must admit, look at their best. Stripped of all adventitious aids to impressiveness, of their country houses and their motor-cars, their yachts and their troops of servants, the Company Promoters looked and talked like pickpockets (which most of them were on a large scale); while, without a noble Embassy in the background, the suave, polyglot diplomatists engendered in my mind by their conversation a horrid suspicion that they had no sense. Had the Bolsheviks some deep, diabolical design in thus exposing the great ones of the earth in all their nakedness to the derision of the common herd? Was it part of some fiendish scheme for undermining our belief in Christianity? Carefully underfed on cold porridge and imitation coffee, slightly exacerbated in temper, and suffering from sore feet caused by a lack of even the most primitive transport contrivances, the august representatives of "big business" were anything but imposing; but I doubt whether, in similar circumstances, even the grave and reverend seigneurs of the Supreme Council itself would have impressed the groundlings.

Among them was a considerable sprinkling of Russians who seemed to be more at home, but who had so many *aliases*, that some of them have probably forgotten their real names. One such Russian, but a very honest and

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amiable one, Mr. Serezhnikov, a Co-operative expert who left Moscow with the Krassin Mission, had long worked for the Russian Co-operatives on the American Pacific Coast where he was known as Shavchenko. He had been in the American Y.M.C.A. in Vladivostock, and belonged to the Social Revolutionary party, but disgust with Kolchak induced him to desert to the Bolsheviks. Another gentleman, called in America Mulkner and in Russia Kamerinsk was working hard to send agents to the United States with forged passports and false money and left himself for the States in February or March last, though I don't think that he ever got there, for the anti-Bolshevik Secret Service of America is the best in the world.

Arrests sometimes took place even among these guests of Lenin. A Frenchman who was apparently a very advanced Socialist, but really an agent of the War Office in Paris disappeared one day because certain agents of the German Spartacists who had turned up in Moscow informed the Extraordinary Commission of his true status. Having previously lived in Berlin this Frenchman had made himself known to the Spartacists in order to obtain from them information about plots that were being hatched by the German Militarists whom the Spartacists hated worse than they hated the French; and though this arrangement worked well in Berlin, it was disastrous in Moscow.

The German prisoners of war in Moscow, who occupy the former German Consulate and the adjoining German hospital live comfortably and in perfect freedom, owing to the fact that they were taken prisoners while fighting against the Tsar. They have two motor-cars, a fine hospital, and a Soviet of their own. Not all of them have joined this Soviet which will only serve to convey the poison of Bolshevism into German and Austrian homes. One of these Germans brought one day to a friend of mine an English magazine article by an English military officer on a method he had discovered for decoding figure cyphers without a key, and asked him to translate it into German, offering him at the same time a large sum of money for the work. "What cypher messages," we asked one another in astonishment "has the man got hold of? Has he a private wireles

pparatus by means of which he is communicating with Germany?"

Other mysterious things were done by those Germans, but some they are still mysteries—mysteries, however, that have no importance since Germany has ceased to be a great military power. It would be easy enough to work oneself into a state of mind wherein these trifles are charged with sinister meaning, but I do not think that there is any good reason for doing so. The secret Mission from the Ebert Government, of which I have already spoken, ended, for instance, in nothing; for though, as a result of it, German killed workmen were sent to Russia, those workmen soon came back again very disgusted. A Swedish Consular official, who had formerly been stationed in Petrograd, was also in Moscow last March, and had many conferences with the Bolshevik F.O., but these were probably connected with a deal in Russian copper which did not come off owing to the Bolshevik sailors of Kronstadt having resolutely refused to let the copper be shipped to a capitalist country.

The collection of hopes, panics, greeds, secrecies, cunning, treacheries, and idealisms which jostled one another in those amazing guest-houses of the Soviets transcended in interest anything that I had ever before seen, read, or imagined. Secret agents of foreign Powers who posed as Bolsheviks jostled open agents of foreign Powers who really leaned towards Communism. Quakers who did not believe in war at all defended militarism against Italian naval officers who, after fighting for three years, had become Pacificists. Korean Buddhists who thought it a sin to kill a rattlesnake advocated the assassination of the Mikado. Mohammedans whose religion is the sword tried to prove that the Prophet was really a man of peace. Financiers wanted the abolition of finance. Respectable married men suddenly remembered that they had got married again that afternoon according to Soviet law, having duly divorced that morning before a Bolshevik Commissar their lawful wives beyond the sea. Diplomats, who knew nothing, fished delicately for information from low-class Labour journalists who, having just dined with Trotsky, knew everything.

The ignorance of the diplomatists surprised me more than anything, until I remembered that, in all this vast Empire, the whole diplomatic, consular, and commercial machinery, by means of which Governments keep themselves informed of the ever-changing conditions in a foreign country, had been utterly swept away. Russia is now as much of a hermit empire as Japan was sixty years ago. The carefully shepherded journalists and Labour men who are allowed to circulate a little outside Moscow, learn little more of actual conditions in the districts which they traverse than did the Dutch deputation from Deshima in their annual pilgrimage to Yedo. When I was arrested later on by Lenin's Inquisition, nothing in my notebooks excited such suspicion as some industrial statistics which I had jotted down. A dubious foreigner arrested in England during the war with a map of Scapa Flow in his possession would hardly have been regarded with more distrust at Scotland Yard.

Owing to the great preponderance of Russian Bolsheviks, the tone of conversation at these gatherings was always very "advanced." Whatever some of us may have thought, none of us openly defended kingship or Parliamentary Government any more than a delegate at an Anglican Church Congress would have defended the burning of heretics. The world consists of different "atmospheres"—the "atmosphere" of the battleship ward-room, the "atmosphere" of the National Liberal Club, the "atmosphere" of the Stock Exchange, the "atmosphere" of a Jesuit novitiate, and many other "atmospheres." The Bolsheviks have succeeded in creating a special "atmosphere" of their own, such as never openly existed in the world before. It is not, in my opinion, a good "atmosphere."

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE BOLSHEVIK F.O. AND THE FOREIGN PRESS

THE curious position occupied by Russia *vis-à-vis* of all foreign Governments, not excluding even those Baltic Governments with which she has made treaties, naturally leads to the existence of very anomalous relations between the Soviet and the foreign journalists who find their way now and then into Red Russia. As no country, save Poland, is formally at war with Russia, journalists from the outer world can, if they are very persistent, find their way to Moscow through Reval or Finland. All they have got to do is to secure the *visa* of some Bolshevik agent, and there are now many recognized Bolshevik agents in Northern Europe and in London. This *visa* will not, of course, be given unless the Commissar is sure of his man; but it is given: I have known it to be given to persons whose own Governments had refused them passports to Russia. Indeed, there is no way of keeping out of Russia any person who wants to go there, and who is regarded by the Bolsheviks as sound. He has only to demand a passport to Reval, which cannot as a rule be refused, and from Reval the resident Bolshevik Mission will at once send him through to Moscow. Even when his own Government will not allow him to go abroad, he may appeal to subterranean agencies which will arrange his journey to the Mecca of Communism. For there are now in every European country two Governmental systems,—one visible, the other hidden—and both of them issue passports. During the month I recently spent in Moscow I was astonished at the number of foreigners who entered that city by the underground method, but it is not of such people that I wish to speak here; it is rather of the honest, adventurous, non-Bolshevik journalist whose curiosity is excited by the mystery of Russia, and whose

determination to probe that mystery is only strengthened by the risks against which he is warned and the obstacles which are placed in his way. Unfortunately it is not always his editor who issues these warnings or interposes those obstacles; quite the contrary. Instead of holding young journalists back, their own newspapers sometimes excite them to go forward by cabling bitter taunts. "Are you going to wait till cheap excursions are running to Moscow?" wired one American paper to its representative on the Finnish frontier, with the result that the young correspondent in question made a heartbreaking appeal to the Commissars to let him pass. He was allowed to pass, but he ever afterwards felt himself to be under an obligation to the Reds, and consequently wrote very much in their favour. If the present system persists, this sort of thing will occur frequently, and the publication of a considerable amount of pro-Bolshevik material in the foreign Press will be the natural result.

Even though most of the matter written about Russia in the outside world will continue, as now, to be anti-Bolshevik, that matter will not have the same news value as matter sent from inside Russia, especially as conditions in that country are changing so rapidly that the Russian expert of to-day will be hopelessly out of date to-morrow. And, if the present anomalous state of affairs continues, it will leave the casual correspondent and the Communists themselves the only sources or, rather, the only source from which outer Governments can obtain information of developments in Russia, where there are no longer any foreign consuls or diplomatists. Even if there were, it would be difficult for them to obtain much information, as the new ruling class in Russia is very different from the old, being characterized by all the intense suspiciousness and reticence which we should expect to find in men who have been conceived in the womb of revolution, and have passed the greater part of their lives outwitting the police and carrying on secret machinations against the established order of things in every land. In comparison with these hard-faced Puritans who deny themselves the pleasures of the table, and whose only relaxation is work, conspiracy, and murder,



the old type of Tsarist official was incredibly simple, gullible, and expansive.

Bolshevik Russia certainly possesses a terrible fascination for the adventurous journalist, for the unscrupulous editor, and, I may add, for a large section of the general public in every country. The Communists are well aware of this fact, and are cleverly utilizing this fascination for the purpose of their own Propaganda. They only allow into Russia, as a rule, foreign correspondents who have written in favour of them or against their enemies; and I have known perfectly honest men who tried to qualify for admission by writing ferocious onslaughts on the White Finns. No Foreign Office in the world keeps such a careful, voluminous, and up-to-date record of newspaper writers as the Russian Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. It is well qualified to do so, being itself composed mainly of Russian Pressmen who have passed most of their life abroad, generally in England, and who are convinced that, for their purpose, journalists are far more important than diplomatists. The latter send home dispatches which circulate among a small circle of officials and are then permanently pigeon-holed; the former appeal to the large masses, the very people whom the Bolsheviks want to reach. And they have so contrived matters that the journalist who enters Russia will only be able to send out Bolshevik Propaganda. He almost always tries to give an impartial description and to send out both sides of the question, but as the Bolsheviks invariably cut out all criticism of themselves, the outer world only gets the pro-Bolshevik matter. Most correspondents try to put matters right when they leave Russia, but it is then too late: the impression has been made, and the man in the street has no desire and no time to read intricate explanations of stale news. If we resume relations with the Bolsheviks, the same system will continue, and the Soviet Government will derive great advantage from it, for though conscientious correspondents will from time to time consider it their duty to explain the true state of affairs, they will only be expelled, lose their posts, lose touch with Russia, and soon cease to be authorities on current happenings here. It is fresh news from a country

that newspaper readers want, not commentaries written by people who lived there years before.

It may be maintained that the Bolshevik attitude towards news is practically the same as that of most Continental Governments and of Japan, that the present abnormal state of Russia justifies abnormal measures, and that things were just as bad under the Tsar. It is certainly true that the Soviet Government is justified in exercising the utmost severity towards the foreign Press, but, on the other hand, we are fools to let her use the foreign Press as she does; and it seems to me certain that, even if we enter into relations with her, she will continue the present system in its full rigour. This would not matter so much if Russia were pursuing a policy which affected only herself, but, on the contrary, she is pursuing a policy which has an extreme and vital interest for every nation in the world; she is carrying out a great social experiment in which all humanity is keenly interested. And her system of mixed severity and blandishment *vis-à-vis* of the foreign Press is one which never existed before in any country and does not exist in any other country now. When I lived in Russia during the revolutionary movement of 1905-1906, I found that I could telegraph to England practically whatever I liked. There was not a single English or American correspondent in Russia at that time who did not oppose the unfortunate policy of the Tsar's Government, and some of those correspondents were almost Bolshevik in their views, yet all of them were treated with the same courtesy by the authorities and not one of them was ever expelled. And in all other countries of the world, not excluding even Japan, there are many foreign correspondents who habitually criticize the Government under which they live, but who are nevertheless allowed to remain and never discriminated against.

At present a correspondent is allowed into Russia for three weeks only, and that fact is clearly stated in the permit he receives. If he does not distinguish himself during those three weeks by writing something favourable about the Bolsheviks, his permit will not be renewed, and, if he writes nothing at all, he will have to leave even before the three weeks have elapsed. No matter how long he stays,

he is a compulsory, non-paying guest of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, and it is impossible for him to get hotel accommodation or lodging in the ordinary way. That system alone places him in a false position, and the great kindness which is shown him makes it very hard for him to be impartial. The Foreign Office has half a dozen large houses in Moscow for its foreign "guests"—the Hôtel Métropole, the Hôtel National, the Hôtel Savoy, the palace of a Russian sugar king on the Sofieskaya Naberezhnaya, and the beautiful villa of a German factory owner in Haritonovskaya Street. Princely apartments in the Kremlin are sometimes placed at the disposal of visitors whom the Bolsheviks regard as peculiarly sound in their views, and some of these highly honoured guests have been foreign journalists.

Along with this lavish hospitality there is a sleepless vigilance to prevent the "guest" coming in contact with the wrong sort of people, and the most meticulous care to keep him in the right atmosphere. Any visitor who calls on him in his hotel must run the gauntlet of a bureau downstairs to which he must submit his name, and under these circumstances a Russian who is unfavourably disposed towards the present régime will, for extremely good reasons, be unlikely to call and still more unlikely, if he does call, to have his name sent up. Pasted on the door of some of these palaces is a notice to the effect that nobody may visit any guest without first obtaining a written permit from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and, by way of emphasizing it, there always stands, alongside this notice, a sentry with a rifle. Each correspondent has attached to him an interpreter, guide, and warder all in one—a reliable Bolshevik in the service of the Foreign Office—who speaks the language of the correspondent as well as Russian. This functionary reports every movement of his charge, keeps undesirable people at a distance, translates the right sort of matter from the Bolshevik newspapers, gives the right sort of information, makes the proper explanations, and keeps the correspondent in the proper circles. The minuteness of the care taken by the Bolsheviks to create a favourable impression is almost incredible. It is like the care of a

scientist conducting a delicate chemical experiment in a laboratory, or like the care of a nurse for a patient hovering between life and death. It goes even so far as to send tramcars flying past, while the foreign observer is looking, and to galvanize into fictitious life factories which have long been dead and will be dead again once the correspondent has left. As Potemkin humbugged Catherine the Great "as to conditions in Russia by conducting her through sham cities run up for the occasion by scenic artists," so the successors of Catherine humbug English Labour delegates and foreign correspondents in the manner I have described. No strict Christian mother is more careful about the books her little children read and the conversations which they hear than the Bolshevik F.O. is about the literature which their guests peruse and the words to which they listen. I know of one English correspondent in Moscow who was forbidden to attend service at the Anglican Church owing to fear, on the part of the Bolshevik specialists who had him in hand, that the success of the delicate experiment which they were conducting on his mind with elaborate and patient skill might thereby be imperilled.

The foreign correspondents are not all kept together, for, if they were, they might generate by discussion among themselves an independent atmosphere of their own. They are therefore distributed very carefully among the various guest-houses, in each of which they are outnumbered by Russian and foreign Bolsheviks, so that the tone of conversation is always predominantly Communist. Some of these Russians are ex-diplomats and ex-officers, and are often of high intellectual attainments. In the hotel where I lived there was a young ex-diplomat who had worked in the Russian Embassy at Constantinople, and sometimes, after an evening spent in talking to him about Near Eastern politics and about diplomatic personages whom we both knew, I could hardly believe that, if such a man believed in it and worked for it, Bolshevism could, after all, be so very different from any other system of Government. A still more remarkable companion was an ex-naval officer who had been everywhere in the world, was a Futurist painter, had the most charming manners, and

knew very much more about Elizabethan dramatists than I do. He had made, for example, a special study of Ben Jonson, some of whose plays are now being performed in Moscow; and, when I left Russia, he entrusted me with money to buy him, not cigarettes or clothing, but certain of Ben Jonson's works. I do not accuse him of diplomacy or duplicity or propaganda. We had both been studied dispassionately and ultimately brought into contact with one another by a keener intellect than either of us possessed.

Notwithstanding the fact that the foreigner makes allowance for all this propaganda and laughs at it occasionally, he is nevertheless influenced very considerably by it. I was never so much struck by this fact as on one occasion when I disclosed my position and my military rank to an honest English gentleman of what I may call Asquithian views in politics, who had undergone for some weeks an intensive course of this psychological treatment at the hands of the Bolsheviki, and was on the point of leaving for England. He laughed at my fears, told me to declare myself an officer and claim boldly the right to leave for England with the other officers, and assured me that the Extraordinary Commission had been deprived of the power to inflict capital punishment. If he knew all that I knew he would have held very different language, but I saw that it would take a long time to make him see things as they really were, and I had only got him away for a few moments from his interpreter, whose ear was probably glued, however, to the keyhole. Although he was very far from being a Bolshevik and flattered himself that he saw through all the little wiles of his hosts, it would be really as hard to make him alter the opinion he had formed of their moderation as it would be to make him change his religion. One's views are formed from what one sees and hears, and if the eyes and ears of an observer are carefully controlled his opinions are, to some extent, forced on him; nevertheless, having formed an opinion, he dislikes to change it, as his doing so would be equivalent to a confession that he has been gulled.

This extraordinary system for influencing the Press—a system which may have a profound effect on journalism

all over the world—presupposes in its author a profound knowledge of psychology and a keener appreciation of the power exercised by newspapers over public opinion than any government exhibited until the outbreak of the Great War. But when one tries to ascertain who invented it, one finds that, like the tank, it owes its origin to circumstances and to a variety of inventors. It may even owe something to the great and elaborate system of dealing with the Press of neutral and friendly countries which was gradually built up in England during the war. Practically all the Bolshevik leaders have been journalists for the greater part of their lives; and, unlike the prominent English statesman who once said that he never read the newspapers, they have made a close study of this remarkable force, which was unknown to antiquity and which was ignored by most modern historians before the time of Macaulay; they have investigated the secret of its strength; and have sedulously sought out its weak points. Unfortunately, however, this flattering attention will probably result in their doing more harm to independent and honest journalism than has been done during the last two hundred years by all the statesmen who ignored it, and contemned it, and persecuted it, and knew nothing whatever about it. Trotsky, himself a journalist to his finger-tips, is even credited with the intention of making all Russian newspapermen wear a special uniform, but that is another story and too long a one to be given here.

I fancy, however, that I can detect Trotsky's hand in what I shall hereafter describe simply as the System (with a big S). Litvinov has also had something to do with it, for he takes an extremely keen interest in foreign journalists, and has an accurate knowledge of even obscure writers who specialize in Russia. He pays more attention, indeed, to inferior but prolific journalists than he does to great writers, for he knows that if the great writers influence tens of thousands of middle-class people, the small writers influence millions of workmen, and even contribute by their daily presentment of contemporary developments in little known countries to form the opinions of the masters.

And what I have said of Litvinov is equally true of the

Bolshevik Missions in Reval and London. The institution which is directly charged with the administration of the System is not itself very imposing, and the secret cannot be found there. Something must here be said, however, about that institution, which is, of course, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs.

That ministry is lodged in a cramped and unimposing wing at the back of the former Hôtel Métropole; and the entrance to it is through a door formerly used by the hotel servants. Painted on a small square of wood hung outside this door is the inscription: "People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs." It is a rough, makeshift signboard, such as the poorest provincial shopkeeper in this country would be ashamed of, but it accords very well with the ostentatious poverty which prevails in the building where Chicherin, in a dispatch to Mr. Francis, the American Ambassador, proudly described the Soviet, of which he formed part, as "the Government of the Poor and of the Oppressed."

Inside the entrance an armed Red soldier is always on guard: at least, he and his rifle are constantly in evidence, though very often he himself is asleep on a dilapidated sofa. There is a lift to facilitate ascent to the upper regions, but it has not been in working order since the Reds came into power, and visitors have got to mount a flight of dark stairs. On reaching the first-floor, a door on the left leads into the suite of rooms devoted to the Censorate. The first apartment is an anteroom where one sometimes finds English, American, Rumanian, and Italian correspondents being enlightened by their various interpreters and getting Bolshevik decrees and newspapers translated for them while waiting to have their articles and telegrams censored. Further on, there are three other rooms, the central one being the office in which the censoring is done and in which a number of correspondents are also to be found waiting, the nearest room being also a waiting-room to which correspondents from the central room sometimes retire, while the censor is arguing some delicate point with some one correspondent, and the furthest room being the private office of Comrade Rosenberg. In all these apartments Bolshevik women clerks, who generally speak some

foreign language, work spasmodically on a damaged Russian typewriter, which seems to be shifted about from one room to another. There is also on the premises a German Underwood with Latin characters, which is sometimes used at a pinch by the correspondents. Passports are also attended to in the central room and permits to leave the country granted to foreigners. Two Bolshevik officials attend to the Press and to the passport business. Their names are Rosenberg and Feinberger, and both of them are Jews with a very good knowledge of English and a still better knowledge of German. The chief of the department is Rosenberg, a good-natured and hard-working but somewhat moody and neurasthenic man. Sometimes he is pleasant, sometimes suspicious, morbidly touchy, and almost inaudible, but always he is impossibly and ludicrously severe as a Press censor. He will only pass whole-hearted and unstinted admiration for Lenin and all his works, and has no use even for praise if it is faint. To give one example of his methods out of thousands, a correspondent once commented in a purely descriptive article, most of it very pro-Bolshevik, on the inconvenience caused to pedestrians by the huge masses of half-melted snow which had been allowed to accumulate last spring in the streets of Moscow, where it constituted such a formidable and amazing obstacle that every correspondent who visited the city at that period immediately started to write about it before speaking about anything else. This comment annoyed Rosenberg. "Why do you speak of this snow?" he asked petulantly. "There are places where the snow has disappeared and where the streets are clean. Why not describe those places?"

Feinberger lived so long in England that he knows English much better than Russian; but though he wrote, I think, for English Labour papers which, at all times of crisis, opposed the mildest and most necessary Press censorship as an infringement of English liberty, he is now himself the most merciless and unfair of censors. When he read the notes I submitted to him about Yurovsky, the Tsar's murderer, he objected to my mentioning the fact that Yurovsky was a Jew, and made me strike out the word



"Jew" as if I should be likely to forget that fact, which, moreover, he did not dispute. I once spoke of the "lugubrious" funeral march which the Bolsheviks play in memory of their comrades who have fallen, and he also objected to this word "lugubrious," which was, he maintained, a term of ridicule.

These, it must be remembered, are not exceptional cases; they are typical cases. With such a censorship, the position of a foreign correspondent in Moscow is such that no self-respecting journalist could tolerate it for a moment, and that no decent British paper should send a representative there until the system is altered. For if a correspondent is made to eliminate from his dispatches all criticisms of Communism and all reference to facts which tell against Communism, quite a wrong impression will be made on his readers. I must admit that the Bolshevik censors always make their deletions in the correspondent's presence and never tamper with dispatches; nevertheless, the position of the foreign correspondent in Moscow is such that he is liable, without knowing it, to become a danger to his own people. If he is a sincere and conscientious man, very anxious to stay and study the intensely interesting problem presented by this unique Socialist Government, he may be tempted to let his dispatches go out mutilated without reflecting on what a false picture of the country they will eventually form in the minds of his readers. If he is simply an adventurous, jovial person without any great feeling of responsibility towards the public, he will be rather amused than otherwise by the thought that he is being maintained in a palace entirely at the expense of the Soviet Government, with motor-cars placed at his disposal, money advanced to him, his radios sent free, clothing and furs given him almost for nothing; and will cheerfully allow the Bolsheviks to cut anything they like out of his messages. Now there are unscrupulous journalists in the world just as there are unscrupulous Bishops, and even one such journalist in Moscow at the present moment might do considerable harm. The mere fact of his being able to make a "scoop" every week might possibly lead him to shut his eyes to many things. And there are newspapers here and there throughout the

world which would not, I am afraid, object to having a correspondent in Moscow able to send them occasionally exclusive news of the highest interest, and costing them nothing at all for his expenses and his radios—that is to say, nothing beyond his bare salary. If there is such a paper in England and it finds such a correspondent in Moscow, I hope that the public will be made to understand the position thoroughly; and I do not ask them to rely on my statement only: the slightest investigation will show them that 99 per cent. of the foreign journalists who have visited Russia during the last two years will bear me out in what I have said above. There are, I know, British journalists who are honestly convinced that Bolshevism is a good thing for Russia, as there are British newspapers honestly convinced that the Bolshevik side should be given as well as the anti-Bolshevik side. But I maintain that such newspapers should refrain from sending such correspondents until the Soviet Government allows more conservative newspaper representatives to send also their views from Moscow. This is not, however, a matter in which official action should be taken: it is a matter for the newspapers themselves and the public of this country. Governmental interference would only make things worse.

To show how intolerant the Bolsheviks are, I may say that a very pro-Bolshevik British journalist confessed to me once that he was almost excluded from Russia altogether, because a book he had written about the Soviets was regarded by the Commissars as hostile, though in England it was considered to be pro-Bolshevik. He lamented the amazing “touchiness” of the Commissars, but I should use a stronger word than “touchiness”; I should call it the determination of the Reds to tolerate no criticism, even of the mildest and most sympathetic kind. The existence of this state of mind would merely amuse me if it concerned only Russia, but at the present critical moment it concerns all mankind in a vital manner; and if any one paper ever tries to steal a march on its rivals by sacrificing its own honour and that of its representative in the manner indicated, I think that the whole world should understand the infamy of which that paper is guilty. If, after August,

1914, the Germans had retained the British correspondents in Berlin and allowed them to cable only pro-German propaganda, these correspondents would, for obvious reasons, have done less harm than correspondents telegraphing Bolshevik propaganda from Moscow at the present moment. As soon, of course, as English correspondents of all shades of opinion are allowed to send fairly impartial dispatches from Russia, the position will have altered entirely, and it will not matter then whether some of those correspondents are pro-Bolshevik or not. No one could object to Lenin's censorship being as severe in 1920 as the Tsar's was in 1905; but, after having had personal experience of both those censorships, I can affirm that Lenin's is incomparably the more drastic of the two. It is so drastic that it converts all correspondence from Russia into Bolshevik propaganda; and, as I have already pointed out, it involves unheard-of interference with foreign journalists, the restriction of their movements, their constant supervision by spy-interpreters, the selection by the Soviet Government of the people to whom they are allowed to speak, their absolute dependence on the Bolsheviks for food, housing, clothes, and transport. With incredible audacity Lenin seeks to use against us the very correspondents whom we send to ascertain the real position in Russia, just as his Extraordinary Commission has, by the threat of death, compelled several French agents in Petrograd to work secretly for it and against their own Government, while apparently continuing to work against it and for their own Government.

The one saving feature, however, of the System which the Reds have drawn up for the manipulation of the foreign Press is that, like everything else in Bolshevism, it is too extreme, and thus overreaches itself. For instance, if the Reds allowed correspondents to send some criticism from time to time, they would be far wiser and more dangerous. But I have no fear that this warning will make them change, for they are incapable of change. If they were crafty enough to simulate moderation, especially in their dealings with the foreign Press and with foreign Labour, they would be much more dangerous than they are.

To return now, for a moment, to Rosenberg and Fein-

berger: these officials are not only censors; they are also managers and directors of the foreign journalists. They find food and lodging for them. They furnish them, if necessary, with clothes and motor-cars. They arrange for interviews and for visits to factories. They let them see the most secret correspondence of Royalty, and lift for them the veil which has hidden, so far, the arcana of modern statecraft. They get them tickets to meetings addressed by Lenin and Trotsky. And, of course, the more Communist a correspondent is, the greater the facilities that will be extended to him. But it will not be sufficient for him to say that he is on the side of the Soviet. He must prove that he is by sending to his paper the sort of messages they want him to send, and, as they file the English papers, it is impossible to deceive them by mere promises.

Up to the year 1914 there was a growing disposition on the part of foreign correspondents, especially those attending Peace Conferences and little wars in which their own countries were not immediately interested, to drop all attempt at impartiality and make themselves mere mouthpieces of prominent and ambitious men who rewarded them by "first news." This did not matter so much in the old days when other correspondents could do the same thing on the other side, and when independent-minded journalists were admitted everywhere, but in the case of Russia it will matter seriously, for, within its territories, the Soviet Government tolerates no independence and no "other side." I have even known the Moscow correspondent of a London paper let Feinberger send radios in his name for weeks at a time, while he himself was absent in other parts of Russia. The readers of that paper, and perhaps the editor, were under the impression that they were getting the views of an impartial English gentleman on exceedingly important developments, but what they were really receiving were the compositions of a Bolshevik Government official who is also a member of the Third International, and, as such, a fanatical worker in the cause of revolution in England. And as Feinberger had access not only to all the latest news and all the highest personages, but also to the messages of the other correspondents which passed

through his hands, there was, of course, no possibility of competing with him.

It may seem incredible, but it is a fact, that Chicherin personally sees every news telegram which leaves Moscow by radio. This involves his sitting up all night, and certainly he is a demon for work. A single look at his haggard face as he wanders about his Foreign Office, shabbily dressed and with a muffler round his neck, and starting violently whenever he is addressed, would be enough to convince anyone that he is very much over-worked. He is invariably to be found in his office at night, as he has found that at night he is less liable to interruption than in the daytime, and also because radio messages are more easily received at night-time. He generally receives newspaper correspondents at 1.30 or 2 a.m., and the few foreign diplomatists who have visited the country since his accession to office are always asked to call at a similarly unearthly hour. A Rumanian Mission once objected to 2 a.m. as rather late, whereupon he made it 1.30 a.m., and kept them waiting half an hour.

Chicherin is a visionary and a fanatic who, before the Bolsheviks came into power, divided up his ancestral acres among his tenantry, and is at present penniless. He is one of those dangerous enthusiasts who do not drink, and for whom the festive board has no attraction. His food is sometimes brought in to him as he sits in his office, and it is never either plentiful or appetizing. His assistants lead the same kind of life as he does, and the usual time for a foreign correspondent to do business with them is between 11 at night and 6 in the morning. I had dinner with Rosenberg once, and found that he and his wife live principally on stale black bread and cold imitation tea without milk or sugar. I satisfied myself that the meal I then partook of had not been got up for dramatic effect, and I know that the Foreign Minister himself fares no better. All the Bolshevik chiefs who are really dangerous to the world lead a simple life and work very hard. Consumed by ambition or fanaticism or a combination of both, they are spurred on to perform prodigies of work by the feeling that they sit in the throne of the Romanovs, rule nearly a

seventh of the land surface of the globe, hold like clay in their hands over a hundred million of plastic, ignorant people, and are looked up to with secret or undisguised admiration and hope by another hundred million of foreign workers. On this latter point they are probably mistaken, but that is what they believe, and it explains the frenzy with which they work, the privations to which they subject themselves, and the extraordinary lives which they lead. As was recently pointed out in *The Times*, even Edmund Burke, who had no love for the French Terrorists, admitted that, though the powers and politics by which those Terrorists won success at the beginning of the Revolution were "not those of great statesmen or great military commanders," but the practices of vulgar criminals, they displayed nevertheless an energy which enabled them to supply their innumerable defects and made them "terrible even to the firmest minds." "They have one thing, and one thing only," he says, "but that one thing is worth a thousand; they have energy." The strong passions of such men "awake the faculties; they suffer not a particle of the man to be lost." They had the insight of hate. "They saw the right thing from the beginning. They saw that in its spirit, and for its objects, it was a civil war, and as such they pursued it." All this might be applied, without the change of a syllable, to the Terrorists who now misgovern Russia.

Chicherin belongs to the gentry class, and served for some time as a diplomatist under the old régime. Aristocratic in face and in manner, he has a good knowledge of English, French, and German, and is very accessible to journalists, much more so than the Foreign Minister of any Great Power, for he regards correspondents, especially Labour correspondents, as truer representatives of their people than accredited diplomatists. The fact that they are not elected, and that their influence is extra-Parliamentary, probably tells in their favour, for Chicherin, like all the Bolsheviks, has Walt Whitman's detestation of "the insufferable insolence of elected persons." He professes to talk with absolute frankness, keeping back nothing; and to publish all outgoing and incoming dispatches. All the

correspondence which he carried on with the diplomatists of the Entente at the time they left Russia, in July, 1918, has already appeared in English and French, and a copy of this publication was given to me. His last message to Ambassador Francis was to wish him a safe voyage, and to send, through him, greetings "to the descendants of Cromwell's Ironsides settled beyond the Atlantic," for Chicherin never neglects an opportunity of introducing Propaganda into his official messages any more than Cromwell ever neglected an opportunity to introduce Biblical references into his. Next to his fanaticism, his most prominent characteristic is his profound and ineradicable distrust of foreign diplomatists and Governments—a distrust which he bases on the policy of the Allies during the last three years in all the States bordering on Russia, and also on the disclosures made to him by Captain Sadul of the French Military Mission. As Chicherin himself graduated in a diplomatic service which was never celebrated for its scrupulousness, and belongs at present to a school of diplomacy which recognizes no law, his distrust is incurable, and it is very unlikely, therefore, that he and his colleagues will ever make an honest peace with the West. If there is a truce, it will be a short one, and will be followed by a greater and perhaps a final trial of strength.

Chicherin seems to work very harmoniously with the other Commissars, and both Lenin and Trotsky place full confidence in him, for both of them frequently refer to him in public utterances as a sound and trustworthy spokesman of Soviet Russia. The routine work of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs is left entirely to Chicherin and his subordinates, but on very important occasions Lenin, Trotsky, and the other two men, who form the supreme committee of five, are consulted with regard to important statements made to foreign Governments, with the natural result that those statements have sometimes a patchwork character.

Chicherin's office is easily the most original Foreign Office in Europe, being more like a small Labour Club over a public-house during the progress of a strike, than the headquarters of an important Government department. In-

stead of the well-groomed young men whom one ordinarily meets with in such places, one encounters roughly clad, unshaven persons with heavy top-boots that have never been polished and without collars. Conversations about politics are sometimes conducted by visitors with a future Ambassador or a *Conseiller d'Ambassade en disponibilité*, who repairs the handle of a door while he is talking, or punctuates his remarks with the blows of a hammer driving in nails to hang up a picture. There is the same air of impermanence about the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs as there is about the Sublime Porte. In one case the impression is that of Asiatics encamped in Europe; in the other case of rioters occupying a palace. Several of the old diplomatists have, it is true, come back; but, with the exception of one young man who has opened a Far Eastern Department in a lumber-room over Rosenberg's office, where he is generally to be found cooking his own food or washing up after meals, all these old-régime people are given employment outside. To one of them has been allotted the interesting task of examining all the secret papers of the late Emperor and of the old Foreign Office, on the chance of finding some scandal which will compromise other monarchs and their Governments.

The feeling of impermanence of which I have spoken is never stronger than when one is waiting at night with the other correspondents for news by radio of some important event in the outer world. At such moments the air is tense with suppressed excitement. One feels as if one were in Sydney Street with the desperadoes who were cornered there, or as if one were one of a party of actors and critics assembled behind the scenes and trying to produce a ghastly merriment, while, before the footlights outside, a hopeless play is being produced to an infuriated audience without the faintest prospect of its being allowed to reach the last act. On the stage, the frenzied dialogue of actors uncertain if they will ever manage to escape with their lives. Behind the scenes a sceptical Press, wondering if, by any chance, *they* will become involved in the final, unrehearsed catastrophe which they see approaching. With the Press a number of nervous actors still dressed for their parts,



and awaiting with ill-concealed anxiety the summons to "go on" again.

One discovers, not without alarm, that the officials one has been dealing with, under the impression that they are the heads of a great State, are merely part of a very small gang which has, by an amazing coup, seized on the Government of a vast Empire, and which is far from sure of its position. A combined attempt is made by the "diplomats" and journalists to boil some water for tea in a disused kitchen, which has been discovered on the other side of the passage. Rosenberg contributes black bread. An English correspondent who came to Moscow without the permission of his own Government supplies butter, which he brought with him from Esthonia. A plucky young American lady, the correspondent of the Associated Press, produces a packet of tea. (That American lady was arrested at 4 o'clock the same morning by the Extraordinary Commission.) A Rumanian and an Italian Socialist, who was a naval officer during the war, complete the party, which seems somehow like a gang of burglars audaciously refreshing themselves in a mansion which they have plundered. Outside, Moscow is profoundly dark and quiet, save when a solitary rifle-shot at a great distance breaks the silence. Chicherin is alone in his office waiting for the radio message which he expects. It is at such a time that one best realizes the vital importance to the Bolsheviki of their great wireless station at Moscow, for without it they would be lost and isolated amid their snows, and Chicherin would have very little to do from one year's end to the other.

It is extraordinary what small things bring about these crises. I remember two of these small things. The first was the seizure by the Japanese of Nikolsh, an act which led the Soviet Government to believe that Churchill had persuaded Japan to take active steps in Siberia, and that, in return for vast territorial concessions, the Mikado was going to march half a million of men to the Urals and to Moscow. The second was Kapp's abortive attempt at a *coup* in Berlin. Judging by the excitement which these trifling events produced in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, I should not like to be there when the real disasters come.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE BOLSHEVIK NEWS AGENCY

THE most remarkable work which the Bolsheviks have done is their organization of a news service which is certainly the most wonderful institution of its kind in the world. I enjoyed peculiar advantages for studying it, inasmuch as I made the acquaintance of its agents in Siberia, got letters of introduction from them to the chiefs of the service in Moscow, and was once able to penetrate into the Kremlin and examine there at my leisure an exhibition devoted to the work of this organization, which is known as the Rosta, a word formed out of the initials of the phrase "Russian Socialist Telegraph Agency." To get into the Kremlin is very difficult, for as Lenin, Trotsky, and the other National Commissars live there, the place is strongly guarded. I noticed, however, that those who went in received a ticket in exchange for a stamped permit of some kind from a girl in a little box-office near the gate, and then presented it to one of the guards. By talking German, saying I was a journalist, and suddenly remembering that I had an appointment with "my friend Radek" (a Commissar whom I had never seen in my life), I managed to bluff this girl into giving me a ticket, without receiving any document in exchange. Her last suspicions were removed when, knowing that she would not like to telephone and hoping fervently that the telephone did not work, I professed great reluctance to accept the ticket ("for fear of getting her into trouble"), until she had first telephoned to "Comrade" Radek. She did not telephone, but told me to pass on, and in a few moments I was inside the Kremlin. There I was fairly safe, for the mere fact of being in the Holy of Holies presupposed that I had got there by legitimate means. I met Trotsky crossing in his usual impetuous

style from Lenin's department to the Cavalry Barracks, and talked to him for a while, but without hearing anything of interest. Then I examined the whole enclosure, which is not much changed from what it was in 1914. The statues of the Emperors have, of course, been removed; and the churches were all closed, and had been closed apparently for a long time, as was shown by the great piles of soft, untrodden snow on the steps. The ancient and much-venerated chapel of the Virgin inside the quadrangle formed by the Imperial Palace is now a motor garage; the Imperial apartments are unoccupied; and the other habitable buildings are filled with (1) the Commissars, (2) their staffs and servants, and (3) Red soldiers and their families. Not much damage was done to the Kremlin during the fighting in October, 1917; one of the gateways was damaged by a shell, but it is now hidden by scaffolding and being repaired. On all the buildings and towers the Imperial double-headed eagle still remains, and the only external sign of the Bolshevik occupation is the Red flag flying over the dome-shaped Palace of Justice.

On entering one large building, which had been converted into Government offices and was full of people hurrying to and fro, I discovered that there was, in one of the halls, an exhibition of the Rosta intended solely, however, for the deputies of the Ninth Communist Convention then sitting. In order to obtain admission even these deputies had to exhibit a pass, as well as their Convention credentials and their identity papers; but luckily I met a prominent Red official who managed, by breaking all the rules, to get me admitted.

The walls were covered with innumerable charts and diagrams prepared with great skill and accuracy, and showing at a glance all the various activities of the Rosta, the whole effect being that of a highly technical and scientific exhibition by a well-equipped Government department. It is the first time in history that the Press has been treated by a Government as seriously as, say, Industry, Commerce, Finance, or Public Health is treated.

The Rosta, which is the successor of the old Russian Telegraph Agency, an organization resembling Reutehr, as

now become a great and most ingeniously constructed machine for the Bolshevization of Russia, a country which, it must be remembered, contains fewer Communists, in proportion to its population, than England does. On the principle that "charity begins at home," the Reds are making Russia Communist before turning the full force of their Propaganda on to the rest of the world, though in the meantime they are not quite neglecting us. Their procedure is simple. They have nationalized the whole Press, so that every journalist in Russia is now a Government servant. All news, home and foreign, goes first to the headquarters of the Rosta, a large building on the Lubyanka, where it is cooked and peppered till it has the right Communist flavour. Then it is sent by wireless to the correspondents of the Rosta throughout Russia, and they give it to the local Press. Even contents bills, headings of articles, and summaries of news are prepared with great journalistic skill in Moscow by expert editors of the Rosta, and sent by radio all over Russia. As far east as Ekaterinburg I had been surprised at the uniform excellence of the newspaper placards. Archangel fell when I was in the Urals, and the finished journalistic phrases in which the smallest newspapers there spoke of the Red flag as now waving from the White Sea to the Black, and prophesied that it would yet wave over every capital in Europe, betrayed at once the practised hand of the metropolitan journalists. Somewhat the same effect would be produced in the British Isles, if all the best English journalists were concentrated in, say, the Hotel Cecil, under the direction of some editor gifted with unusual organizing ability. These experts would be divided into different Committees, one consisting of experienced manufacturers of headlines and contents bills, another consisting of leader writers, another of news editors, and so on, with the result that the smallest newspapers in the provinces, as well as the largest newspapers in the great cities, would epitomize all the journalistic skill of the country enthusiastically supported by the heads of the Government. In each great city there would be, moreover, a local correspondent of the British Rosta, who would always be a journalist of distinction, and who would have a palatial

house to reside in, and a network of local correspondents under him. The agents of the Rosta in Perm, Ekaterinburg, and other places are Bolsheviks, who all acquired a good knowledge of journalistic work and of foreign languages while in exile under the Tsar. I once heard one of them lecturing a number of his local correspondents on their duties, and was surprised to hear him tell them that he did not want murders and divorces, but only solid matter about the repair of bridges, the agricultural, industrial, and educational situation, and, above all, the progress of Communism. One of them, an unsophisticated country schoolmaster, asked if poetry would be acceptable, but, curbing by a violent effort a sudden tendency to laugh, the agent explained politely and with patience that, though the republican Government would always be glad to discover and foster any genuine poetic talent that was brought to its notice, the news of the day had better *not* be sent, as a rule, in poetic form. "And if I send poetry," continued the pertinacious schoolmaster, whom I suspect of being himself a bard, "will Comrade Lenin see it?" to which the agent replied that poems of special excellence would certainly be shown to Comrade Lenin and also to Trotsky. This assurance so satisfied the poetic schoolmaster that he subsided and did not interrupt again.

The Rosta does not confine itself to telegraphic work. It sends out to all the newspapers news articles, reviews of books, literary articles, and even stories and poetry, all of which are produced in the great journalistic factory on the Lubyanka; and I saw in the diagrams referred to above a very accurate record of the reception which those articles met with in the provincial Press. The name of the writers was given, and also the exact number of times which each article was used. Thus, one could trace the rise of a writer with scientific precision, and, by looking at the chart of any journalist, the Director of the Rosta could see at a glance whether he was progressing or not, the exact popularity of each writer being stated in figures and even in decimal points. If the development of Shakespeare's genius had been recorded in this way, it would have been shown in a series of charts similar to those used in hos-

pital to indicate the successive stages of an attack of typhus.

The publicity which attended various agitational cries was indicated in the same way. Trotsky, for example, would say to Kerzhentsev, the Director of the *Rosta*, "Start a cry of horror at the White Terror in Ireland." Kerzhentsev would pass on the order to his news editors and poets, and forthwith the whole Russian Press would resound with roars of indignation and with lurid descriptions of Governmental repression. A similar cry was raised about India, Egypt, Finland, Poland, and Hungary. More practical cries were raised in connection with cleanliness, typhus, education, repair of transport, collection of arms for the Red Army, hair cutting, and the support of Red Army hospitals. Minute cross references from the articles to the "talent chart" of the journalist who had written them gave the whole exhibition the air of a very up-to-date laboratory for scientific experiments.

Even thus did Lord Northcliffe send forth a cry for "Standard Bread" or for "More Shells," a cry which was taken up by all his organs in the Press. But this Bolshevik newspaper trust will be immensely bigger than the Northcliffe combine, for it is an absolute monopoly of the Russian Press, and seems to contain in it the principle of a rapid and monstrous growth. If Bolshevism continues, there will be as much difference in volume between the Red Press of 1930 and that of to-day as there is between the British Press of to-day and that of 1820.

Curiously enough, however, the Bolshevik papers generally are not yet so subject to Kerzhentsev as the Northcliffe papers are to Northcliffe, many of the provincial journals in Russia being published by local Soviets and local Labour organizations which print a good many original articles; but, of course, the complete control of the foreign and of practically all the Russian news, as well as the possession of a merciless censorship, enables the central Soviet Government to exercise a tremendous and irresistible influence on the entire Russian Press an influence even greater than that exercised by the German Government on the German newspapers during the war. Moreover, the

Rosta not only supplies telegrams and articles to the Press throughout Russia: it also publishes over four hundred newspapers of its own, not to speak of a still greater number of small sheets called "wall papers," which are posted up on hoardings and at railway stations, and from which the Russian man-in-the-street derives most of his information about the general progress of the world, even as the British man-in-the-street derives most of his information about current events from newspaper contents bills. The extent to which the Press has expanded may be judged from the fact that, while formerly there were only two newspapers in Ekaterinburg Government, there are now twelve, eight of which get most of their news by radio from the town of Ekaterinburg.

In Perm and Ekaterinburg provinces, where there were formerly only four newspapers in all, no "wall papers," and no resident correspondent of the Russian Telegraph Agency, there are now twenty-two "wall papers" and two resident correspondents whose position in the Bolshevik hierarchy is second or third, who live in houses as large as those occupied by the local Bishops, and who hold in the Bolshevik Community the same position as the Bishops held in the Pravoslavny Community. This is not a fanciful comparison. Lenin has decided, with the same cold, matter-of-fact, but inflexible determination which he has shown in all the other tremendous changes that he has decreed, that his newspaper correspondents shall exercise all that influence over public opinion which has hitherto been the monopoly of the Church; and Trotsky speaks calmly of having replaced the Army Chaplains by political Commissars, who will appeal to the emotions of the soldiers exactly as the Chaplains used to do. At the Red Front in Siberia I attended military revival meetings presided over by military Commissars, who employed all the arts of the Methodist preacher in order to arouse the fanaticism of the soldiery. By wild harangues and by making the "congregation" join in the singing of fierce revolutionary songs, those Commissars worked the troops up to a state of excitement such as I have only seen paralleled in Stamboul and Belfast. The old *régime* used to do the same by means

of vodka and religion; and I remember that, during the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian War Office distributed among the soldiers thousands of pictures representing a priest who, with his crucifix held aloft, was alleged to have headed a charge against the heathen Japanese.

Owing to its flatness, Russia is an ideal place for the use of wireless, which is being very extensively used even now for journalistic purposes, much more extensively than it is used in England; and the Bolsheviks look forward to a time when its use for such purposes will be a million times greater than it is at present, and when the great establishment in the Lubyanka will be like a vast megaphone dictating policies and opinions, and then hearing the innumerable echoes of its own voice come back to it from the remotest confines of Russia. It is difficult to exaggerate the power which the Soviet Government will thus acquire for the manufacture of public opinion, and for the education, on utterly wrong lines, of a plastic people still in its infancy. The central laboratory wherein all domestic and foreign news is manipulated with the one main object of helping Bolshevism, is under the direct control of the Communist Executive Committee at the Hôtel Métropole, and, in fact, the more important news, foreign and domestic, goes to the Hôtel Métropole first, and is sometimes manipulated there before being sent to the offices of the Rosta. The position is much the same as if all the more important news reaching England or coming from various parts of the British Isles went first to Downing Street, and was "touched up" by a board of Ministerial Secretaries under the direct supervision of the Cabinet before being sent to a college of tame editors housed in the Hotel Cecil. If Mr. Lloyd George dropped in occasionally to add a flashing phrase or a striking metaphor to the concoction before it was served out, the parallel would be complete, for that is what Trotsky does.

For a large area round Moscow the telephone is used, and wireless telephony will be employed as soon as possible. The great map in the Kremlin exhibition indicated where the ordinary telegraph lines and even mounted messengers are employed to carry the news to remote villages and factories. Kerzhentsev is a convinced Communist and



an indefatigable editor; his guide-book to Communist literature and his organization of the Rosta display all the minute scientific care of a Darwin or a Mechnikov. Some of his assistants are not so satisfied with their servitude, and, in fact, they would like to get into a freer atmosphere; but, under present conditions, they have as little chance of getting away as a cog-wheel in a Pittsburg factory has of walking down the street. I once spoke to an intelligent Commissar of this pitiless repression of human individuality, but he retorted that the same thing went on in Western Europe. "Have you not in England," he asked, "able journalists of Radical views who are compelled by the pressure of hard facts to work for Conservative newspapers?" This Commissar had spent most of his life abroad, and knew the French Press from the inside. What he told me of the corruption in the French Press was astonishing and not untrue; Trotsky has a similar tale to tell of the American Press. Both of them are convinced that, outside Russia, Capitalism exercises indirectly as tremendous a power over the Press as Socialism exercises in Moscow. "This is no time for sloppy sentimentality," they said. "We had better face facts and take our measures accordingly." On this point Trotsky spoke, I must admit, with a certain amount of authority, for he, with his great organizing and journalistic ability, might easily have joined the Associated Press or some of the great New York papers, if only he had consented to moderate his Socialist enthusiasms. Instead of that, he worked for obscure revolutionary organs which paid him little or nothing, and he always had the police on his track, moving him on from one country to another.

Most of the best Russian journalists are still abroad, but lack of money will probably induce them to return, as the diplomatists and the officers are returning; and when they do come back, they will be fitted into the great Press Machine of the Reds. That Machine is supplemented by theatres and concerts, and works in harmony with the Commissariat of Education and with the Propaganda department. It even caters for the illiterate by means of cinemas and posters; and its agents are expected to furnish periodically most careful, statistical reports of their activi-

ties. The specimens of these reports exhibited in the Kremlin Exhibition could not be surpassed in accuracy and painstakingness by agents of the great Steel Trust of America. They were all facts and figures; no rhetoric whatever. Those facts and figures were controlled from other sources, and there was short shrift for a correspondent who did not "deliver the goods." The chiefs of the Rosta weighed the idealism and energy of their subordinates with a detachment which could not be excelled by the President of a Chicago Meat-Packing Company.

The conception, organization, and management of the Rosta is very good—from a technical point of view. The pooling of all journalistic talent under Government supervision enables the smallest papers in remote parts of Russia to publish excellent articles and reviews, to use catchy headings, and to issue striking posters. Trotsky, himself a journalist, is so enamoured of this scheme that he is going to make all Russian journalists wear a special uniform, probably with a pair of crossed pens as the badge, so as to emphasize the fact that they are as much agents of the Soviet Government as the Grenadier Guards are of the British Government.

The technical experts at the head of the wireless service are extremely able men. They claim to have invented a new receiver, in advance of anything used elsewhere in the world, and they say that they can alter the pitch (or whatever the technical expression is) to take any kind of message. They receive messages at Tver and send messages from Moscow, and are now installing in Moscow a transmitter much more powerful than the one at present in use.

In some respects the Rosta overdoes its propaganda. It so frequently reports revolutions abroad, that people have come to disbelieve it, even when it tells the truth. A prominent Bolshevik once asked me if there was any truth in the reports of demonstrations outside the War Office in Whitehall by soldiers wanting to be demobilized. He had been doubtful of it owing to the false reports of the same kind, which had appeared so often in the Communist Press that there is a common humorous saying in Moscow

to the effect that "We must have a revolution reported from abroad at least once a day."

But though the Commissars do not always believe their own Propaganda, they nevertheless continue it at the same high pitch for the sake of less enlightened "comrades"; and their policy is justified, for the rank and file swallow it all. On my once telling an educated Bolshevik workman that Krassin was going to England, he said: "Then England has gone Red." To him our loss of India, Egypt, and Ireland were accomplished facts. He believed that a Soviet was sitting at No. 10 Downing Street, that an English Lenin had replaced Mr. Lloyd George and an English Trotsky had replaced Mr. Churchill. The tremendous events of the last three years in Russia, the constant reiterations of the Bolshevik Propaganda, had rendered these events not only credible, but even trifling and commonplace.

## CHAPTER XXI

### AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PATRIARCH

DURING my residence in Moscow I visited the Patriarch, Tikhon, at his palace. I was first met by one of his clergy, who warned me that the Patriarch was under "house arrest," and not supposed to see anyone without authorization. I was also given to understand that I should run some risk myself, as I should have to sign my name in a book which had to be submitted afterwards to the Extraordinary Commission.

I signed my name, however, and was soon afterwards ushered into the presence of the Patriarch, who certainly lives in comfortable surroundings, having the whole palace to himself and his small entourage of clergy and servants. None of the furniture, pictures, *ikons*, etc., in the spacious halls have been disturbed, and the whole place is kept in good condition. Tikhon wore the gorgeous dress of a Russian patriarch, and he received me with simple dignity. He is a tall man of about sixty, with shrewd grey eyes and a florid, healthy face—the face of a peasant. In the subsequent conversation he struck me as simple in the ways of the world, but fearless and sincere. He is as different from, say, Cardinal Mercier, as the Orthodox Church is different from the Roman. The latter, I should say, has a powerful organization, and possesses among its higher ecclesiastics cultured men with trained minds and great diplomatic ability. The former is in a more primitive stage, and its long connection with the State has atrophied it. Cardinal Mercier is a highly educated man with Latin energy and initiative. Patriarch Tikhon is a pious, unsophisticated man with a considerable knowledge of Russian theological literature, and with more than a touch of Russian fatalism and apathy. Although he lived for several years in America

and Alaska, visiting Russian congregations there, he must have lived in monasteries all the time, for he knows nothing of American conditions, and has only picked up one word of English—"Good-bye." He is capable of being a martyr, but incapable of inaugurating and carrying on an active anti-Bolshevik movement. He told me of the encyclical in which he had cursed the Bolsheviki, and remarked, with a chuckle, that the latter were very annoyed about it, and had complained to him that Denikin's troops were using it very extensively as propaganda and had pasted it up on all the walls in Tombov and other towns. I told him that Kolchak had used it in the same way, and this intelligence seemed to gratify him. But I do not think that he will write any more encyclicals, being apparently satisfied that he has done all he can, and that the rest is in the hands of God. On the other hand, the Bolsheviki are not likely to trouble him so long as he keeps quiet.

He approved of the separation of Church and State, but complained that, though the Church had lost Government help, the Government continued to interfere in its internal affairs. About sixty Bishops and several hundred priests had been put to death, but the Communists made it impossible for him to get accurate statistics. It was difficult for any ecclesiastic to get a permit to travel, with the result that diocesan visitations had been pretermitted, many churches left without a pastor, and the whole ecclesiastical machinery stopped. Thus Lenin has made use of the peculiar importance of the railways in a vast and thinly settled country like Russia, and of the fact that Bolshevism has a firm hold on the railwaymen, in order to strangle not only all the political parties which are opposed to him, but also Christianity. He prevents rival politicians from travelling on the railway or sending their correspondence by it, and he also prevents priests from doing so. No doubt some of these difficulties are due to a disorganized transport service, and not specially created for the persecution of the Church.

There was little altar wine left and little oil. The Patriarch wanted to know if I could get these for him from England. He was anxious to know my religion, being

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apparently afraid of Jews visiting him. All the Church's printing-presses and paper had been confiscated, and this made the publication of religious works or periodicals impossible. All meetings of ecclesiastical Councils are also impossible, and it is doubtful if they will be allowed in the future, so that common action among the leaders of the Russian Church is precluded.

The position of the Patriarch is pathetic, and also the position of the clergy, who are now entirely dependent for support on their parishioners. If the latter do not want a particular priest or any priest at all in their villages, they need only refuse their offerings. The result will be an entire change in the status of the clergyman who, in any case, was never very much venerated by the villagers. That status will be lower, I think, henceforward, for the clergyman will be an expensive luxury, and the higher ecclesiastical authorities will cease to have any hold on him. He will tend to become a mere tool in the hands of the dominant faction in his parish. The peasants, at least, will not dispense with him, for he will be useful at the blessing of the crops and other functions to which the *muzhiks* attach a superstitious importance; but, even under the Tsars, the parish priest was generally regarded as a man who had his own trade, like a cobbler or a carpenter, and was not expected to take an interest in the social and moral life of the people like the English or French clergyman. Nor did he take any such interest. When he had finished reading his Mass or performing some other religious service, he went home to his family, without thinking that he had any other obligations towards society at large than a mechanic who had done a piece of work and been paid for it.

Bishop Anthony of Ufa tried to interest Kolchak in a scheme for making the clergy take an interest in social and educational work, such as the clergy of the Western Churches take, but this scheme was never carried into execution. What would tell against its success would be the fact that the priest is, as a rule, only a peasant himself, uneducated and sometimes addicted to drink. In one village in Vologda Province, where I lived before the war,

the *muzhiks* complained to me of a parish priest who beat his wife, and got so drunk on Saturday night that they sometimes had to pull him out of bed on Sunday morning in order that he might say Mass for them.

The Patriarch told me that there are now no candidates for the priesthood, and that all the ecclesiastical seminaries are closed. The net result will probably be the downfall of the Russian Church and the formation of a great number of small sects, some of them probably of a very strange character. The Old Believers among the Cossacks will probably become stronger, and so will the Baptists, the largest Protestant sect in Russia, but there is more likely to be a throw-back towards old and fantastic heresies than an advance, or what is generally called an "advance," on modern religious lines in the West. The Communists will probably have trouble with sporadic religious outbreaks, but these outbreaks will be accompanied by such massacres of Jews and by the preaching of such impossible doctrines that Europe will find it difficult to sympathize with them. Bolsheviki have confessed to me that they are nervous on the subject of religion, and that they must go slow. A Russian gentleman, who distinguished himself before the war by his strongly anti-alcohol views, recently started some sort of religious revival in Petrograd, but the Bolsheviki promptly put him in jail, whereupon the movement collapsed.

The most formidable enemy of Bolshevism among the religious bodies in Russia is the other great International—the Roman Catholic Church. This Church possesses in every Russian and Siberian town large and very earnest congregations composed chiefly of Poles and Lithuanians, and in no case that came under my observation has the priest deserted his flock or discontinued holding daily services, which are always well attended by men as well as by women. There has been no interference on the part of the Bolsheviki with these R.C. communities, save that their schools have been closed, their schoolbooks and libraries confiscated, and their children forced to attend Communist schools. One of their prelates, Bishop Ropp of Petrograd, has been imprisoned, but he was probably too

outspoken and aggressive, for the Government of the late Tsar once exiled him from his see and from Russia owing to the high tone he took with them. There were also arrests of Catholics in Petrograd, some few months ago, owing to religious processions of protest against several Bolshevik measures having been organized by the congregation of St. Catherine's Church on the Nevsky Prospect. In Little Russia the Uniat Church, which is recognized by Rome, will probably gain in membership; and a large number of Lithuanians, who had been forced by the old Imperial Government to register themselves as Orthodox, will now profess Roman Catholicism openly.

The Catholic Church in Russia is powerful, well organized, and solid against Bolshevism, for no Catholic can be a Bolshevik, but owing to the fact that it is mainly Polish, there is a national prejudice against it in Russia, and it will consequently have no effect on the general situation. Rome, too, is behaving with her usual prudence in this matter. She is taking no steps against Bolshevism, being probably afraid of exposing her followers in Russia to persecution.

The standard of education and general culture among the Roman Catholic clergy in Russia is much higher than that which prevails among the Orthodox clergy, hence the machinery of the Catholic Church is able to function much as usual, despite the fact that it is exposed to the same lack of communication as has paralyzed the Russian Church. Among the Polish clergy are some very remarkable men, speaking four or five European languages besides their own, and accustomed to move in the highest circles of the Vatican. They are inclined to take little or no interest, however, in the conversion of the Russians, whom they regard with contempt as an inferior race. One of them, a very learned man, who had travelled everywhere and spoke every language in Europe with the most scholarly precision, complained to me bitterly of the Byzantine style being chosen for Westminster Cathedral. He detested everything Byzantine, and regarded the Eastern Church as a blind alley in artistic as well as in religious matters. It was not, he maintained, a living organism like the Catholic Church, and had not



developed in any respect since it had cut itself off from Western Christendom. It had made no attempt to accommodate itself to modern life as the Catholic Church has done. Its architecture, its pictures, and everything about it is stereotyped. Joseph de Maistre said that the Orthodox Church is a mummy, and that, when the wrappings are taken off it and the light of modern science let into its coffin, it will crumble away. Most of the Poles believe that, and they are as little interested in the conversion of Russia as a Sinn Feiner is in the conversion of England. Consequently Rome, though it takes a great interest in the Uniat Church, is unable to do anything for it, as it has to act through the Polish clergy, who would almost decline to go to heaven if Russians were admitted there also. A well-known Galician prelate, who is also a Prince, a *littérateur*, a theologian, and a publicist of somewhat similar stamp to Cardinal Newman in this country, has made it his life-work, however, to persuade all Russians to enter the Uniat Church; and the lifting of the Tzarist ban on the residence of Catholic regular clergy in Russia may result in his obtaining able assistants from the heads of the religious congregations in Rome. In the present turmoil he can, however, do nothing.

I should have pointed out above that the schools, school-books, libraries, etc., of the Orthodox clergy have been all taken over by the State, and that all the children in the country of both sexes and of every race and religion are taught together in Communist schools. Education is conducted with enthusiasm, and will, if continued, reduce very much the percentage of illiteracy in Russia, but it is very anti-religious, and inculcates that anti-nationalism and class hatred which are the first principles of the Bolsheviks. A generation of this teaching will overthrow every religion in Russia, and convert the country into a factory of high explosives which will make it a danger to the whole world.

The number of Jews occupying high positions in the Soviet Government is probably larger than the Jewish community is entitled to either on account of its numbers or of its higher educational standard. But, even in Russia, there are many Jewish anti-Bolsheviks; and several of the leading

Commissars are very anti-Jewish. Chicherin is Russian, though several of his assistants are Jews. Derzhinsky, the head of the Extraordinary Commission, is Russian or Polish, and none of the people whom I met in that institution were Jews. Derzhinsky's right-hand man, Mogilevsky, with whom I was brought into close and unpleasant relations, is very anti-Jewish, and is at present trying to get hold of a Jew in Moscow who supplied Mr. North, it is alleged, with large sums of money for anti-Bolshevik agitation.

There must be many such anti-Bolshevik Jews who are probably opposed to Lenin on account of his ingenious scheme of inflating the currency until money becomes valueless. One can quite understand that a race with the financial ability of the Hebrews should dislike such a project.

Continental Freemasonry, which is not the same thing as English Freemasonry, played some part in the Young Turk movement, and in the Portuguese Revolution, but it plays no part whatever in Bolshevism. None of the leading Bolsheviks are masons, and they all regard the institution with suspicion as being calculated to encourage mysticism and help in other ways the domination of the *bourgeoisie*. There are also no secret societies in Bolshevism, but the movement itself is practically a secret society, and it is almost impossible for a non-Bolshevik to get admittance to Communist election meetings and conventions. Even the reporters must not only show their permits, but also their cards of membership and their identity cards, and must, in addition to this, write their names in a book.

## CHAPTER XXII

### IN THE DUNGEONS OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COMMISSION

I WAS arrested by the Vecheka (the usual contraction for the Russian words signifying "All-Russian Extraordinary Commission") at 12.30 on the night of Good Friday. I had passed the evening in the company of a very cheery electrical engineer called Falk who, though a Russian, had served in the French Army throughout the Great War, and was not a Bolshevik. He is at present helping to carry out the vast engineering scheme for the electrification of the villages which I have described elsewhere, and his frank and naïve appeal to me, to assist by my pen in putting Russia on her legs again, moved me more than all the elaborate arguments of the well-primed specialists who had previously been let loose on me. The corrective came half an hour after midnight in the shape of the Vecheka. I was asleep at the time of the visitation, but a loud knocking on the door soon woke me up. I was not alarmed on hearing it, for correspondents in possession of important news had been in the habit of thus waking me up unceremoniously at night. On opening the door I saw a group of soldiers outside—five or six young men. One of them said: "You are arrested, and we are going to make a search." Switching on the electric light, I invited them to enter, but the invitation was unnecessary, for they were already in my room when it was made. Among them was the young soldier who was acting as hotel manager at the Savoy. All of them were excited and were breathing heavily. They evidently expected resistance, and one of them asked me if I had any arms. They themselves were all armed with revolvers.

I was proceeding to dress, when they plucked away my clothes from me, and began to search them, not only turning out the contents of my pockets, but also feeling all

over each garment to see if there were any document hidden in the lining. If there had been any, it would have betrayed its presence by the crinkling of the paper. Only a few weeks earlier I had secreted in the lining of my coat a photograph of myself in military uniform, stamped on the back "Director of Military Intelligence, War Office," with the word "correct," and the signature of an officer in the M.I. Department at the War Office added in ink. Luckily I had destroyed this, along with a great deal of other documentary evidence establishing my connection with the Army. It would certainly have been discovered on this occasion, for the searchers knew their business thoroughly; and, if discovered, my stay in prison would be lengthy, or, which would be worse, not lengthy. The only compromising object in my possession was an army identity disc worn round the neck, but the soldiers apparently mistook it for a charm or religious emblem of some kind. Painted in large letters on the outside of my leathern hunting kitbag was my name and military rank and the one fatal word "Intelligence," but I had rubbed some ink over this inscription, to which the searchers paid no attention, though a wet rag would have removed all the ink in a few moments without obliterating the tell-tale letters underneath. The interior of the bag was very carefully examined, however, even the space between the canvas lining and the outer skin being opened up and minutely scrutinized.

Having searched my clothes, the soldiers of the Vecheka returned them to me and told me to dress. While I was doing so, they examined all my other belongings with the same expert care. These police of the Revolution are twice as competent at their work as the old police of the Tsar, for, during the imperialistic régime, they themselves (having been in jail most of the time) knew every trick for secreting documents, and now they put that expert knowledge to account in order to discover the documents that others may have secreted. One of them even hammered on the wall in order to ascertain if, during the week I had occupied the room, any *cache* for papers had been hollowed by me in the wall underneath the wall-paper. It was documents they were practically in search of. I happened to have a

good many, and they collected every scrap of writing, as well as of printed matter, including even bits of newspaper which I had wrapped round pieces of bread, etc., and tied them all together in one large package which they treated with particular care, and which they would not even allow me to approach. They were evidently afraid of some sudden grab on my part, or some of trick of legerdemain which might result in the destruction or the disappearance of some compromising document. But, luckily, as I have already pointed out, I had no compromising document in my possession. My mind was perfectly easy, therefore, and I could even afford at times to be jocose. This had its effect on the police. Their laboured breathing soon became normal, and their manner natural.

I took advantage of this change in their demeanour to ask why I had been arrested, and what the charge was, but everybody burst out laughing at this unusual question, and the leader of the party replied darkly, "Oh! you'll learn that soon enough." I then asked him if he had got any warrant, whereupon he showed me a document from the Vecheka ordering the arrest of "the English journalist, Francis McCullagh, and a search of his rooms." The warrant was signed by the head of the Vecheka, but no charge was stated.

When the search was finished, the leader of the party asked me to sign a document, stating that I had no complaints to make with regard to the manner in which the search had been conducted. I said that I protested against both the search and the arrest, but, as he explained that that was not the point, and that the only question at issue was whether I had been offered unnecessary personal violence or had any of my belongings stolen, I signed.

Having packed up all my belongings, they tried to telephone for an *izvoshchik* (cab), but, as the *izvoshchik* did not come, they asked me to help them to carry my things downstairs. I carried one bag; they carried all the rest between them; and so we left the house at about 2 a.m., the girl-clerks of the "hotel" forming a frightened group at the foot of the stairs, and regarding me with tragic eyes as I passed through them.

We had not far to go, for the Vecheka was only about 600 yards off. It struck me, as I staggered along under the weight of my luggage, that the reason for my transfer from the Mala Hartonovskaya to the Savoy was that the latter "hostel" was much nearer to the Vecheka than the former. I should be under closer observation in the Savoy; and, when the time for my arrest came, I should only have to be brought across the Lubyanka Square in order to be "run in." When correspondents in the Mala Hartonovskaya are now invited to transfer themselves to the Savoy, they generally make their wills and prepare for the worst.

The exterior of the dreaded Vecheka is as little calculated to strike one with terror as the exterior of, say, Harrod's or Selfridge's. Far from resembling a gloomy prison like the forbidding fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, it is light and airy in its style of architecture, and there is not a single iron bar on any of its exterior windows. It is a huge block of business premises situated between the Bolshaya and the Malaya Lubyanka, and opposite the Vladimir gate of the Kremlin on the other side of Lubyanka Square. Built only a few years back by the great Insurance Society "Rossia," its very modern appearance is rendered almost flippant by contrast with the aged Kremlin walls. It occupies an island site, as it is called, and juts up to a great height like a rocky island, but all trace of austerity is removed from its outline by the gay turrets and pinnacles, weathercocks, and plaster figures which give a light and frivolous air to its skyline, as well as by the enormous shop-windows and office-windows which break up its exterior surface, not only on the ground-floor, but on every storey. No greater contrast could be imagined than that between those generous windows and the narrow, barred slits in Petropavlovsk *kryepost*, unless perhaps it be the contrast between the fair modern façade of Lenin's "Holy Office" and the mediæval horrors of the interior. Like the Bolshevik system, the Vecheka presents an ultra-modern front to the world, while, inside, it is a throw-back to the days of Ivan the Terrible.

The inscriptions on the windows all speak of peaceful occupations—"Dentist," "Music Shop," "Bank," "William

Miller and Sons, Petrograd and Moscow." (This last inscription in English, Messrs. Miller and Sons being, I believe, an English company which used to brew beer and manufacture soap, candles, etc.). The biggest inscription of all advertises a Life Insurance Company, but some of the huge gilt letters have fallen off. The topmost figure on the roof is that of a benignant female deity of some kind; and at her feet on each side sit two half-naked allegorical figures, also of benignant aspect.

As seen from the street, the insides of the rooms with the plate-glass windows differ little from what they were in peace-time. They are still offices. Clerks still sit on high stools and work at desks. The cashier in the bank still hands out money through a grille, and apparently the bank-clerks are still busy writing in huge ledgers. But the bank is simply the financial department of the Vecheka. It pays the employees of that great organization, and some of the payments it makes against scrawls signed "Derzhinsky" are for services such as would surprise an English bank manager. The objects of value in the safes of this extraordinary bank consist not only of money, but also of jewelry, strings of pearls, and of precious stones, taken from suspects arrested by the Vecheka. The clerks writing in the other offices are dealing not only with the complicated business side of their extraordinary organization, but also with secret and incredible matters such as office-boys in England like to read about in penny dreadfuls, but which no English clerk ever writes about, at least during office hours.

I was brought into what had apparently been a large shop. It was now cut in two by a wooden partition in which there was a door. Behind this door was the police-office of the Vecheka—a police-office with a large plate-glass window as big as any in Bond Street. This window was unprotected by bars, but the glass was rendered opaque by means of whitewash. There was no fear of any prisoner attempting to escape by jumping through the window, for, before he had got near it, he would have been spitted by the policeman who was on duty with fixed bayonet, or shot by some of the other policemen, all of whom were armed with revolvers.

What surprised me about these police officials, as it had surprised me about the policemen who had arrested me, was their youth. Their average age was about twenty-four, and some of them were mere boys. Apparently the best police agents of the Vecheka are of the "larrikin" type, dissipated, conceited, cruel, as all boys tend to be when allowed to run wild, and, when the occasion demands it, desperate. Some of these lads were probably sailors, but the majority were factory-hands. Few of them could be described as educated, but they were all of them fanatical believers in Bolshevism.

This was the first visit I had ever paid in my life to a police station, but I had always imagined such an institution to be a silent place presided over by a grave inspector of mature years and containing, besides a loudly ticking clock, a police-clerk, the prisoner, and the large constable who has brought the prisoner. Most of the officials in this police station looked, however, like brutalized schoolboys engaged in some savage "rag." Here I was again searched and my belongings examined, the youthful police-inspector indulging all the time in cruel jibes at my expense. When I asked to be allowed to keep my safety razor, he said: "No, you won't want to shave for another year." He marvelled at my having six tooth-brushes, and declared that I must be a merchant. "We in the Red Army," he said, "have only one tooth-brush for every two men, and you have six," at the same time glaring at me as if this disproportion were a crime to my charge. When he came to my field-glasses he said: "In the Red Army we have very few binoculars, while you, a civilian, have got a good pair of field-glasses. What do you want with them?"

This habit of making out a man to be a criminal because he has got something which the Reds have not got, is universal among the Bolsheviks, being based, of course, on the first principles of Communism. The Communists have a theory that no man should have more than one blanket, two suits of clothes, two sets of underlinen, two pairs of socks, two day-shirts, two night-dresses, two pairs of shoes, one cap, one piece of soap, one overcoat, and a very



few other strictly necessary articles. He is also allowed to have a bag of some kind for carrying his spare linen, etc. My own modest kit was soon cut down to this scale, and I was also allowed to take with me two tooth-brushes, not good ones, but worn-out ones. The bag into which I was allowed to put my spare things was the one which bore in bold lettering (concealed by a thin coating of ink), my name, military rank, and unit. It remained in my cell with me during my incarceration, and was never examined. All the things taken from me were packed together and sealed with the seal of the Vecheka. My money and valuables were sent upstairs to the bank which I have already described; and, after my release, I got them back again.

Here, again, I was asked to sign a statement to the effect that this search, as a search, had not been improperly conducted. I had also to fill up a long form, intended apparently for Russians only, asking not only for the usual particulars—name, age, birthplace, nationality, etc.—but also if I had relatives in the White Army, had served myself in the Red Army, and that sort of thing.

Having done this I was brought up three flights of stairs to the office of the Governor of the jail. That functionary, a man of about thirty-five years of age with the hard face of a professional jailer, searched me personally, even putting his hands into my pockets and feeling all over my clothes. Then he showed me a paper which stated in very general terms the property that had been taken from me downstairs—R.10,000 in Soviet money, R.10,000 in Omsk money, and one bag full of clothes, books, etc. I signed this, but explained at the same time that it was obviously no check as a detailed list of my belongings was not given. And, as a matter of fact, I afterwards discovered that a number of things were stolen, and all my efforts to have them returned proved unavailing. I also discovered, by comparing my treatment with that of other victims of the Vecheka who were not journalists or authors, that I had been dealt with very gently indeed. As a rule, a prisoner's money is all kept, and returned at the rate of 1,000 roubles a month. Mr. Bleezdale, an English engineer who had

been thus robbed of all the earnings he had made in Russia since the beginning of the war, calculated that, in order to get back his money repaid to him at this rate, he would have to remain seven years in Russia; and, though he was offered a well-paid technical job in addition by the Soviet, he refused to wait, and left the country at the same time as myself. I could cite thousands of similar cases, but this is not the place to give them.

It was 4 a.m. before the Governor of the jail had done with me; and then I was conveyed by the soldier with rifle and fixed bayonet, who had been in attendance on me all the time, into that part of the building which had been converted into a prison. The soldier knocked at a closed door: a sentry opened it carefully; and I was inside the Communist Inquisition, the most dreaded prison in Moscow. This part of the house had evidently been used as living quarters by the staff of Messrs. William Miller and Sons; and, with its lighted corridors, linoleum floor, and gay wall-paper, it still resembled the living-quarters of well-paid clerks. At the end of the first corridor was a door which gave me rather a shock, for it differed from all the other doors I had passed by having a sentry posted outside it. Was it a condemned cell? I had never seen a condemned cell, but had read that it was differentiated from the others by having a warder stationed day and night at the door.

Into this sinister cell I was ushered: the key grated in the lock; and I was alone. After the manner of gentlemen in story-books, who find themselves immured in a dungeon, I next proceeded to examine my surroundings. My first thoughts were practical. A dismantled plank bed lay in the corner; and I lost no time in fixing it up, spreading my one blanket on it, and rolling up my overcoat and coat so as to constitute a sort of pillow. I then turned my attention to the room. I did *not* try the lock, as heroes in fiction do, for I presumed that it was all right; and, even if it had not been secure, there was no object in my opening the door, for an armed sentry stood outside it, and, besides, there were quite a number of other doors and other sentries between me and liberty. As for the window, which is the next thing that the hero turns his attention to, I cannot

say that I "examined" it, for I placed no hopes in it at all as it was a long way above the ground, but I looked hard at it and found it to be secured by thick iron bars. Despite Soviet Russia's lack of iron and of skilled ironworkers, both iron and skilled labour were here employed to produce a very neat piece of work indeed—from the jailer's point of view; and an enormous amount of similar work must have been done all over Russia since the Bolsheviks came into power. All the old Tsarist prisons having been filled to overflowing, private houses, business establishments, and monasteries have been converted into jails and fitted up accordingly. A small army of men must be needed for this work, and also for the detective and police work of the Vecheka.

My room was five yards square, twelve feet high, and contained no furniture beyond the plank bed. It was lighted by electricity controlled from the outside. The walls were covered with light wall-paper of gay design, but the pencilled inscriptions with which it was covered were anything but gay. I made out some words of them, and found to my surprise that some of the scrawls were in English. There were half a dozen opened jam tins strewn about the floor, and full, not of jam, but of urine; and there was quite a pool of the same filth in a corner of the room. This disgusting state of things was due to the fact that, in all Russian places of detention, the prisoners are only allowed to visit the latrines once a day, and that it is difficult to get this rule altered. Great inconvenience is caused by this arrangement, as the rough kind of food, to which nearly everybody in Russia is now reduced, acts in such a way on the bowels and kidneys, that in all cases several visits per day are necessary. I suffered from this rule myself until the last day of my detention, when it was modified in my favour. All my requests to see a doctor were ignored, probably because the visit of a doctor might divert my mind, even for a few moments, from the gloomy reflections which naturally filled it, and undo to some extent the effects of the solitary confinement to which I was condemned.

My reflections this first night were gloomy enough, when suddenly there was a sharp click from the door, and I saw

that, through a peep-hole in it, an eye was watching me. Hastily undressing, I lay on the plank bed—there was no mattress—and covered myself with my blanket. I could not sleep, more especially as the electric light was left burning for about an hour after I retired. Even after it was switched off outside, I remained awake listening to the occasional movements of the watcher on the threshold; and it was near daybreak before I fell into a troubled doze.

I could not tell at what hour I got up next morning, for my watch had been taken from me, and my cell was almost dark, even in the daytime, owing to the whitewash on the windows, and to the fact that a high wall at a distance of ten feet from my window cut off all direct light. I could see this wall through scratches in the whitewash. The light was so bad that I could only read a few lines of the type-written notice on the wall, though my ignorance of some of the many warnings of which this notice was composed might have been fatal. The only two prohibitions I could make out were (1) not to make a noise, and (2) not to stay in that part of the cell where I would be invisible to the sentry through the eye-hole in the door. To make a noise was sometimes necessary, as there was no other way of attracting the attention of the sentry outside, and, owing to the complaint from which I suffered, I was frequently obliged to attract his attention. I was given no facilities for washing, and was beginning to think that I should get no breakfast, when the key rattled in the lock and the door opened wide enough to admit a hand and arm which deposited a large jug of hot water on the floor, and then withdrew again immediately, shutting the door as they did so. Luckily I had been allowed to bring with me an enamelled mug which had seen much war service and also some tea. Hastily seizing the jug, I filled my mug and was making myself some tea when the door opened again, the hand reappeared, and the jug was rapidly withdrawn, the door being immediately afterwards closed and locked.

This mysterious performance showed me what the game was. The inquisitors meant, before questioning me, to submit me to such a dose of strictly solitary confinement as would shake my nerves and render me an easy subject

for them when they came to examine me. I was amused at first at the wall of impenetrable silence, broken only by terrifying sounds, with which they surrounded me; and also at the disquieting sights they sometimes permitted me to see, for there was a good deal of the boy's penny dreadful about the whole proceedings. But I could not help reflecting on the cruelty of treating delicate women in this way. And delicate women were so treated. Mrs. Harrison of the American Associated Press had been arrested in the Savoy the same day as myself, and, as I afterwards learned, was at that very moment being subjected to the same terrible régime in another part of the building. Other women were enduring the same punishment, and thousands of women and girls have suffered similar treatment at the hands of the Vecheka.

Even in my own case the isolation and anxiety soon became almost unbearable. Absolutely solitary confinement is a terrible punishment if prolonged for any considerable length of time; and the jailers of the Vecheka are past-masters in the art of getting the full benefit out of it. If I had had books, for example, or pencil and paper, I could have occupied my mind; but they took particular pains to deprive me of all printed matter, even of the smallest scraps of newspaper, and of all facilities for writing. What this means will be readily understood by anyone who has never, since he learned to read, been alone without a book or notebook or newspaper. Deprived of outer stimulus or of any possibility of exercising itself, the mind tends to prey on itself, and to become lost in morbid speculations and gloomy thoughts. I tried to struggle against this tendency, but found it impossible to prevent my mind from traversing a futile and tiresome round of surmises. "Who had given me away?" This was the question that I asked myself a thousand times a day; and the answers I gave myself were always the same.

1. Nobody. The Vecheka had no evidence against me, and had merely arrested me on suspicion, expecting that, if reduced to a sufficiently nervous and hysterical condition, I would incriminate myself. This conviction remained uppermost to the end and finally saved me.

2. Some of the young officers of our party had been imprudent in their conversation. Instances of supreme imprudence on the part of young British officers rushed at once to my mind. There are no people in the world so frank and open as young British subalterns, so ready to pooh-pooh secrecy and mystery. Their physical detestation of closed and darkened rooms and foul air is only equalled by the irresistible impulse they all have to throw open the windows of their minds, and let the air and light of heaven in. It is a glorious impulse, but not suited to all countries. I knew a Colonel at Omsk who insisted on keeping his windows open in mid-winter, and who laughed in scorn when told that it was a dangerous practice. To leave the physical aspect of the question, I would not like to estimate the number of British lives that have been lost in this war through the national virtue of transparent frankness. We are not a loquacious people, but we hate to keep secrets or return indirect answers; and we credit people who have been properly introduced to us, and who apparently sympathize with our point of view, with the same honesty as we have ourselves. Unfortunately my experiences in Russia proved to me beyond all manner of doubt that the people whom we should most expect to be on our side are, some of them, in the clutch of the enemy. They hate Bolshevism as much as we do, but the Extraordinary Commission has got a hold on them, either through offences they have owned up to in writing when on the verge of mental collapse through solitary confinement, or through a similar hold which that terrible Inquisition has got on persons who are near and dear to them, and to whom they confide everything. This is not surmise on my part. I *know* of such cases. Hence it is that the Vecheka possesses allies in the most unexpected quarters. Delicate, aristocratic ladies, officers of the Guards, foreigners, even trusted secret-service agents of the European Powers: there are members of all these classes acting consciously or unconsciously as spies of the Soviet. This is not surmise, I repeat. I *know* of such cases.

3. Some of the British civilians in Moscow in whom I had to confide may have given me away, also through imprudence in their conversation.

4. Some of the very few Russians in Siberia who knew all about me may have been themselves arrested, and evidence against me may have been found on them.

This exhausted the possibilities, and all my thinking during the next three days tended to run in these narrow grooves. But of course I combated this tendency, as I would, when swimming in a rough sea, have combated waves that threatened to engulf me. I tried my best to crest all these dark billows, to swim on the surface, and to keep the sky and the land in sight. I divided the long day into several parts. For hours I would sing songs in various languages; and this exercise had a wonderfully exhilarating effect on me. One song of Thomas Moore's I was fond of repeating, and I sometimes sang it in an audible voice. It was "The Minstrel Boy"; and I thought it was *apropos*, for the Bolsheviks might make my writing for them a condition of my release; and of course I was determined to refuse this condition. I sang it out loud, as I suspected that there was somebody who understood English listening to me. Perhaps the sentry at the door did not understand, but I noticed that high up on the wall, near the roof, there was, underneath the wall-paper, a large square of boards instead of brick. Some of the wall-paper had peeled off, disclosing the nature of this contrivance, which I suspected to be a sort of box accessible from the adjoining room, and containing at times a listener who understood English.

But I should be cowardly and ungrateful indeed if I omitted to say, though I have an extreme reluctance to speak of such things, that my greatest consolations in those dark moments were given me by Him who so often invited the afflicted to come to Him, and that I more than once felt my sinking soul held up by the strong arms of comrades who had passed from my side at Gallipoli into that unknown land at whose dread frontier I now stood. I had begged the intercession of those soldiers with all the more confidence inasmuch as I had never for a single day forgotten them in my prayers.

I also prepared a number of speeches on Russian subjects, and declaimed them to myself in a low voice. I walked a great deal up and down my cell while engaged in these

mental exercises, so that, despite the bad food, my health continued good, and, when I was brought before the Inquisitors, I felt quite calm and self-possessed. My food was very bad, scanty, and unpalatable. In the morning I had hot water and three-quarters of a pound of black bread. In the middle of the day, and again in the evening, I got some fish-soup with nothing but fish-bones and water in it, followed by some concoction of salty cabbage. I could never take more than one or two spoonfuls of these dishes, which were quite repulsive. On the first day of my imprisonment I got ten cigarettes and a box of Soviet Government matches, which all refused to light.

I was visited once every day by the Governor of the prison, a silent and most forbidding-looking man, who never asked me more than one question: "What is your name?" When he had asked me this on the third day and refused to be drawn into any discussion about anything, I concluded that he meant to go on making the same enquiry until I had forgotten my name. Then he would probably report that my nerves were sufficiently wrecked, and that I might be brought before the Extraordinary Commission.

It was on the third night, after seventy hours' solitary confinement, that I was summoned to appear before that terrible tribunal. The summons was brought in the same dramatic manner as had marked all the proceedings of the Vecheka. After I had gone to sleep, I was awakened by the sound of the key grating in the lock, but at first I paid no attention to this, as my jailers had been in the habit of rattling the key in this way once every ten minutes or so for hours at a time during the night, with the object presumably of breaking my night's rest, wrecking my nerves, and thus reducing me to a helpless, neurasthenic condition in which I would be more likely to blurt out every secret to my examiners. I therefore pressed my fingers to my ears, and tried to sleep again, but suddenly I felt somebody touching me, and, on looking up, I saw a soldier with a rifle and fixed bayonet bending over me. "Get up and follow me," he said. "You are going to be examined."

My hour, then, had come; and, jumping up, I quickly



dressed, and followed him along several corridors and up two flights of stairs, until he threw a door open and ushered me into the Inquisition Chamber. It was certainly not a place of the rack and thumbscrew order, being, on the contrary, a large and commodious office fitted with electric light, desks, typewriters, telephones, and all the most up-to-date office furniture. Even the two men who sat at a large desk at one side of the room were not out of keeping with their surroundings, save that they wore the semi-military khaki uniform which most employees of the Soviet Government wear. Xenofontov, who was standing, was a man of about thirty, with mild dark eyes and a countenance to which a sympathetic, Biblical touch was lent by a short silky beard which had never apparently been touched by a razor. The other, Comrade Mogilevsky, who was sitting at the desk, was thin, nervous in manner, and clean-shaven save for a slight moustache. He looked harder than his companion, but I do not think that he was harder.

I was asked to sit down and then offered a cigarette, which Mogilevsky lighted for me, at the same time apologizing for the inconvenience he had put me to. Pointing to a pile of papers on the desk—my papers as I saw at a glance—he said: "We find nothing suspicious in these, but there are a few things we would like you to clear up for us."

They then went through all my papers and asked me to explain sundry passages in them. One passage was in very badly written shorthand which even Mr. Pitman himself, if he were alive, would probably have found impossible to decipher. Unfortunately this passage gave me away completely, and I cursed my imprudence which had left this one damning piece of evidence unobliterated, while marvelling at the sure instinct which had led them to select it from among a mass of innocuous notes also in shorthand. While they both watched my face narrowly, I translated it for them freely, so very, very freely that they were quite satisfied.

I was surprised afterwards that they let me off so easily, for the Bolsheviks have a department in the Kremlin where ordinary English shorthand is easily deciphered, and where notes written in any system of phonography can soon be

made out, if the writer of the notes is induced to give them the principles of his system. I know of at least one English correspondent who was so "induced"; and if they had confronted me with this expert of theirs who, if not an Englishman, must know English extremely well, I should have been ruined. I might also add that they have an excellent cryptographic department, where some of the most secret ciphers of foreign nations are decoded. Several of my own papers were, I think, treated chemically, so as to disclose the presence of invisible writing; and, in short, the Bolshevik Secret Service employs very efficient cryptographic experts and the most modern cryptographic methods. The other things about which the Inquisitors wanted an explanation were all easily explainable, being names and addresses of various Bolsheviks in Moscow, as well as odds and ends of general information which I had picked up. Some of this information dealt with the economic condition of the country, and I was surprised to discover that they regarded any enquiry into their economic or industrial conditions as espionage.

"You say you are only a journalist," said Mogilevsky in a menacing tone, "but why do you collect all this data about our factories and our agriculture? A newspaper man does not write on such subjects."

I might have told him that these are the very subjects which a good journalist does write about, especially if he is in the habit of contributing to serious periodicals, but I thought it better to remind him that I was an author as well as a journalist, and that I was collecting material for a book. This answer appeared not only to satisfy him, but to raise me considerably in his esteem.

Telling his companion that he would ask Derzhinsky to sanction my release that night, he went into another room, and then Xenofontov, the mild-looking man who is, as a matter of fact, Derzhinsky's ablest adjutant, looked at me in his mildest manner, and repeated some things which I had only told Mr. North. It was not a very important matter, but the fact that it had got out rather unnerved me, and I had the greatest difficulty in explaining it away. The mild-looking man then remarked casually that, being a

newspaper correspondent, I had probably been in the habit of visiting Kolchak's Intelligence Department at Omsk. Did I happen by any chance to recollect the names of the men employed there? I said that I had met a Colonel Goldstein in the Military Operations Department, but that I had never met anyone belonging to the M.I. He pressed me to give him the names of any agents whom Kolchak had sent into Russia, but I said that I did not know any. His object, of course, was to terrorize these men, who had nearly all been captured by the Reds, into giving him the names of other agents inside Soviet Russia. These would be made to betray others still, and the vision of endless cruelty and bloodshed which this prospect opened up so appalled me, that I was heartily glad when Mogilevsky returned and told me that I could go. He also gave me a document certifying that I had been released from the prison of the Vecheka.

The soldier who had brought me had been waiting all this time at the door, and he now led the way back to my cell, where I packed my belongings with a vigour that I had seldom shown in that work during the whole course of my life. Within the space of an hour I was back in the Savoy Hotel, and I could hardly have been more pleased had it been the Savoy in the Strand to which I was restored.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### LENINISM: THE DESIGN OF THE BOLSHEVIKS

No matter what promises the Bolsheviks enter into with Great Britain, they will not abandon the active prosecution of their plans for revolutionizing the world. These plans are an essential part of their theory, and for us to expect the Communists to give them up would be like the Communists expecting us to give up our theory and practice of ministerial responsibility.

The Bolsheviks hold that mankind is divided not into nationalities but into two classes, the Proletariat and the Parasites. Such of them as have had some education admit, however, that unfortunately in the benighted capitalistic States outside Russia many of the proletariat are at present working as slaves and instruments of the parasitic classes, being drugged and stupefied by patriotism, religion, and a *bourgeois* education ingeniously designed by the capitalists to make them contented with their servile lot. When these deluded workers have been enlightened they will see that their place is not with the capitalists but with the people. Such, in short, is the Bolshevik contention.

Carlyle describes in a well-known passage how a dozen French peasants are taken by their Government, put into gay clothes, armed, drilled, and sent out to kill a dozen German peasants who have been put through a similar process by *their* war-lords. A Bolshevik official, who greatly appreciates this piece of literature, told me once that the Communist idea is to arm all the peasants and workers of the world, but to make them then turn their rifles on their respective oppressors, the kings and capitalists of their own lands, and, having abolished these, to shake hands all round in token of perpetual peace.

This simple theory has gripped the Bolshevik mind in

Russia, as if it were a Divine revelation, and its ready acceptance is probably due to several conditions peculiar to that country—the simplicity and ignorance of the people, the ascetic and mystical traits in their national character, their misgovernment in the past, their profound love of peace, their sufferings in the war, and their conviction, implanted and fostered by an able but mendacious propaganda, that the workers of the world are following in their footsteps, though their efforts have not, as yet, been crowned with quite the same success. Another condition peculiar to Russia is the feebly developed nationalistic sense of the people. Most of them have as little idea of a *patria* as the average Gaul had in the time of Cæsar, and I have heard of many Russians who did not know that they themselves were Russian, their imagination having never travelled beyond the confines of their native province.

Knowing the existence of this state of things, I was not surprised, consequently, when we were captured at Krasnoyarsk, to find that the soldiers of the Red Army were indifferent as to our nationality, and were only anxious to know which of their two categories we belonged to. We were never once asked for our passports, such tokens of nationality being regarded as antique lumber, which all mankind was throwing on the scrap-heap as fast as it could along with crowns and croziers. There was pained surprise when the private soldiers in our party did not, on being released by capture from their military "servitude," join their natural friends the Bolsheviks joyfully and at once, but remained voluntarily with their natural enemies, us, their officers.

The Irish soldiers amongst us were not treated differently from the others, because the Bolsheviks who captured us had never heard of Ireland, but later I found that the leading Bolsheviks were favourably disposed towards the Irish, whom they regarded as disinterested agitators with a genuine sense of grievance and with a considerable practice in agitation since the days of Parnell.

These Communist leaders expect much help from disgruntled nationalities outside Russia; hence the support they give to nationalist movements abroad, and the great

sympathy they express for them in every issue of their newspapers. But if those movements succeeded, the Bolsheviki would be the first to undermine the resultant nationalist Governments in order to clear the way for Soviets. Many similar instances of dishonesty on the part of the Bolsheviki could be given. They manifest, for instance, great sympathy with strikers abroad, yet they not only crush strikers at home, but, owing to their complete control of the Press, are able to cover them with moral obloquy as well, by denouncing them as traitors bought by foreign capitalists. Workmen so accused have no means of publicly refuting these charges. Such a case happened recently when a strike occurred on the Moscow-Kursk railway. They turn a moist eye towards the "enslaved" British workman, yet treat a deserter from the labour army as a deserter from the fighting army at the Front is treated in war-time.

A ring of Soviets all round the world is their ideal, but circumstances have rendered their present policy complex. Though anti-nationalist themselves, they have been assisted in their struggle against Kolchak, Denikin, and the Poles by a nationalist movement among the Russians who saw that practically all the Red Army was Russian, while Kolchak, for example, though professedly nationalist and ultra-Russian, was assisted to such an extent by British, French, Italians, Americans, Japanese, Chinese, Poles, Serbs, Czechs, and Letts, that his enterprise was described as an invasion of Russia by a gang of international capitalists.

Lenin knows more about conditions in the outer world than the simple folk who captured us at Krasnoyarsk, but he knows much less than he is given credit for in this country. He is a fanatical believer in his own dogma of internationalism—or, more properly speaking, anti-nationalism and cosmopolitanism—and in the duty incumbent on him of preaching this dogma to all peoples.

In speaking of this man many Englishmen seem to form in their minds the picture of a statesman who will act as they themselves would act if they were in his position. They think that the responsibilities of office must sober and modify him as they would sober and modify an English

Socialist. They believe that his extremist utterances are mere popular clap-trap such as an English politician sometimes indulges in for electioneering purposes, that he must "play up" to the impossible demands of his party, but that, when it comes to practical politics, he is bound to display moderation and common sense.

Such Englishmen do not know Lenin. They read their own character into that of the Communist leader, and attribute to him an English mentality and training which he has not got. There is in Lenin and in the whole Communist party a good deal of that inflexibility, narrowness, intolerance, and fanaticism which we associate with the Eastern Church; and I might add, by the way, that if Bolshevism continues in power for a few years longer, it will inevitably become a dead and mummified system, a mechanical, devitalized structure such as I believe official Orthodoxy to be.

The meticulous care which the Bolsheviks take to prevent foreign literature and non-Bolshevik foreigners from disturbing the belief of their neophytes in the Bolshevik faith, reminds one of the care taken by Pobydonostsev, the Procurator of the Most Holy Synod. The mentality in both cases is the same, though the object is different. No mistress of novices in a convent could be more careful than the head of the Extraordinary Commission to prevent bad, breezy men from the outer world from "blowing in" among the innocent novices, and shaking by profane laughter their delicately poised faith. A full description of these minute precautions would be amusing, but it would be too long a digression. What I have said, however, will show what a mistake it would be for us to think that these people can modify their programme. To think so is to attribute to the Bolsheviks the character of an English political party. Bolshevism has been called "inverted Tsarism," but it might also be described as "inverted Christianity," for whereas the Founder of Christianity sacrificed Himself for the World, the founders of Bolshevism are, like the first Mohammedans, ready to sacrifice all the rest of the world if it does not accept their creed.

Lenin himself impressed me as having all the character-

istics of a fanatical Byzantine monk. He has narrowness, intolerance, asceticism, a fixed idea, and an incapacity to change. Later I came across a similar view of him in Landau-Aldanov's "Lenin und der Bolschewismus" (Berlin, 1920). The Russian Socialist writer says that "some of the Bolsheviki, and perhaps some of the best of them, have the mentality and the entire psychology of monks. Had he lived some centuries earlier, Lenin himself might have made an excellent Jesuit." Landau-Aldanov goes on to institute a comparison between the hair-splitting of the Greek theologians at the Œcumenical Council of Constantinople and the hair-splitting of Lenin, Martov, and other Bolsheviki ideologues at the Second Congress of the Social Democratic party in August, 1903. He does not strengthen his case, however, by dragging in Captain Pascal, an officer of the French Mission in Moscow and formerly a Catholic priest, who has now become a Bolshevik. "Dostoevsky tells us in one of his novels of an atheist who blew out all the candles in front of his holy *ikons*, replaced the *ikons* by the works of anti-Christian philosophers like Buechner and Moleschott, and, having done so, piously lighted the candles again. This expresses exactly what the Reds have done. Yesterday they believed blindly in St. Nicholas the Wonder-worker; to-day they have transferred the same unreasoning faith to Karl Marx; and their scientific superstition of to-day is as childish as was their religious superstition of yesterday."

Though he has travelled abroad, Lenin has lived, even abroad, in a close revolutionary atmosphere, which is, after all, a very narrowing atmosphere. He brooded over his own ideas, exchanged views with people who were much of the same way of thinking as himself, and entered into controversy only with Mensheviki, Anarchists, and other theorists who are even further removed from the realities of life than he is. His ignorance of conditions in England is therefore very great. His manner of life has deprived his mind of all flexibility, and imparted to his utterances a pontifical character which would not be tolerated for a moment in political circles anywhere outside Russia.

The Russian newspapers are filled daily with interminable



dissertations on abstruse socialistic subjects from his pen or from the pens of other prophets of Bolshevism, and the style of these lucubrations bears some resemblance, in respect at least of extreme aridity, to the interminable treatises on obscure theological questions which were popular in Europe during the religious ferment of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Instead of quotations from pious divines and from the Early Fathers, they are full of ponderous passages from German professors, who are apparently regarded by the Communists as infallible authorities. And in the same way that some English congregations of the post-Reformation period delighted in sermons lasting three or four hours, so the Bolsheviks delight in endless speeches on abstruse socialistic subjects, of which most of them can understand only very little.

But amid all this confusion and obscurity there remains clear the fixed idea of "internationalism" or anti-nationalism whereof Lenin is the Prophet. He has passed most of his life in poverty and exile on account of it. He is now wading towards it through blood. It would be a mistake, therefore, to think that he will ever really surrender it—though he may promise to do so for the sake of getting locomotives and machinery from us. He has made this perfectly clear in hundreds of speeches and newspaper articles; if we think otherwise, he has a perfect right to say that he has not deceived us, that we have deceived ourselves. He has warned us not only in his public utterances, but by his actions, that he will not keep any promises he makes to capitalist States, and that he will use any methods and accept help from any quarters in order to attain his ends. He accepted help from the Kaiser in 1918 in order to contribute afterwards towards the Kaiser's overthrow; and he has frequently boasted that when he made peace with Germany at Brest-Litovsk, and promised to cease his revolutionary propaganda in Germany, he never meant to observe the conditions of that peace and did not observe them in so far as they related to propaganda.

This is not his policy alone, but that of all his party, which admits that it has always acted on it and always will act on it. In his pamphlet on the "Bolshevik Party,"

Radek, an authoritative spokesman of the Communists, says that the Bolsheviks supported the agitation for a Duma in 1905, not because they wanted to keep a Duma in existence, but because they were convinced that it would be a ladder which would enable them to reach their goal, and which they could then kick away. The same pamphlet and all the recent literature of the Bolsheviks are full of similar admissions of dishonesty.

After peace was concluded with Esthonia, Lenin said in effect:

We have acknowledged the *bourgeois* Government of Esthonia. We have given it money and concessions and territory and all the other playthings that a Capitalist State hankers after, because we are perfectly sure of our ability to undermine the foundations on which it stands. We will work silently and tirelessly among its working classes, and it is only a question of time when the whole fabric will come tumbling down. Esthonia is now in the Kerensky stage, but, as surely as sunrise follows darkness, so surely will the Communist stage follow the Kerensky and the Esthonian workers establish a Soviet republic.

It may be taken for granted, therefore, that, no matter what promises Lenin makes, he will not cease to encourage Bolshevik propaganda in the British Empire.

The danger of this propaganda consists in the idea of internationalism which I have explained above, and which might better perhaps be called antinationalism or anationalistic class war. This theory enables the Bolsheviks to find accomplices and allies in the most unexpected places outside Russia—in battleships, wireless stations, military barracks, post-offices, consulates, palatial hotels, and mansions. The result is that no one holding a responsible position in a non-Bolshevik country can be sure that he has not in his employ an embittered subordinate, sometimes with a genuine grievance against society and a genuine belief in Communism as a cure for all the ills of the world, but more frequently aggrieved because of a natural incapacity which education does not and cannot remedy. Such a man may feel that his place is with the all-world proletariat and not with the mixture of classes which compose his particular country, so that, if not actually working for the

Bolsheviks, he may be quite ready to work for them if the opportunity presents itself.

I know nothing of present conditions in this country (Great Britain) owing to my long absence from it, but this danger is manifest on the Continent, and especially in the countries which lie near Russia. There is a leakage of official information in the Finnish, Scandinavian, and Polish posts, telegraphs and hotels, and even in some of the foreign consulates and legations, where non-Britishers have to be employed. One such case of leakage that I know of was suspected to have taken place in a foreign consulate in Warsaw. The position in Finland is especially bad from this point of view, owing to the accentuation of class differences by the arming of the middle classes and the disarming of the working classes, a measure which has been of enormous assistance to the "Internationalist" propaganda in that country.

Even here in London the establishment of a Bolshevik embassy with the Red flag flying over it might have anything but a tranquillizing effect on a section of our working classes. Workmen and private soldiers, who would be incapable of feeling any sympathy with a foreign nation which attacked England, might, in some cases, sympathize with what Chicherin calls "the Government of the Poor and of the Oppressed." You will notice from this phrase how Bolshevism has stolen the thunder of Christianity. Thus one of the principal Bolshevik newspapers is called *Bednota* (Poverty). Lunacharsky, the Bolshevik Minister of the Fine Arts, has maintained in numberless discourses delivered in Russia that Christ was the first Bolshevik, and that the early Christians were the first Communists. Even anti-Bolsheviks have expressed astonishment at Lenin's choice of "such a dangerous cleric"; but doubtless Lenin knew, when he made the appointment, that a Modernist like Lunacharsky is a far more dangerous enemy to Christianity than a violent unbeliever. He was still engaged in this campaign when I was in Moscow in the spring, and I think that, in the opinion of the simple Russians who heard him, he had the advantage of the learned theologians who ventured to dispute his theory. A drift towards religious

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anarchy has long been characteristic of the Russians, as may be seen by a study of their literature for the last fifty years. It has been counteracted by a powerful ecclesiastical organization, but the Bolsheviks have now stopped the machinery of that organization, and are undermining all confidence in it by a series of carefully conducted exposures in connection with bogus relics of saints, etc.

Even if the Bolshevik succeeded in establishing Soviet republics all over the world, they could not succeed in eliminating national feeling and war, for, in this as in other matters, they are fighting against human nature. But even their temporary success would, I think, do irreparable harm to our civilization. And it would be foolish to ignore the fact that their theory does contain a seductive appeal to that large number of people in every land who are convinced that they have never had a fair chance owing to the faulty construction of the society in which they live. The seductiveness of that appeal is increased by the most ingenious devices. If a Bolshevik embassy comes to London, it will not only fly the Red flag, signifying the triumph of the proletariat, but it will use on its official notepaper and on all its stamps the crest of the Republic—a crossed hammer and reaping-hook, symbolical of the union of peasants and workers. If the Bolshevik trade unions and other organizations send deputations to this country, they will also use seals which are in all cases humble implements of manual labour. A Bolshevik official once pointed out to me with pride that the Communists had thrown into the scrap-heap the lions and eagles, swords and battle-axes, and all the other emblems of ferocity and slaughter in which the old heraldry delighted, and had substituted for them “the poor, crooked scythe and spade.” In his opinion—the comparison is sacrilegious, but we must know the views of the other side in order to combat them—the world has entered on a phase such as that which began when a gibbet replaced the Roman eagles as the emblem under which the most important portion of humanity marched.

The Bolsheviks have, of course, no right to a monopoly of those emblems, which were chosen for them by clever literary men who have never done manual labour in their

lives, but many people are misled by symbols. All pictorial advertisement is based on this weakness in the logical powers of the human mind. An advertisement containing a picture of a fat baby and a eulogy of somebody's patent food establishes in the mind of the average woman a connection between the fatness of the baby and the nutritive value of the food, though no such connection necessarily exists; and the Bolsheviki, who are extremely up to date in many of their methods, act continually and with great success on this principle in all their propaganda. The pictorial propaganda which raised the Kitchener Army is elementary in comparison with the propaganda which raised the Red Army, and this latter propaganda is only one manifestation of a system carefully and scientifically constructed by men of considerable artistic talent and with a profound knowledge of Russian, and indeed of world, psychology.

This sort of deception is easier when, as is the case at present, a sort of madness has seized upon men's minds, as has happened on one or two occasions in the past history of Europe. On such occasions all opinions and beliefs seem to become, so to speak, liquefied or molten, and the mind of the world is ready to take the imprint of any new stamp that is applied to it. When this period of liquefaction has passed, opinions harden again either in the new mould or in the old mould. The Reformation and the French Revolution are cases in point. The former established the principle of private judgment and maimed the system of an international Church. The latter established the rule of the *bourgeoisie* and made the heads of states their servants. According to the contention of Lenin and his followers who, to do them justice, are close students of past history and take a wide survey of it, the proletariat have now as much right to subjugate the middle classes as the latter had in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to subjugate the nobility and heads of states. All the Bolshevik literature now being published emphasizes this point. Lenin cannot see how England, which allowed the right of private judgment to her middle classes in the seventeenth century, and allowed every kind of Reformist literature to enter the

country, can now deny the right of private judgment to her lower classes and prevent Bolshevik publications from circulating among them. The Bolshevik leader knows that, as the present period of liquefaction will not last long, it is necessary for him to act quickly, or else public opinion in England will harden again and the receptivity of the popular mind in England to the new ideas will cease, or, as we would put it, the period of madness will pass. As Lenin would put it, Spain was kept unchanged during and after the Reformation owing to the energetic measures taken by Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second to prevent the circulation of Reformist literature among their subjects, though it is an historical fact that the latter manifested a keen appetite for this forbidden fruit. The Bolsheviks admit that, if England could establish a similarly strict blockade against their ideas, England would be saved from Bolshevism, but they do not think that, under modern conditions and with trade re-established between the two countries, and especially in view of her well-known theories on the subject of free speech and a free press, England can ever establish such a blockade. Some of them are enthusiastic on this subject; others are inclined to fear that they are already too late; that, in these swift days of the aeroplane and the radio, movements of popular effervescence soon pass, and that Great Britain is hardening again in the old *bourgeois* mould.

I have tried to make it clear how impossible it is for the Communists to abandon their theory and practice of international propaganda. My contention may be strengthened by a description, from personal observation, of the conditions which prevail in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs at Moscow. Most of the members of that department belong to the Third International, and their main work is to produce revolutions in foreign countries. After working hard all day organizing trouble for us in India, Persia, Turkey, and Egypt, they allow themselves some comic relief and relaxation in the afternoon by the composition of soothing despatches intended for the English *bourgeoisie*. One of them, Commissar Feinberg, acted very often as correspondent of an English newspaper, the *Daily Herald*. Many of the English passports which go through Feinberg's

hands get "lost"—that is, they are set aside for the use of Bolshevik emissaries going to England, or else utilized as models in the well-equipped establishment for the fabrication of English passports which the "Third International" has inaugurated. English banknotes are also fabricated there, and may be expected on the market at any moment. Thus we have the Foreign Office of a great country deliberately forging the passports and the paper money of a foreign Government with which it is conducting friendly negotiations, and Foreign Office officials calmly supervising the work of forgery.

I have already spoken of the character of the Pan-Mohammedan Congress held under the *ægis* of Chicherin in April, 1920, of his Korean and Japanese intrigues, and of the entertainment provided for foreign revolutionaries who are housed, fed, paid, and clothed by the Soviet Government, travel free, and enjoy every facility for their destructive activities.

Can we make the Bolshevik Government stop all this? I do not think that we can, for the Foreign Office, like the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Foreign Trade, and one or two other organizations of technical experts, is regarded by the Executive Committee generally as being very lukewarm in the faith and as having made too many concessions already to the capitalistic heretics outside. The organization of the "Third International" is so interwoven with the Bolshevik Government organization that it would be difficult to say where the one ends and the other begins, and quite impossible to tear them apart. Most of the leading Commissars are in "the International" as well as in the Communist group which rules Russia, and they can never be depended upon to expel themselves from the latter body. Foreign revolutionaries orate frequently from the same platform as Lenin and Trotsky, and they are not regarded as foreigners because in the Communist scheme of things there are no foreigners. There are only Proletariat and Parasites.

I must admit, however, that the Reds are as afraid of us as we are afraid of them; indeed, my stay among them gave me the impression that one of their leading

characteristics was an intense suspicion and great fear of what they call "the great predatory Empires."

Their state of mind is, in some respects, the same as Japan's was in 1868. Japan then found herself the only non-Christian nation in the world which the Christian Whites had not conquered or undermined; and, consequently, she became profoundly alarmed at the irresistible military strength, the utter unscrupulousness, and the consummate diplomatic talent of the European, with the result that their whole national character, which is naturally joyous, became permanently altered for the worse. I do not mean to say that this change took place in 1868. It began, as a matter of fact, long before, in the time of the Shogun Hideyoshi, when the Philippines had been conquered by Spain and Japan itself had become filled with Spanish and Portuguese Jesuits; but the effects were apparent twenty years ago, when I lived in Japan, and are apparent still.

I shall now give the Bolshevik point of view, not because I sympathize with it, but because it is always useful to know what the people on the other side think and to understand the suspicions and delusions under which they labour.

The Bolshevik Government now finds itself the only Government of its kind in the world, and in an infinitely more dangerous position than the Japanese were. The Government of the Shoguns represented all the Japanese race, which was as patriotic and as firmly welded together as the British race was in 1914 and is still. The Government of Lenin is brand-new, and has therefore none of the forces and sanctions of tradition behind it. It represents but a very small section of the Russian people and is menaced not only by powerful interests inside Russia, but also, in the firm opinion of the Bolsheviks, by all the other Governments in the world, republican as well as monarchical. The Soviet Republic believes that these Governments hate it intensely, and are, some of them, in a state of acute fear for their own existence. But I have seen myself that the countries which suffer most from this fear—Finland, for example—are by no means in such a state of panic as the Bolshevik Government, which is convinced, rightly or wrongly, that all the wealth of the world and all the intellect



of the world are working against it ceaselessly and with supreme ability. Wealth, according to Lenin, is naturally against him; and intellect has been subdued to the service of wealth by capitalism, religion, patriotism, and militarism.

Despite all their bluster and all their military success, the Bolsheviks therefore feel themselves at times to be nothing but amateurs in the realms of diplomacy, war, secret service, and economics; and, on more than one occasion, Lenin himself confessed to a painful sinking at the heart, and even declared in public that his great experiment would probably fail.

The leading Bolsheviks whom I met in Moscow are profoundly convinced that their enemies have a great advantage over them in being able to offer rewards which they cannot offer—wealth, comfort, high and permanent positions, the esteem of powerful and ancient empires, the blessings of religion. The Soviet can only give its agents hard work, danger, permanent discomfort. It cannot provide them even with good cigarettes or with matches which will light. It can only promise them the applause of a small clique, not the applause of a people. It measures so accurately the tremendous strength of the temptations to which they are exposed that, when it sends abroad not only an ordinary agent, but even a leading Commissar, it generally keeps his wife or some of his relatives behind as a hostage, lest, corrupted by the gold of the capitalists, he should grow faint-hearted, tired of the bitter, unending struggle, and abandon them altogether.

Lenin has himself confessed, in moments of depression, that, though there are nominally 600,000 Communists in Russia, there are not 6,000 who can be trusted implicitly. Only fanatics can be depended upon in all circumstances, and fanatics are few, even in Russia. The average man cannot rise to the heights or sink to the depths of fanaticism, and even if he does, he is easily tempted by the easy, normal life which ensures him cigars, beer, soap, clean linen, and other comforts which Bolshevism cannot give him, not to speak of nice dresses, jewelry, scent, and real tea with sugar in it for his wife, as well as playthings for his children.

Even the fanatics in Russia have been kept at too tense a strain during the last two years: weak human nature cannot stand it. Lenin and Trotsky both realize this, and are appalled by the infinite staying-power, the secular experience, and the extreme seductiveness of the vast, patient force entrenched in front of them. They are all the more appalled because they realize that, though the workers are tired, the work has hardly yet begun.

The foregoing explains why Lenin and Trotsky tolerate, and will in all probability continue to tolerate, such a mediæval institution as the Extraordinary Commission. Despite the dangerous wideness of its powers, it at least guards them from the anti-Bolshevik conspirators and the foreign agents who, in their opinion, swarm in every part of Russia.

Most of the things we say about them they say about us. We praise their "Intelligence," but they think that ours is of extreme and deadly efficiency. They gave me to understand that more than 99 per cent. of the sympathetic foreigners to whom they opened their minds have turned out to be agents of their worst enemies. Trotsky, in particular, has become so nervous and frightened at what he regards as the "disloyalty" of sympathetic Britishers that he starts whenever he is addressed in English, and, though he speaks that language fairly well, he conducts the conversation in Russian or French if his interlocutor happens to know either of these languages.

He does not understand our institutions; he is suffering from overwork and nervous strain; he is even afraid for his own life; and, consequently, he believes the impossible story of the renegade French officer Sadul that the British Government hired assassins to murder him. We must bear this in mind if we want to understand fully the truth of Mr. Lloyd George's remark in this connection, that we are "dealing not with realities, but with illusions, myths, and ghosts."

What frightens the Bolsheviki most of all, however, is the well-founded suspicion that the very nature of man is working against them. All their attempts to abolish capitalism, trading, and that legitimate desire for gain

which, after all, makes the world go round, are as futile as cutting water with a sword and expecting the fissure to remain open. Not a month passes without the Extraordinary Commission discovering that some new financial or commercial nucleus has formed on the old lines; and for the past six months a vast amount of speculation has been connived at in Moscow and elsewhere. As much of this speculation is carried on, especially in the Moscow Food Control, by high officials of the Soviet itself, the Extraordinary Commission lost heart altogether in April last and has practically ceased to contend against it ever since.

Even this natural result the Bolsheviks attribute, however, to "Capitalist" Propaganda, so that they have decided that there is not room in the world for both a Soviet and a Capitalist Government. Hence, plots for the overthrow of all existing Governments, counteraction by these Governments, and a thickening of the fog of suspicion, a multiplication of the "illusions, myths, and ghosts."

## CHAPTER XXIV

### ABOARD THE GOOD SHIP "DONGOLA"

THE experiences of past history make us doubtful of any theory of government ever coming in practice to produce the results which the Constitution-framers had in mind, or of any governmental action ever having the effect which statesmen expected it to have; for the values with which rulers deal fluctuate continually, and missing factors have an awkward habit of turning up unexpectedly and spoiling all the neat equations of Cabinets and Kings. Past history (to vary the metaphor), is largely a record of intense activity on the part of rulers in erecting walls which tumble down on top of them, and digging pits into which they fall themselves. James the First planted Ulster with sturdy Scots who, instead of proving a support to his dynasty, as he had probably expected, helped to drive James the Second from his throne. We supported our settlers in the New World so as to counterbalance French influence in Canada, with the result that our North American Colonies threw us over, while the French Canadians remained faithful to us. And as past history is strewn with falsified predictions, so future history may likewise be paved with the miscalculations of statesmen, and the present activities of European Governments may be found, in fifty years' time, to have been entirely futile, misdirected, and suicidal. To-day Mr. Lloyd George, for example, is apparently concentrating his immense industry on the task of converting the essentially conservative peasantry of Ireland into Bolsheviks, and Comrade Lenin is equally busy laying the foundations of a great capitalist state in Communistic Russia. I quoted in a previous chapter a strange admission of Lenin to the effect that he did not quite know towards what harbour he was drifting, and at the present moment he is certainly

tossing about in uncharted seas which, when he weighed anchor, were the very last places in the political world where he ever expected to find himself. He set out to kill militarism, with the result that he is now almost the only militarist in Europe. He has one of the largest and most enthusiastic armies in the world; schools for officers have been established in every town, and boys from sixteen to twenty years are taught military exercises. What is more important, the Russian people have become, for the first time in their history, bellicose and jingoistic. They write martial poetry which even Kipling could not improve upon, and of which they never before had any specimens in their popular literature. One poem to the "Red Star of Bolshevism" comes from a section of the workmen to which Lermontov's "Borodino" never made an appeal; and their innumerable rude dramas in praise of militarism are quite a novelty on the Russian stage, where patriotic operas like "A Life for the Tsar" were never popular save on artistic grounds. Their coarse, popular pictures depicting the triumph of Bolshevism in arms arouse enthusiasm amongst a class which Vereshchagin's heroic Napoleonic canvasses left absolutely cold.

Lenin set out to kill individualism in Russia, as well as militarism, but all he has killed has been the vague Socialistic spirit which tinged the thoughts of most Russians, even those of the middle and upper classes. A harsh, greedy individualism has now mastered most of the Russian people. The old philanthropic landowner has gone, but has been replaced by a hard-fisted *muzhik* class resembling the most unlovely type of French peasant, and the patriarchal old bureaucrat has been replaced by a violent and ill-mannered Commissar, with all the worst qualities of his predecessor and none of the good.

The Bolsheviks declared that they would extirpate all capitalists, but, judging by innumerable indications to which I have already made allusion, they will, if they last, find themselves largely in the hands of foreign capitalists, of whom the Tsar's Government was always very distrustful. In March last, an able Lettish forestry expert in Ekaterinburg approached the Soviet forestry department for a post, but

was told that most of the forests would be given over for exploitation to foreigners. "They know these things better than we do," quoth the Forestry Commissar. Moscow I found full of secret or acknowledged representatives of great American, British, and Continental firms, some of whom, I know, got very large concessions. There is now in Copenhagen a great clearing-house scheme for doing trade with Russia, and in Norway, Sweden, Germany, France, and Italy, the "big business" men are equally active. Krassin could, if he would, make some strange disclosures of the anxiety of British firms to "do a deal" with him, and of the way Russified Englishmen and "big business" generally have grovelled before him, as I once knew an obsequious English concessionaire literally to crawl on his belly before a former King of Siam, in accordance with the degrading Court etiquette then prevalent; and the ultimate result will be that the anti-capitalist movement in Russia will end by leaving Russia as much at the mercy of foreign capitalists as China. Whatever may be said of the old Russian bureaucracy, it must be admitted that they never allowed anybody to plunder Russia but themselves. There will now be wholesale plunder by Bolsheviks ready to sell the real gains of the first Revolution, and by capitalists ready to sell their country, their civilization, and their souls.

The Socialistic régime was expected to stop corruption in Russia, but it is a well-known fact that corruption was never so rampant there as it is now. The Food Control at Moscow is a scandal of the first magnitude, 50 per cent. of the food which is handed over to it being sold through speculators and profiteers. An employee of the English Cold Storage Company in Moscow told me that he himself transferred to the Food Control enormous numbers of chickens and sausages, and large quantities of butter, which were never issued to the public on cards, but which he himself saw in the hands of speculators, who offered them for sale at more than extravagant prices. The attempt to extirpate the profiteer has only resulted, therefore, in the enhancement of the profiteer's earnings by 5,000 per cent., and even the shooting of dishonest Commissars does not reduce the evil.

Every Commissar's train which visits the provinces returns to Moscow with loads of food on which much money is made. There is a soldier at every railway station to prevent this, but the Commissar invariably gives a paper to his subordinates entitling them to bring home as much foodstuff as they like. When Bolshevnik Missions return from abroad, they will have similar cargoes; hence there is a keen desire on the part of Red officials to go abroad in some official capacity. This also leads to instances of favouritism and corruption, such as no other Government in the world could parallel. Theoretically the most competent man is chosen, but in practice it is a matter of intrigue, family influence, and money to a much greater extent than in the worst days of Imperialism. The selection of bureaucrats for important posts is accompanied by an amount of "wire-pulling" which would shock even the city of Washington. The relatives of Commissars get appointments which they would never obtain under the laxest Parliamentary system of government, and the children of Trotsky and of the other Commissars will be sure of high positions in the Bolshevnik Oligarchy.

I am sometimes tempted to think that the outcome of it all will be the establishment of a powerful Russian bureaucracy allied to a powerful German bureaucracy, and the conversion of anti-capitalist Russia into a sort of Petropavlovsk Fortress-prison, with capitalists and bureaucrats in the fortress, and an enslaved Labour class in the prison. Why, indeed, should not the handful of desperate adventurers, who have conquered Russia by their ideas, evolve, with the support of international capital, into a ruling caste, even as the disreputable freebooters who conquered England in 1066 by their swords evolved into perfectly respectable people? But the conclusion at which I have invariably arrived, when engaged in such surmises, is that the ideas of the Bolshevniks will not keep their edge so long as did the swords of the Normans, and that the feudal system, with its roots stretching down to the humblest of the people, contained far greater promise of stability than does the Bolshevnik theory which has no hold on the peasants and no hold on most of the workmen. There are, as I have

already pointed out, 125,000,000 people in Russia, and, according to Trotsky, the Bolsheviks number only 604,000, of whom not more than 70,000 are workmen. All the rest are bureaucrats, and, from personal investigations which I conducted in Moscow, I discovered that at least half of these 70,000 workmen are engaged on what they call "political work," though they are paid by the factories, are inscribed on the books of the factories, and are supposed to be working in the factories. The Bolsheviks are losing touch with the manual workers at a very rapid rate indeed, and, in a short time, every member of the party will be a bureaucrat. Obsessed by their impracticable theories, they will be carried further and further from the realities of life and of human nature, until finally they are tripped up by something very simple and very small, as the Tsar, who had survived the Japanese War and the revolution of 1905, was ignobly tripped up at length by a drunken pilgrim and a shortage of bread. Wars have been caused by diphthongs, and the heirs of the Byzantines may be overthrown by their own misinterpretation of the one word "worker." To that word their leaders, who certainly know better, have consistently and dishonestly given the meaning "manual worker," so that when, in 1905, Count Witte claimed, and with very good reason, to be also a worker, the deputation of Workmen's Deputies, which by the way included Trotsky, laughed him to scorn. Yet now there are in Moscow alone 230,000 Bolshevik officials who do not work with their hands, against 100,000 manual workers, of whom considerably less than half are members of the Communist party. A Menshevik recently asked in the *Pravda* why so few skilled workmen are Bolshevik, and the editor replied that he needed time before he could answer that difficult question. "If any will not work, neither let him eat": out of their own mouths shall the Bolsheviks be confounded. They misapplied that text in order to ruin others, and now it will be misapplied by others in order to ruin them.

History has frequently furnished the spectacle of rough barbarians descending from the hills to conquer a great pacific people, and to found a ruling caste which in course



of time becomes corrupted by luxury and is swept away. The empire-smashing barbarians of the future will come from the mines and workshops of nations which brutalize the lower classes and lose at the same time their own ancient virtue; but in these rapid days the degeneration of the conquerors will be swift, and in Russia it shows every sign of being already complete.

A probable outcome of the present Russian experiment will be a military reaction involving the extermination of half a million Reds, and perhaps another half-million of more or less inoffensive Jews, and the persecution by the Whites, for twenty years, of those Socialists and Liberals whom Lenin hated, and who will probably have done most towards bringing about Lenin's fall. Then the pendulum will swing from right to left and from left to right, until finally it settles at a federated *bourgeois* republic.

Of my own personal adventures there is little more to be said save that, curiously enough, they ended on a cheerful and even comic note.

After my release by the Bolshevik Inquisition I applied for permission to leave Russia with the British refugees who were due to leave under the Litvinov-O'Grady agreement for the exchange of prisoners, and this permission was granted. I could have remained as a correspondent on very favourable terms if I had consented to write for the Bolsheviks; I could have visited Petrograd, the South, and the Polish Front, and accumulated a mass of material about Red Russia, but there was danger in carrying out that programme. The fact that I was an officer might leak out at Krasnoyarsk or at Moscow, might be disclosed by treacherous interpreters who had been attached to us, by military documents which had been captured, or simply by reference to the British Army List. Even if it did not leak out, the Bolsheviks, who were anxious that I should stay, and willing to make it worth my while to stay, would certainly try to cut off my retreat and place me entirely at their mercy by publishing something which I had not said, or garbling something which I had said, with the result that, owing to my inability to contradict this, and to the British Government's intense suspicion of everything Bolshevik,

I might be refused admittance into England. Those who are inclined to doubt all this do not know the Bolsheviks, and do not know the morbid tension which Bolshevism has produced outside Russia, and of which I had a most unpleasant personal experience as soon as I crossed the Finnish frontier.

I always told the Reds that it was absolutely necessary for me to go home, since (as I put it) everything I wrote from Russia would be regarded in England as having been written under duress. At the same time, I always made it clear to them that I was no Socialist, that I did not believe their experiment would succeed, and that when I returned to England I would put down everything without fear or favour, what told against them as well as what told for them.

Their answer to this was characteristic. They said in effect: "Russia is the only country in the world where you can write with perfect freedom. Here you can denounce King George, Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, and all the Generals, Cabinet Ministers, clergymen, and capitalists that you can think of. There is no limit to the violence of the language you can use against them, and no matter what mismanagement, fraud, and debauchery you accuse them of, you need fear no action for libel here. What greater freedom do you want? You could never do that in England. You could never publish in England anything that tells in favour of Bolshevism, no matter how true it be, and no matter what denunciations of Bolshevism you publish along with it."

My answer to that is the foregoing narrative, in which absolutely everything is published, and in the composition of which no suggestion has been made to me to omit or alter a single word. That is what I call freedom.

The last days spent in Moscow by the British party were enlivened by the efforts of certain young Russian ladies to get married to the fugitives, so that they themselves could leave as British subjects, for it is as difficult for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle as for a Russian "citizen" to leave Russia. Most of the British officer-prisoners, married and unmarried, could have brought out

with them charming Russian brides of good family, and in some cases with ample fortunes awaiting them outside in Paris or London banks; and I do not think that, since the Rape of the Sabines, soldiers have ever had such an embarrassing abundance of youth and beauty to choose from. The officers resisted heroically, though perhaps some of them, demobilized and out of work, now regret that *gran rifiuto*; but, alas! some of the civilians fell. It was not a serious matter, however, for the unions were contracted in accordance with the Soviet marriage-law (which is anything but serious, and has no legal validity outside Russia), and were only nominal unless the parties wished to supplement them by a regular marriage on the other side of the frontier. Some amusing situations arose in consequence of these marriages. One aristocratic lady who had "married" an English youth of half her age dropped him and the name he had given her as soon as she got aboard the boat for England; another English bridegroom had, on the contrary, considerable difficulty in getting disentangled from his Muscovite "bride." But no English wife need be in the least uneasy. The whole masquerade was as innocent and delightful as a dance, and, in the gay jingling of marriage bells mixed with the silvery laughter of Russian girls, I read a prophecy of a day when the masculine energy of the Briton will combine on equal terms with the delicate feminine genius of the Slav to reorganize a shattered world and to save our Christian civilization.

Up to this time an ice-bound sea, void of life, had stretched away like a Siberian steppe to the horizon, but now the mighty waters had burst their chains, and the humble craft of the fisherman went freely to and fro on the rippling surface. I thanked God for the passing away of that dreadful winter which I had often thought would be my last, and I prayed that the great Russian people might soon be freed in like manner from the frozen, life-destroying immobility of Communism.

For five long months the only news I had had from home were the tidings of discontent, disorder, mutiny, and revolution published in the Bolshevik newspapers, but all these shapes of horror faded away when I went aboard the British

naval transport which lay awaiting us in Helsingfors Bay with a British destroyer alongside. An armed bluejacket saluted briskly at the gangway, and the interior of the great ship presented the same impressive picture of ordered freedom as the *Kent* had presented at Vladivostock seven thousand miles away. The bugles were as merry and confident as ever; the "Aye, aye, sir!" of the sailors as ready and cheerful as of yore. Amid these reassuring sights and sounds I close this narrative of captivity.



TWO SNOW SCENES ON THE FINNISH FRONTIER.

*To face p. 310.*

## APPENDIX

THE following miscellaneous notes were written by me in short hand while a prisoner in Siberia and Russia, but I had no time to decipher them till the foregoing pages were already in the hands of the printer, and till I myself had left England again for the Russian frontier. I hope that, under these circumstances, and in consideration of the fact that nearly all of them were written amid the scenes which I describe, and even jotted down sometimes in the street and in the darkness, their crude form, their want of connection, and their appearance as an appendix will be excused by the reader.

### KOLCHAK'S GOLD TRAIN

Gold to the value of £44,000,000 left Omsk in a special train of forty cars which came into collision at Tatarskaya, near Omsk, with another train and caught fire, with the result that boxes full of gold to the value of hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling were thrown out of the train like so many boxes of "bully" beef, were left lying on the track for days, and were finally "lost." The rest of the gold was captured by the Reds at Nizhniudinsk, near Irkutsk.

### BURNING OF A RED CROSS TRAIN

This disaster took place at Kochenovo, forty versts to the west of Novo-Nikolaevsk. I heard of it while still with the Whites, and the Reds afterwards gave me full particulars of it. They said that they rescued some of the patients, and that they found the charred remains of over two hundred typhus patients in the débris of the train. They added that in some of the abandoned trains they found prison vans with barred windows, but that in all cases the prisoners had been butchered by the Whites. Whether this was true or not I do not know, but at Novo-Nikolaevsk and Omsk I found the railway stations adorned with ghastly photographs of mutilated corpses as they had, in Kolchak's time, been adorned with similar photographs of Red butcheries.

## WRITINGS ON STATION WALLS

"DEAR MASHA,—I have gone on by the echelon of the Osvyetverkh, November 11. I will wait for you and the children in the Dom Petrov, Bolshoi Prospekt, No. 12.—IVAN."

Ivan, it will be seen, neglects to give the name of the town where he proposes to wait.

"TO DOMINICA IVANOVNA GLYEBOVA,—We cannot get any further, and are staying here in Bolotnaya in the Square opposite the Church, Dom Rykachev, No. 8. Vanna is sick of typhus.—SERGIUS AND NATASHA."

Sometimes one found rude, pencilled notices from Colonels who had apparently lost their regiments.

"Colonel Butenko is living here in Sadovaya, No. 18."

Still another specimen, unsigned:

"Will anyone who knows the whereabouts of Olga and Tatiana Petrova, please tell the commandant at this station?"

Reading long afterwards the copies I had made of those notices, I was touched by the confidence shown by all the writers that there must be a secure haven of refuge somewhere. At Novo-Nikolaevsk, Tomsk was the abiding city, the inviolable sanctuary which Trotsky could never violate; at Taiga it was Marinsk; at Marinsk it was Achinsk; at Achinsk it was Krasnoyarsk. At the time I first read those appeals I had, however, the same illusions myself; but now I see something symbolical in this futile hunt for security. "We have here no abiding city."

## THE PROPAGANDA HALL AT EKATERINBURG

This hall was always crowded with young soldiers and workmen, who listened most attentively to the violin recitals, piano playing, old ballads, and classical music, and seemed to be fascinated by the endless succession of artistes, some of whom were very good. It had, however, two great drawbacks: it contributed to the spread of poisonous doctrine, and it contributed to the spread of typhus. One of my travelling companions visited it once only, and shortly afterwards fell sick of this disease. The entertainments and lectures seemed to go on for ever, but the audience never grew tired. There were all sorts of common people in the crowd—Cossacks, Kirghiz, miners, young peasants with the bodies of giants and the faces of children. Workmen sometimes came in with bags of flour, which they deposited on the ground while they listened to what was going on. It reminded me of workmen and market women I had seen coming

into an Italian cathedral in the noonday heat to pray: these Propaganda Halls are the Cathedrals of Bolshevism. Soldiers also came in, the permanently fixed bayonets on the muzzles of their rifles white with hoar-frost.

In one of the cartoons a man with a plough stood on a terrestrial globe, beneath which was the inscription "The World is Thine." Innumerable other notices vaunted the superiority of Labour and the defeat of Capitalism and Imperialism. "The Rule of the Proletariat," said one of these notices, "is the Death of the Bourgeois Horde."

### BOLSHEVIK JOURNALISM

Nearly everybody dabbled in journalism; and foreign correspondents always ran the risk of seeing their most casual conversation at Commissars' tables reproduced in a distorted form next morning by some Communist newspaper. Cabinet ministers in the West are sometimes rather afraid of talking to newspapermen lest their remarks be published without their permission and in an incorrect form. Journalists from the West have, for precisely the same reason, a well-grounded fear of talking to Bolshevik Cabinet Ministers. The average Red leader writes as much as he talks, and he talks as much as the most talkative English M.P. The Russians are, indeed, a very talkative race; they talk with the inexhaustible rapidity of Greeks or women. Not that I despise them for this natural accomplishment: on the contrary I envy them; and I must say that their conversation is sometimes of extraordinary charm and brilliancy. But the conversation of such of them as have got the Bolshevik bee in their bonnets can only be described as devastating, though the Reactionaries who think that England has not helped enough run these Red bores very close. The "loquacity valve" which works so stiffly in some other races does not exist in the Russians at all. Talking is apparently an imperious necessity for them, and they droop and wither if deprived of all possibility of satisfying that necessity. I am told that many of the Russian prisoners of war in Germany went mad: I think it was because they had nobody to talk with.

Powerful articles are published occasionally in the Moscow papers, but the general tone of the Bolshevik Press is extremely low, for most of the regular Pressmen belong to the type which used to make a precarious living by bringing trifling items of intelligence to the old newspaper offices, though they themselves seldom succeeded in getting beyond the hall-porter. I know one editor who wrote a series of violent articles against a Soviet official, because the latter once occupied the permanent place assigned to this editor in the local theatre. Another paper published a frightful onslaught on a lady, the wife of an educational Commissar, because, on visiting the Opera House once, she



complained (and with excellent reason) of the smell which emanated from the Proletariat audience. The attack on Mrs. North, wife of the British chaplain at Moscow, in the official organ of the Soviet Government, was the most vulgar, disgraceful, and unmanly thing that I ever read in print. The non-existence of a Libel Law encourages cowardly scribes to attack in the most brutal manner people whom it is safe to attack, especially women of good family married to technical functionaries of the Soviet, but none of these scribblers would dare to attack Mrs. Lenin or Mrs. Trotsky any more than they would have dared in the old days to attack the Tsarina.

The untruthful nature of the news which appears in the *Pravda* has become so notorious among the higher Commissars themselves that they have a saying to the effect that "You never find *Pravda* (Truth) in the *Pravda*."

### THE PEASANTS

If the outer world is nervous about Bolshevism, the Bolsheviks are even more nervous about the outer world and about the permanency of their own régime. They are so nervous that, excepting high officials and fanatical secret agents, none of Lenin's subjects are ever allowed to leave Russia. Many of the Bolshevik Chinovniks have asked me confidentially if I thought their system of government would last, and were very anxious to know what change will, in my opinion, take place, and whether the change will be brought about by foreign interference, by internal trouble, or by a gradual modification in the Socialist system itself. I have seen with my own eyes that these people, who profess to be so very, very sure, are, in reality, very doubtful of their own success. They are overawed in the first place by the stupendous strength of the world-organization against which they have set out to do battle and are profoundly depressed by the obvious disinclination of the World's workers to join Jack the Giant-killer in his forlorn campaign against the giant. They are also very much afraid of their own peasants who stand sullenly aside, refuse to bring produce to market, hoard all the money they can lay hands on, and leave the towns to starve. Despite his tone of supreme confidence, Lenin has many sleepless nights on account of the *muzhik*. That dark, enigmatical mass of a hundred millions presses down on him like a nightmare, and he has been forced to recognize the fact that the peasant is anything but an altruist, being extremely selfish and close-fisted, being, in fact, a small capitalist. "I have found," said he, "that the *muzhik* has a dual personality. One personality will joyfully take all the Soviet Government gives it. The other refuses the least help to the Soviet Government."

This Sphinx is cunning, cautious, and evasive. One of the Commissars told me that the class of "poor" peasants—still

catalogued as "poor," though they are now rich—are much more difficult to deal with than the old *kulak* whom they have plundered and replaced. Meanwhile the attitude of the Bolshevik newspapers towards the peasantry is very interesting and suggestive, for those newspapers faithfully reflect the hopes and fears of the Omnipotent Five. Sometimes they attack the peasants with violence, but, as a rule, they write about him with a hopefulness which they do not feel. They publish many articles on "What to do in the Villages," proving to their own satisfaction apparently that the peasants' sons, when they return from the Red Army, will carry the armed doctrine of the revolution into the farmhouses (but omitting to state that they will also carry, in many cases, those diseases which seem to be almost inseparable from the noble profession of arms), and that they will make the villages supply the workmen with bread, since, without bread, the workmen will be unable to deliver the ploughs, clothing, boots, etc., which the villagers need so badly. An energetic agitator, who had (of course) served a sentence of penal servitude under the Tsar, once described to me with great satisfaction how he had corrupted the peasantry in his native village. At first he had to be very cautious, and could not speak against the Tsar, the priests, or the landowners, but little by little he made headway "until now"—and with a bland smile he waved his hand towards the street adorned throughout its entire length with Red flags. As a matter of fact, however, Lenin would be as much out of place in the average Russian village as the Dean of St. Paul's would be in a Sinn Fein school at Ballinasloe. This was clearly shown during the attempts, which the Bolsheviks made, to establish Communist colonies in Samara Government and elsewhere throughout Russia. Those colonies were established in the confiscated estates of landowners, and were filled with long-haired enthusiasts from Moscow, but there was as great a gulf between them and the peasants as there would have been between the peasants and an American Brook Farm colony dumped down among them. The *muzhiks* simply said, "These are new landlords come here. Let's kill them," and in the riots which ensued several people were killed and wounded on both sides. Finally, the Red Army was sent to restore order. The peasants were flogged, but the long-haired enthusiasts had fled, and all these Communist experiments came to naught.

To all the frantic appeals of the Reds to co-operate with them in the creation of a great Socialistic Russia, the peasant opposes an inscrutable passivity. As a matter of fact, he dislikes to be worried by any form of government, and no more desires to build up a great Socialist Russia than he ever desired to build up a great Imperialist Russia. His objection to military service is as great as was the objection of the Bolsheviks when they came into power, but, as the Reds now conscribe the peasants as readily

as the Tsarists, the peasants feel vaguely that they have been swindled. On one point only do the Marxists and the *muzhiks* feel alike. Neither of them care in the least whether chunks as large as France and Germany put together are bit off the Empire, for the Marxists have no fatherland, and the *muzhik's* Empire is confined to the limits of his native village.

I once saw a list of instructions to Bolshevik agitators, which laid down the rule: "Keep things moving all the time. When one cry has become stale, get up another and cry it out at the top of your voice. The next cry will be 'Electrification of the Villages.' Always have something new. Don't let the pace flag. Keep the people so busy that they won't have time to think."

And, sure enough, in a week or two afterwards the cry "Electrification of the Villages" resounded all over Russia. It is, in truth, rather a silly cry considering how many of the Russian peasants are nearer the Stone Age than the Age of Electricity, and the slight effect that it has had on the *muzhiks* shows that Lenin does not understand them at all; but, after all, politicians in every country act very often on the same great principle. What about "Three Acres and a Cow," "Land for the Soldiers," "Hang the Kaiser," "Make Germany Pay," and a number of similar slogans in our own country? The principle of keeping everybody busy is important, and leads to Lenin making all women, even married women, work all day in Government offices, so that they will have no time at night to worry themselves and their husbands about politics. The inertia which is such a marked characteristic of the Muscovite mind makes the Russian difficult to rouse, but it also makes him continue working at high pressure once he has been thoroughly warmed up, and the Bolsheviks are cleverly utilizing this psychological trait in the national character in order to keep things "humming," and to prevent people from falling back into their old state of sluggishness.

In order to "keep things humming," the Bolsheviks not only insist on the Proletariat working: they also insist on their playing. Life among the Reds is not only therefore a constant round of work, it is also a round of amusements, lectures, Red picnics, Red athletic exhibitions, Red swimming shows, and Red skating competitions. Certain days are devoted, by Government decree, to certain "stunts." There is a "Children's Day," a "Woman's Day," a "Red Soldier's Day," a "Red Hospital Day," a "House Cleaning Week," and many other fixtures of the same kind, which replace the ancient religious holidays.

In order to give greater interest and a better organization to these movements, newspapers are published temporarily in connection with each of them. I have already spoken of how such newspapers are published by the G.H.Q. of the Labour Army.

## MOSCOW

The first night I ventured out into the streets of Moscow was one of almost unbelievable gloom and depression. I was not met by brass bands and Soviet motor-cars, as most of the English investigators have been met; nevertheless, I venture to think that I saw as much of the real Russia as they did. The first thing that struck me early in the night was the great number of people, including feeble old men and delicate young women, who were engaged in dragging along the street little sleighs laden with firewood; and in some pitiful cases this work was rendered impossible of accomplishment owing to the physical weakness of those engaged in it, and to the fact that in many places the snow had all melted, with the result that the sleighs got hopelessly embedded in the mud or wedged immovably among the loose cobble-stones. Some of the young ladies were in a state of utter exhaustion; apparently they had been engaged all day in collecting fuel; their whole time was taken up in attending to the most primitive necessities of themselves and those dependent on them. Subsequent investigation showed me that this theory of mine was correct, and that the Communist system tends inevitably to crush all expression of genius, as it has never before been crushed even under the most barbarous of the Ottoman Sultans. If a Shakespeare or a Shelley arises in Red Russia, and refuses to make himself the mouthpiece for the coarse, semi-educated leaders of the Reds, he will have to spend all his time in getting himself bread, water, fuel, and clothing, and will have no leisure left for any higher work.

When the night advanced and the darkness increased, there was not a gleam of light in the streets, for there were no street lamps and no shop-windows. There were also no trams for passengers, but, once an hour or so, a solitary tramcar rushed madly uptown, flashing fire from the electric wires overhead as it tore onwards. I was nearly run over once or twice by these insane chariots, for the only possible place for a pedestrian was right in the middle of the tramway track, and on each side of the track there rose to the height of at least four feet a solid rampart of frozen and excessively slippery snow and mud, which was quite invisible in the darkness. I had some bad falls in consequence, and on one occasion smashed my only pair of spectacles, with the result that the chaos around me became more of a Dante's inferno than ever. It only needed those furious tramcars to give the last touch of unreality and insanity to the whole incredible tableau. The desertion of the streets, the disorder, the gloom charged with menace, the terrifying and inexplicable sounds that smote the ear, combined to create the best impression of the lower regions that it is possible to imagine. I have often been at night, during the Great War, in deserted and

shattered villages of No Man's Land, with corpses lying in the streets and enemies hidden in the cellars, but none of them ever filled me with such fear as did this Bolshevik Garden of Eden.

The night was bitterly cold, yet all the glass in the single crazy tramcar had been broken, and the driver, who was the sole occupant, was muffled up as if for an Arctic expedition. These cars carried, I believe, the mails, or had some other sane reason for their insane speed; but the enigma remained why, if they could run, other cars could not run with passengers. Making all allowances, they seemed to be symbolical of Bolshevism.

Three kinds of noise broke the midnight stillness of Moscow: first, the rushing sound of these rickety tramcars lurching unsteadily over the worn and uneven rails, with wildly clanging bells, and amid a continuous shower of electric sparks which illuminated with a sickly and unnatural light the dilapidated houses and the emaciated faces of the few passers-by; secondly, a curious hooting of railway or other engines which went on all night, and which, to me at least, remained mysterious and inexplicable; thirdly, and most ominous of all, occasional stray shots in the distance. I have compared the scene to a scene at the Front, but I could almost imagine myself at times to be lost in the dark recesses of an equatorial forest, listening to the nocturnal cries of wild animals.

### BOLSHEVIK MODERNISM

The Communists claim to be ultra-modern, to be the last word in scientific progress; and, in proof of this, they point to their extraordinarily wide use of Wireless for newspaper purposes; and to their vast schemes for the electrification of agriculture—schemes which will introduce electric ploughing in one part of an Empire, where the peasants in other parts are still ploughing with boughs of trees dragged by bullocks. They point also to the extensive use they are making, for Governmental and propaganda purposes, of that remarkable system of advertisement by suggestion which is one of the most striking developments of the twentieth century. They are utilizing the cinema for educational work, and they speak with enthusiasm of the wide-spread use they will make of other modern inventions, when the opening up of trade relations with foreign countries enables them to import the necessary apparatus. They will teach geography and history by the cinema, as well as by the older methods. They will teach foreign languages and the correct pronunciation of their own language by the aid of the gramophone and the dictaphone. They will restore the theatre to its ancient position as an educational instrument. In their schools they have already replaced the Bible by Karl Marx, and substituted Esperanto for Latin and Greek, and their next step will probably be to

make Trotsky take the place of Demosthenes. Not only have they adopted the Julian Calendar which, owing to religious scruples, Old Russia boggled at for two hundred years, and which even Peter the Great was not brave enough to carry through, but they have also adopted the Daylight Saving Bill—though that measure is of doubtful utility in Russia owing to the length of the days in summertime and to their shortness in winter, as well as to the fact that the country is mainly agricultural—and have even improved on it by putting on the clock not once but three times a year.

The Omnipotent Five—Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Kamenev, and Kristinsky—propose, in short, to cut themselves adrift altogether from the past, and to turn their faces entirely towards the future. They will harness modern science to the Socialist chariot, as Wilhelm harnessed it to the Militarist; and, indeed, Russian Communism bears in some respects a close resemblance to Prussian Militarism. The idea of doing what Lenin is doing is not, of course, new. Russian professors toyed with that idea before the Great War; Professor Struve, Wrangel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, was the first to translate Karl Marx into Russian (an achievement for which he is now very sorry); and the Russian Intelligentsia themselves are largely to blame for the general weakening of faith in Christianity, and the general strengthening of belief in the infallibility of science that has taken place in Russia during the last twenty years. But, though apparently so up to date, this Bolshevik system of education is thoroughly wrong, as the whole Bolshevik theory is wrong. That theory, as it is now seen working in practice, has all the hardness of the early Egyptian priestcraft; and, if it lasts for any length of time, it will inevitably become a fossilized and intensely materialistic religion of empty symbols, of barren rites and ceremonies. Though young, it has already acquired all the jargon, mummery, hair-splitting, futile and involved controversy and rotatory argument of an old and debased superstition. The pundits of the Reds are more addicted to red tape than the most retrograde Chinovniks of the Empire ever were. They quote decrees, rescripts, and precedents with all the verbose obscurity of Old Régime lawyers quoting ukazes and legal enactments; and, owing to the many barbarous contractions they have invented, it is sometimes difficult even for one knowing Russian to follow them. These Bolshevik decrees are innumerable, and most of them are silly, but respect for them is imposed by terror. Mr. Thomas, the acting British consul in Ekaterinburg, told me once of a clown in a circus who, for joking somewhat coarsely about the amazing legislative fecundity of the Soviet Government, was immediately taken from the stage and shot.

Hypocrisy and insincerity permeate Bolshevism through and through. Even now, while professing to be merely servants of the people, most of the Bolshevik leaders live in comparative

luxury. They wear on public occasions the humble dress and high boots of the Russian working-man. Trotsky, the most autocratic War Minister in the world, dresses as a private soldier, shovels snow, and runs about the Kremlin with his own messages. The big-wigs at the F.O. act as their own office-boys, and carry on diplomatic conversations while repairing the handle of a door or nailing up pictures on the wall. A time may come when the successor of Tsar Lenin will appear on ceremonial occasions leaning on a symbolical spade, and wearing on his bowler hat the republican crest of a crossed hammer and scythe, as Wilhelm used to lean on a sword which he never used, and to wear on his Imperial crown a Cross which taught him nothing. But it will all be idle show. Lenin the Thirteenth, or whatever his name and number is, will be none the less an autocrat because of his wearing emblems, whose significance will have become lost in the mists of antiquity.

Bolshevism, as I saw it, made the same impression on me as was made by a carnivorous plant which I once saw trapping flies in the Kew Gardens. Attracted by the bright red colour of the fatal plant, the giddy fly alights unsuspectingly on the pitcher, crawls in, is stupefied by the juice and the faint perfume, and, in the end, is slowly dissolved and absorbed. I have seen the Red flag of Bolshevism have the same effect on many young and ardent natures. I have seen living men swallowed by an organism which is itself dead. Their initiative, their creative energy, their immortal souls, are sucked out of them, and nothing is left but mere husks of themselves, "hard, indigestible remains," like that part of the fly which is rejected by the insectivorous *Nepenthes* and *Sarracenias* after the process of digestion has been completed.

### TYPHUS

The mortality from typhus in Siberia ranged from 5 per cent to 8 per cent. in 1918, but in 1920 it reached 10 per cent. to 11 per cent. In Taiga on February 1 nearly all the large railway stations had been converted into typhus hospitals, and most of the cases lay on the bare floor without blankets. I am told that many buildings in the town were equally full, and that there were over 20,000 cases in Taiga alone. There were two huge piles of unidentified dead bodies, one near the station, the other some distance off; and in one hospital surgeons were busily engaged in amputating gangrened limbs that had been frost-bitten. There was only one doctor for every one hundred typhus cases. In the district between Omsk and Krasnoyarsk practically all the medical men had been attacked by typhus, and 50 per cent. of them had succumbed, among them being the best doctors in Siberia. One doctor told me that he found the mortality to be lowest among young illiterate peasants, and

highest among middle-aged people engaged in intellectual work. Not the least horrible feature of the typhus horror in Russia is this fact, that it reduces still lower the percentage of literates, always low in Russia, and brought down to an infinitesimal figure by the murders and the proscriptions of the Reds. The doctor I refer to had served with Kolchak, and left Omsk in a staff train containing eight hundred staff officers who had some chance of changing their linen; nevertheless, at Krasnoyarsk, he had twenty-six corpses on the train. Sanitary conditions on the other trains were frightful, and the percentage of deaths was consequently greater. In the echelon of the Izhevsky Division about 50 per cent. of the passengers died.

It would be difficult for me to exaggerate the horror produced on my mind by what I saw of the great typhus epidemic in Siberia and Russia. My whole journey from Omsk to Krasnoyarsk, and from Krasnoyarsk to Moscow, was overshadowed by this scourge, as well as by the venereal and the other diseases which are fast eating away the vitality of the Russian race, and my fears on the score of typhus were increased by what I saw of the filthy personal habits of the Russians; some of them could not shake the folds of their dress without sprinkling lice on everybody in their immediate vicinity. My worst experience was in Moscow, where a man fell ill of typhus in the compartment which I occupied in a railway carriage. I fled from him in horror, and spent most of my time in the corridor, but I could not keep my eyes off that fatal door inside which my belongings were piled close to his. This patient had accumulated a large supply of rusks, Siberian butter, and rum, but even his starving companions were afraid to touch them. The terror of those awful, voiceless, creeping things, whose bite is sickness, unconsciousness, physical collapse, and sometimes death, protected those stores more effectively than anything else could have done. For weeks afterwards I could not sit on the bunk where the sick man had piled his clothes without being filled with a morbid dread; and never, as long as I live, shall I be able to look a body parasite in the face without a shiver, or to dread its infinitesimal bite any less than I would dread the bite of a mad dog. Going through Russia at the present moment is, owing to typhus alone, as dangerous as going "over the top" was in France. The Soviet Republic is protected, for this winter at least, against outside aggression by a triple shield of hunger, typhus, and cold, but the strongest of these three is the typhus. Instead of making one charitable towards the sick, this epidemic develops in the healthy a deadly hatred of typhus patients, as if they were murderers who meditated an attempt on one's life, and for this hatred the sick people themselves are sometimes to blame on account of their criminal carelessness, their intense selfishness, and their utter disregard for others. In the present atmosphere of Red Russia all human charity withers away like flowers in



Polar snow. Not even on the battlefields of the Great War was death such an overpowering factor in the situation as it is now in Russia. Behind Lenin's head grins a skeleton, and one can hardly ever converse with any Muscovite about his friends and relations without hearing, sooner or later, the dreadful word "dead." Sometimes when I spoke to a man about his wife or children, he took out of his pocket a photograph of a beautiful young woman and a group of healthy children, and again I heard the phrase "died of typhus" pronounced in as unconcerned a tone as that in which an Englishman might say, "Gone to Brighton for the week-end."

If the above remarks seem overstrained and morbid, the explanation lies in the fact that they were all written, not in a clean British home, but in that pestiferous railway carriage at Moscow, and that I transcribe them here without the change of a syllable. Had I not had the writing of these notes to occupy my mind with, I do not know what I should have done during the interminable waits in railway carriages at desolate, typhus-stricken stations on the Trans-Siberian, and especially during the nightmare weeks that I passed sidetracked with a dying man in a dismal swamp of mud and melting snow, outside a deserted halt on the outskirts of Lenin's Red Capital.

It is doubtful whether the wild educational efforts of the Bolsheviks will ever compensate for the ravages of typhus among the Russian *litterati*, and for the other factors which have militated against the spread of public instruction. For several years past most of the schools in Russia have been used as hospitals and barracks. The old teachers have mostly run away, and those who have taken their places have enthusiasm, but not competence; and, as a result of these two circumstances joined to the decimation of the *litterati*, the new generation in Russia will have hardly anything in common with the old. The stage has been swept clear for an entirely new set of actors filled with most poisonous ideas, devoid of any trace of Christianity, and bound to constitute for centuries a centre of infection for the world. If any of the best parts of the old civilization are retained, it will be due to the action of many Russian mothers in teaching their children the great truths which Lenin has set himself to crush. For the moment, however, it would seem as if Lenin will simply drive Russia back into savagery, instead of teaching her anything new. Most people are occupied so much in seeking for food, clothing, and warmth, that they have no time to think of higher things, and are rapidly drifting into barbarism. No books save poisonous ones are published. There is a great scarcity of school-books and of Russian classical writers. Nearly all the young men are either in the field fighting, or else they are hiding in the woods to avoid conscription, so that for some years they have read nothing, and the gentlest of them have become very much roughened. Growing children have

become accustomed to the most awful sights of war, so that the new generation is already ruined. The peasant is in a state of panic. Harried, robbed, and flogged, first by one side and then by another, he sees his horses, carts, sleighs, sons, and food-stuffs requisitioned. Many of the workmen are trying to study, but, while their stomachs are empty, their heads are full of wrong ideas, misty notions, and impossible expectations. The interference of the Government with everything cannot be a success, and the whole outlook for Russia is excessively gloomy. But nothing in the present situation makes a more painful impression on one than the dreadful wastage of human life which is going on unchecked.

### CONDITIONS IN EKATERINBURG

I might add to the description of conditions in Ekaterinburg, which I have given in Chapter XII., the following remarks, which I wrote in shorthand in a notebook, while wandering about the streets of Ekaterinburg:

“One shop advertised ‘Boots. Quick Repairs. All Kinds of Footwear. Children’s Shoes a Speciality.’ I entered and found not a single boot in the place, and not even a scrap of leather. I went to a dentist’s, dentist fled; to a tailor’s, tailor present and correct, but no cloth, thread, needles, or buttons; to a watchmaker’s, no watches; to a *café*, no coffee; to a grocer’s, no groceries; to a milkman’s, no milk; to a beer-hall, no beer; to a tea-house, no tea; to a carpenter’s, carpenter sick of typhus; to a butcher’s, no meat save possibly the very small quantity which may have covered the bones of a moribund, half-frozen old man, sitting helplessly in an icy shop before an empty pair of scales. What made these disappointments all the more heart-rending was the fact that, for the benefit of the illiterate, there were pictorial representations on each shop of the articles supposed to be sold within—fat cows, foaming pails of milk, tankards of beer, firkins of butter, loaves of bread, and so on.”

### THE RUSSIAN WHITES

My opinion of the Russian Whites I shall set down frankly, as it is of importance, for our own future guidance, that my own countrymen, who have not had an opportunity to go abroad, should know something of the class they have been asked once, and may be asked again, to reimpose on Russia. They are a class which has forgotten nothing and learnt nothing, and is in every way unfit to rule. As soon as the White officers in Siberia began to recover from the effects of the Red Terror to which they had been subjected, they reverted at once to the courses which had brought about their downfall. They intrigued in the most shameless manner for posts in the rear, so that Kolchak

had more officers in his G.H.Q. than Foch had in his at the time of the Armistice. Thousands of those who should have been at the Front spent practically all their time revelling in Omsk. Regimental commanders neglected their soldiers for months, and then treated them with brutal severity. Every British officer who served with Denikin or Kolchak can give dozens of examples of this. I shall confine myself to one. A regiment was sent from Tomsk to the Front in the middle of 1919, but at Omsk the men sent a deputation to their C.O. to say that they had no boots or clothing, and could not go further; and, as a matter of fact, they had been swindled of their pay, rations, and clothing by their own officers. The C.O. had several members of this deputation shot and the remainder brutally flogged, with the result that the whole regiment passed over to the Reds a few months afterwards. This sort of thing made such a bad impression on our British troops, that they became more or less demoralized, and, if a large British Army had been sent into Russia, it would have become utterly corrupted. The Russian Generals whom we supported became almost invariably reactionaries of the worst type; their punitive expeditions into the villages turned all Siberia against them; and, if they had ever reached Moscow, they would have undoubtedly established there a régime in comparison with which the Government of the Tsar would have seemed absurdly democratic.

In 1918 I travelled to Ekaterinburg in a Czech train, into which a Russian General introduced himself without permission. Having done so, he promptly got drunk at the expense of his involuntary hosts, whom he began abusing as "mere prisoners of war, nothing more." Under the Czech flag he smuggled past his own Customs a large quantity of cigarettes, on which, at Omsk, he made a profit of 20,000 roubles. Some of the Russian officers who joined the British Mission frankly explained that they did so because (1) they were not obliged to go to the Front, and (2) they were paid both by the British and by the Russians.

The Intelligentsia spent half their time criticizing the British troops for not going into the firing-line, and the other half in "wangling" safe jobs for their own officer-sons in the rear. Kolchak's newspapers in Siberia were not allowed to make the faintest criticism on the utterly inefficient Government of Omsk, but they were not prevented from filling their columns with abuse of the English for not helping them enough. I think they were even encouraged to make these attacks, as it was considered that this display of independence tended to remove the impression that Kolchak was a puppet of Whitehall—which he was.

The Russian *bourgeoisie* are a kindly, soft, and gentle people, but, brought up as they were under the protecting tyranny of the Tsardom, they reminded me of domesticated animals let loose in a savage jungle. To put it differently, the Russian

Intelligentsia seems to be suffering from shell-shock (or what I might call revolution-shock), with the result that they turn all their venom on the Good Samaritans who minister to them, and address no reproaches to the Levites who pass by on the other side of the street and take no notice. In such cases the physician should be firm as well as kind, but unfortunately we have in England many people suffering as badly as the Russians from revolution-shock, who persist in saying that we did not do half enough for Kolchak and Denikin.

To give one out of innumerable personal experiences, during the retreat from Omsk a number of middle-class Russians, including young ladies and aged people, were placed under the protection of the British party I was with, and but for them none of us would have been captured. Among them, wearing uniform and carrying a sword, was a young Russian who, even in fleeing from the battlefield under a foreign flag, could not restrain himself from criticisms of England for not having given Kolchak sufficient assistance; and when, owing to their own utter helplessness, the whole party was ultimately captured, they overwhelmed us with abuse. Previous to that they had shown themselves to be impossible travelling companions. We had very little water in our carriage, but they used all of it for washing clothes, and then used the water we had obtained with great difficulty for cooking purposes. One of our officers had a batman, Private Smith, who had kindly consented to cook for all the officers, but the Russians wanted us to force him to cook for them too, and could not be made to understand that a British soldier cannot be forced to be a batman at all, much less to cook for a crowd of foreign civilians. Their attitude on this small question was the attitude of Kolchak and Denikin on larger questions. Kolchak and Denikin wanted us to employ the British Army in a way which would certainly have led to wholesale mutiny, and probably have caused revolution at home and the bankruptcy of our Empire. And, because we did not take their advice, they hated us like poison. I speak thus frankly about them, because there is a danger that these things will be overlooked by some British officials and officers anxious for employment in Russia, and not sufficiently alive to the expense and danger to their own country which further intervention in Russia would entail.

### WHITE TROOPS WHO JOINED THE REDS

During the first week I spent as a prisoner of war at Krasnoyarsk the number of White officers who registered at the Red Commandant's office (where, by the way, we found Makarov, one of the British Mission interpreters, acting as a Bolshevik employe, and professing to be a red-hot Bolshevik himself) was: 20 Generals, 175 Staff officers, and 4,380 higher officers. The

White soldiers who were drafted like cattle into the Red Army, without having to go through any formality, numbered 24,000. For some weeks the peasants in villages near Krasnoyarsk busied themselves in digging out of the snow guns, Generals, "Brass Hats," and rifles, which they surrendered, cold but more or less intact, to the conquerors. One village presented to the Reds, as a peace-offering or Christmas-box, one White General (slightly frost-bitten) and a battery of 6-inch howitzers which had been supplied to Kolchak by the British Government. The Staff officers, the Colonels, and even the great Brass Generals were promptly reduced to the ranks, formed into awkward squads, and drilled by a Red corporal in the barrack square. Some of them seemed to have forgotten the very elements of drill, but the corporal was merciful to them, and even prefaced on one occasion the welcome command "Dismiss!" with the respectful Russian phrase for "Messieurs les officiers," though I am afraid that he spoke in sarcasm. About two hundred White officers refused to serve in the Red Army, and were consequently sent to work as convicts in the Ural mines. For these brave men I was sincerely sorry, but I cannot honestly say that I was moved to tears by the spectacle of the lazy and corrupt old Generals, who had joined the ranks of the Red Army, being made to do an honest stroke of work, probably for the first time in their lives. Many of the White officers not only joined the Reds, but worked enthusiastically for them, and were given positions of trust. A trusted Adjutant of General Sakharov was in the Red force which captured us.

General Dutov's adjutant, Bogdanov, who was captured by the Reds in September of that year, is now a Red Propagandist who has had great success among the Cossack *stanitzi*, and many of the Russian officers, who were attached to the British Missions in Siberia and elsewhere in Russia, are now working far harder for the Reds than ever they worked against them. Lieutenant Hahn, an ex-Guards officer who was attached to the British Military Mission in Omsk, is now at the head of the Red Extraordinary Commission in Irkutsk, and unfortunately this is only one name out of many. This weakness on the part of the Russian Imperialists themselves had far more to do with the defeat of the anti-Bolshevik effort in 1919 than any weakness on the part of the Entente, yet the Entente is bitterly blamed for that defeat by the Russian reactionaries, who never by any chance think of asking themselves if there was any fault on their side. I have remarked in Chapter XIX. how aptly the words of Burke on the French Terrorists may be applied to the Bolshevik leaders. His indictment of the "Marais" of 1798 is no less applicable to the Russian anti-Bolsheviks, whose flabbiness has disgusted most of the British officers who have had to do with them during the last two years. "They are nothing more nor better than men engaged in desperate designs with feeble minds.

They are not honest; they are only ineffectual and unsystematic in their iniquity." "They can serve no cause," he says in another place, "because they have no cause at heart. . . . They have not been guilty of great crimes, but it is only because they have not energy of mind to rise to any height of wickedness." "They are of a tame, timid, languid, inert temper wherever the welfare of others is concerned."

As for the railway material lost by the Whites in Siberia, the Reds told me that they captured 20,000 railway waggons between Omsk and Krasnoyarsk, and over 3,000 locomotives, 600 of which were taken at Novo-Nikolaevsk alone. Nearly all these engines were derelicts that had cumbered the line for years, or machines that had "gone cold" or been damaged during the retreat, so that the Siberian line is in an extremely bad condition as regards engines. The captured trucks are useless, for the Reds have already more waggons than they can make use of. The enlightened policy of Sverdlov, the Bolshevik Minister of Railways, in employing ex-railway officials of the Omsk Government, is giving rise to much opposition on the part of the workmen, who threatened at Omsk to take from the train in which I travelled seven of these "Kolchakovsky officers," as they called them. These officials, being at the mercy of every workman, find it hard to get any work done. One of them told me that he would much prefer to be a workman. The Executive Committee of the Communists in Moscow has come to the assistance of the "*bourgeois* specialists," however, both by direct decrees and by explanatory articles in the Bolshevik Press, to the effect that, being at present indispensable to the State, they must be retained and even paid high salaries, until the workmen produce thoroughly Bolshevik engineers of equal competence to take their places. Lenin cannot see that the professional self-respect of these new experts must necessarily make them as much a class apart from the ignorant workmen, as did the professional pride of the old experts.

### TRADE WITH CAPITALIST COUNTRIES

As for trade with capitalist countries, there are two schools of thought among the Bolsheviks. Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, and several other leaders think that, even if it be a danger, it is absolutely necessary at present, as otherwise they will never be able to overcome their transport difficulties, or to get their factories going. But they contend that it will be an even greater danger to outer Powers than to themselves, owing to the facilities it will give their propaganda in foreign countries. They admit that trade between a Government on one side and private firms on the other will be very difficult, but are convinced that all difficulties will be eventually overcome by the whole outside world becoming Bolshevik. They confess that the Soviet Government

does not stand much chance of surviving unless all the other Governments in Europe become Bolshevik too. Hence their nervousness and the extreme importance they attach to foreign propaganda.

The second school of thought is represented by Bukharin, Radek, and the Cheka, which is fearful of the effect of foreign trade on the Bolshevik movement in Russia. Radek has expressed that misgiving in the *Izvestia*, where he declared that the Entente, having failed to conquer them by force of arms, now intends to conquer them by a much more dangerous weapon—namely, the opening up of trade relations—which will involve the flooding of Russia with agents of capitalism. This second school thinks that the Soviet system must be given time to harden, as the Shogunate system in Japan required a century to harden before it had cemented the Japanese race, and rendered totally impossible the conquest of Dai-Nippon either by Christian ideas or by Christian arms.

One Bolshevik said to me quite confidently: "The re-establishment of commercial relations between Russia and the outside world will ultimately lead to the overthrow first of the financial system, and secondly of the political system of the European States. The gold value has ceased to exist in Russia: we mean to abolish all money; and a new value, based perhaps on the price of bread, will have to be created. The change is bound to affect, sooner or later, the financial and political system of the rest of Europe. Trade cannot be carried on between a Socialist Government which has no currency, and a number of private firms in capitalistic Governments which have a currency, without new and far-reaching changes resulting in the capitalistic countries."

### THE IMPERIAL FAMILY

The birth of each of the Tsar's daughters had, in turn, been a bitter disappointment to the parents, so that the girls grew up neglected Cinderellas, who, perhaps, for this very reason, became all the more beautiful in mind and body. The Imperial couple were morbidly anxious to have a boy. Every Saint in the Russian calendar was appealed to, while the intercession of living "Saints," like Father John of Kronstadt, was continually implored, and God only knows how many pilgrimages were undertaken, and how many prayers and Masses were offered up in monasteries and convents, for the same end. The Empress became morbidly obsessed by the idea of bringing a man-child into the world, and there is no knowing how many night-long petitions she offered up to God in her oratory for that purpose, or how much money she bestowed on pious quacks of the Rasputin type. She even pressed science into her service, as well as religion, and the Austrian doctor Schenk was brought at great expense to Tsarskoe Selo, in order to put into practice there his

theory for pre-determining the sex of infants. He failed, and the Tsarina turned again to Heaven with a fervour that seems to have permanently affected her mind. When, finally, God granted her a son, her joy was soon alloyed by the discovery that he was tainted with the hereditary disease of her family, and she addressed herself once more to religious quacks with results which finally cost her both her throne and her life. It has been pointed out to me since this book was placed in the hands of the publisher that, owing to his illness, the lad's education was certainly neglected; and it is at all events certain that this young Prince never lived to attain his sixteenth year. On the other hand, the comparative neglect in which the girls were allowed to grow up counterbalanced the pride natural to their high position, with the result that they had, at the time of their murder, developed into unaffected, charming, and highly accomplished young women. Had the Tsaritsa not been born, or had his father, on seeing the sickly condition of his son, proclaimed the eldest daughter his successor, the nation might have rallied around this young woman, with the result perhaps that there would have been no revolution, and that Olga would have proved herself as great as Catherine without Catherine's vices.

The Grand Duchesses were, at the time of their death, in the full glory of young womanhood, but the face of their mother bore those tragic signs of middle age which she could no longer conceal by elaborate coiffures, perfect dress, and a dazzling display of pearls calculated to withdraw the spectator's eye from the faded face. The Empress had a passion for jewelry, which was carried so far in 1906, when I lived in Petrograd, that it was thought to indicate monomania. This helps to explain why she brought so much jewelry with her into exile.

Yurovsky's drowning of the Tsar's last words reminds us of how Santerre cried out with uplifted hand "Tambours!" at the execution of Louis the Sixteenth, in order to drown the voice of the condemned King.

## LENIN

Lenin's strong convictions, combined with his extreme narrowness of mind, make him a terrible antagonist. His convictions are so strong that all reasoning is lost on him, and he has none of that foresight which leads to doubt. He has more than once shown that he is ready to sacrifice himself for his ideas, and that the very instinct of self-preservation is obliterated in him. This intensity of faith gives great power of suggestion to his words, and leads to his imposing himself in an astonishing manner on the Communist party. He has succeeded in arousing in their souls that formidable force known as Faith, the most tremendous of all forces at the disposal of humanity. Like all crowds, the Communist party bows to strength of will, energy, and conviction.



In comparison with Lenin, Lloyd George is only a subtle rhetorician without moral earnestness or strong convictions.

Lenin is hypnotized by the philosophical ideas of Marx, and is employing his gigantic propaganda organization to spread them, exactly as Robespierre was hypnotized by the philosophical ideas of Rousseau, and employed the propaganda organization of the French Republic to make them known. He believes that he has the secret of earthly happiness, and people who believe very strongly that they are in possession of the secret of earthly or eternal happiness inevitably display intolerance and fanaticism, accompanied by a blind submission to a political or religious formula, an inability to discuss that formula, a tendency to regard as enemies all those who refuse to accept it, and an intense itch for propaganda.

Despite his warlike panoply and his constant desire to overawe, the ex-Kaiser represented a lesser danger to the world than does Lenin with his unassuming manner, his unfashionable exterior, and the real modesty with which he regards himself as merely the foam on top of a great seismic wave, with whose formation he had nothing to do. As a matter of fact, he is perhaps the most startling figure which has appeared in the world during this century, and there is more of peril to civilization in his hard laugh than there was in all the theatrical mouthings of the Kaiser, or in all the barbaric militarism of Peter and Catherine. Even now the cloaked and belted figure of Wilhelm is gradually becoming transformed before our eyes into that of a respectable country gentleman, whose end will probably be peaceful and even edifying. But the awful fascination exercised over men's minds by the Red Tsar, by this terrible *homme qui rit* of these apocalyptic times, increases daily, as he comes more and more within the dark shadow of the unknown, unavoidable cataclysm in which he will finally go down, dragging perhaps our civilization with him. Meanwhile, however, the world, having spent all its strength in overthrowing Prussianism, finds itself naked and unarmed in front of a far greater menace.

The following is a specimen of Lenin's hard style of eloquence: "I read in the English newspapers that all the victories of the Bolsheviks are due to their propaganda. This is very flattering, but, as a matter of fact, the people of Siberia and of South Russia have had a lengthy experience of both Red and White Propaganda, and they have apparently made up their minds that the Red Propaganda is true and the White Propaganda untrue. The Red Propaganda was not more skilful than the White Propaganda, backed up as the latter was by the unlimited paper and the inexhaustible technical resources of England, France, and America. The only advantage it had was that it was true. In the judgment of the people the actions of Kolchak and Denikin spoke louder than their propaganda, and gave that propaganda the lie. As Denikin advanced, the great landowners

by whom he was surrounded took possession of their estates again, and chased away the peasants, despite all Denikin's proclamations to the effect that he would let the peasants keep the land which they had taken."

Another specimen:

"Formerly it was said, 'Each for himself and God for us all,' and how much suffering did not the application of this principle cause in the world! Our motto is: 'Each for all, and without God we will nevertheless go forward.' . . . We used to send 700 million poods of bread out of this country every year, and this export trade enriched a small group of Russian and foreign millionaires, but left the Russian workmen and peasants starving. That system is bad on the face of it, and it will now be changed. In future the Russian workmen and peasants will first be fed, and if there is anything left over it will be exported abroad."

As a final example of Lenin's style I shall quote from the *Social-Democrat* of November 11, 1914, his statement of the position he took up during the Great War:

"The duty of the Socialist during the armed Imperialistic conflict of the *bourgeoisie* of all nations is to preach the Class War, and to do all that in him lies to convert this struggle of the nations into universal Civil Strife. Down with the sentimental, foolish, and stupid cry of 'Peace at any price!' Let us raise aloft the banners of civil war!"

It almost seems at times as if, in Lenin, Antichrist had at last appeared on earth. Christ's greatest commandment was love; Lenin's is hate. He teaches workmen to hate their employers, peasants to hate their landlords, Jews to hate Christians, soldiers and sailors to hate officers, laymen to hate priests, citizens to hate their magistrates, apprentices to hate their masters, shoppers to hate shopkeepers, the poor to hate those who are less poor, the ignorant to hate those who are less ignorant. And there is no denying the fact that, in the present period of universal bitterness and universal disillusion, of intense hatred among subject peoples for their masters, among beaten nations for their conquerors, and, even among conquerors for each other, he has hit upon a principle of action which may lead to the undermining and collapse of our whole civilization. The distrust and suspicion with which he is inoculating Europe, at a time when Christian charity and mutual confidence are absolutely necessary, may very well be the end of Europe; and, unfortunately, he is assisted very much by the fact that it is easier to make men hate than love, criticize than approve, distrust than confide; by the discovery of obvious defects in our economic system, and, worst of all, by a continual succession of mistakes and miscalculations on the part of the statesmen who are opposed to him.

## THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

Russia is ruled by a Committee rather than by a party; and a Committee has always been the most impersonal, and, in consequence, the most oppressive form of tyranny, owing to the fact that the leaders who direct it are freed from all responsibility, and are in a position to do just as they please, because they are supposed to speak and act in the name of a collectivity. The Committees of the French Revolution carried out proscriptions such as the most savage tyrant never ventured upon, and, owing to the ignorance of the lower classes in Russia and the apathy of the upper classes, the Bolshevik Committee has been able to perpetrate atrocities such as even Robespierre would have boggled at. The Bolshevik Government is irresponsible, impersonal, and perpetual; and no more oppressive despotism could be imagined.

To look at it from a somewhat different angle, its principal weakness is that it contains too many orators and writers, and too few technical and administrative experts, and that it has to deal with a disorganization worse even than the disorganization of Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. The majority of the technical experts are not in sympathy with Bolshevism. Many of them are strongly opposed to it. Some are dull, old, routine, red-tape bureaucrats handed down from Tsarist days, and constituting a drag rather than an assistance, but it is impossible for the Reds to dispense with them at the present moment owing to their special knowledge and their extensive experience. Even if specialists arise from the midst of the Proletariat, as Lenin says they will, they also will be anti-Bolshevik. It is impossible for them to be otherwise. Lenin's power really rests on the great mass of skilled and unskilled labour. The shock-battalions which overcame Denikin, Yudenich, and Kolchak were composed almost entirely of skilled workmen, but they are rapidly ceasing to be workmen and are becoming professional soldiers or office-holders.

It is surprising how many of the Russian revolutionaries employed by the Soviet are not Bolsheviks: in fact, it is difficult to find a thorough Bolshevik among them. They defend themselves, however, by saying that they had to support Lenin because he was the only man capable of overthrowing Kerensky, who was such a weak doctrinaire that, if he had not been upset by a Revolution from the Left, he would certainly have been unseated by a Counter-Revolution from the Right. They also maintain that the Russian Revolution could not possibly have been a direct movement from an abnormal state of things, such as existed under the Tsardom, to a normal condition with liberty for all. The previous abnormality rendered unavoidable the creation of a temporary abnormality in the opposite direction. The popular ignorance was so great, and the disorganization of

life so profound, that people would simply not have worked at all had a dictatorship of the Proletariat not been established. The Social-Revolutionaries with their pathetic belief in the peasant as opposed to the workman, their weak philanthropy, and their endless talking and theorizing, joined to a total incapacity for action and a fixed delusion in favour of giving complete liberty to everybody, would have lost for Russia the fruits of the first Revolution. The Social-Revolutionaries were dreamers, who thought they could build an enduring structure on the ancient Socialism of the Russian peasant, on that Socialism which was shown in the *mir*. But the *mir* no longer exists, nor the Socialism of the peasant either. They would have built on sand. Only the Bolsheviks, that is, the workmen themselves, could ever have made a tired, hungry, and disorganized Proletariat toil for ten hours a day.

My own strongest objection to Bolshevism is that its existence in Russia strengthens reaction in every other country, and continues the abnormal situation brought about in the domestic politics of those countries by the war.

#### MY BOLSHEVIK TRAVELLING COMPANIONS

On the occasion of my journey to Ekaterinburg with Soviet engineers, I found that, after the train started, my companions solemnly formed themselves into what they called a Soviet, but which I would call an ordinary mess, and formally invited me to join, which, of course, I did. Communistic ideas run in this way through all the life of the good Bolshevik, but the result is rather amusing than otherwise. I have often heard a Red say, out of habit, to a comrade, "This is mine"; and the reply, given in the voice of a fanatic stating a religious dogma, was always the same: "It is not yours. It is ours. There is no longer private property." As a matter of fact, there *was* private property; each Bolshevik had at least his own clothes, while many of them had much more property which was absolutely his own.

I found some of my companions on this journey wearing honest Bradford cloth, and eating with trusty Sheffield steel which, being smiths themselves and having had lamentable experience of Japanese knives, they thoroughly appreciated. Among the Russian workmen the manufactured products of Great Britain have done more, in my opinion, to sustain a belief in England's greatness than all the victories of Nelson and all the glory of our Old Nobility. The Bolsheviks say that the workmen who make such excellent wares will one day rule England and be their brothers.

As I have just alluded to dress, I might here remark that, if Bolshevism continues much longer, there is a serious likelihood of the Russians reverting to the ancient Scythian costume of skins.

I have seen very many peasants wearing trousers made out of ordinary sacking with the name of some guano firm on the seat.

We had, by the way, as a servant in our train a most respectable-looking individual with mutton-chop whiskers, whom at first, despite my constant practice to think evil of nobody, I was inclined to put down as having been an habitual lawyer. On being jokingly addressed once as "old *bourgeois*," this respectable-looking personage fairly exploded with wrath. "Even in jest," he spluttered, "you should not apply that term to any human being."

But, on the other hand, as I afterwards discovered in Moscow, the term "Tavarisch" (Comrade) has become a term of contempt among the technical and political experts employed by the Reds. To them it means an unkempt, unshaven person enveloped in a dirty sheepskin coat and without the slightest knowledge or experience to fit him for the post into which he has been pitchforked.

### THE RED LABOUR ARMY

All the news in the *Tocsin*, the organ of the Red Labour Army, was set out just as war news used to be set out in the English newspapers during the Great War. Under the general heading of "News from the Front," there was a collection of dispatches from the different Labour "Fronts," and one of the early issues of the *Tocsin* bore, as a "screaming" headline, the words, "Our First Victory." Beneath it was a triumphant account of the repair by the Red Labour Army of a bridge over the Kama at Perm, which the retreating Whites had blown up. The Red journalists go on the principle that "peace hath her victories, no less renowned than war," and accordingly celebrate the battles of peace with headlines as large as those which announced in English newspapers the Battle of the Marne.

I might here add that in those newspapers they have even got a "Roll of Honour," containing the names of workmen who died in mines, factories, and hospitals. For example, an account of a Red soldier who died while carrying out anti-typhus measures was headed: "The First Victim in the Great War. Soldier Dies while Fighting the Worst Enemy of the Republic."

The Bolsheviks are trying to arouse as much enthusiasm among boys over industrial triumphs as the militarists used to arouse among boys over military triumphs. Pictures of charging cavalry are replaced in boys' magazines by pictures of miners saving entombed comrades. Instead of soldiers charging trenches, happy workmen charge into their own factories, eager to resume work. Blazing camp-fires on the battlefield are replaced by the red glow of colossal blast-furnaces. A youth hammering at an agricultural instrument on an anvil replaces the youth in military dress who hammers in an opponent's head with the butt-end of

his rifle. There is a glorification in boys' papers, not of piracy, but of farming; not of mechanism for destroying life, but of mechanism for preserving it and adding to its comfort.

### WORKMEN IN FACTORIES

Trotsky has admitted that 30 per cent. of the skilled workmen in industrial areas have fled to the villages, where most of them opened little one-man repairing shops. Mr. Keeley, an American engineer, who was allowed to make very careful investigations, discovered the exact percentage to be 60. In one Moscow factory which he visited, Mr. Keeley found the names of 1,600 workmen inscribed in the books, but over 400 of these were permanently engaged on "political work" and never turned up at the factory, though they were paid by it. The work of the remainder was 60 per cent. below the pre-war work of the same number of men, but I am told that the same decrease of output is noticeable in Western factories.

### THE MILITARY POSITION IN SIBERIA

The only foreign mercenaries I saw in the Red Army were (1) an International Battalion in process of formation at Ekaterinburg. It was composed of ex-prisoners of war—Magyars, Letts, and Germans—and the British soldiers were invited to join it, but did not do so; (2) a battalion of Chinese soldiers quartered in an extemporized barrack near the Municipal Theatre in Ekaterinburg. They were all coolies who had been brought into Russia by the Imperial Government to constitute a Labour Battalion during the Great War, and who, after the war, were prevented by the Allies from returning to China. They are armed, equipped, and drilled in the Russian fashion, and have fought on various fronts, but when I saw them they were not doing military work, being only employed in shovelling snow from the railway track. It would be unjust to say that they are especially feocious, or that they are the mainstay of the Soviet Government<sup>r</sup>

At Novo-Nikolaevsk, on my return journey with the Reds, I found the German ex-Rittmeister, von Blücher, acting as commander of the 30th Division, which was stationed at Novo-Nikolaevsk, and as military commandant of the town. It was lucky for us that he was not in command of the force which captured us, for he is anti-English, and, being a Prussian, holds strict views about the treatment of war prisoners. He is a capable officer, however, and his relegation to the rear is probably due to Communist distrust of military talent even among themselves.

The 3rd Army is at Ekaterinburg, and is now the 1st Labour Army. All the houses on Lenin Street, the principal street, from the Café "Orange" to the house opposite the town theatre, are

occupied by the barracks and offices of a semi-military, semi-police force, which is now to be met with in all the large towns of Russia, and which is known as "the Force for the Internal Defence of the Republic." The soldiers of this battalion fall in every morning, punctually at 9 a.m., in the street outside their quarters. They are inspected, and, after inspection, they divide into half a dozen different groups, and march off in good order to different parts of the town. They are well armed with Russian rifles, have plenty of ammunition, and are well dressed. This battalion remains under arms, and is not to be incorporated in the Labour Army. All the other troops in town are comfortably housed in barracks, well fed, well equipped, and well armed. The same remark applies to the troops in Omsk and Novo-Nikolaevsk. There were no troops in Taiga when I went through, all of them having moved east. The G.H.Q. 5th Army was at Tomsk, but preparations were being made for its reception in Krasnoyarsk on January 28, the day I left that town. Those entrusted with making these preparations said that the whole 5th Army was coming to Krasnoyarsk, and that they would remain four days there and then move east. An artillery brigade, several squadrons of cavalry, and a detachment of military engineers were also expected in Krasnoyarsk. At Omsk and Novo-Nikolaevsk I saw four or five military trains conveying Red troops eastwards. The Reds are certainly sending large forces into Eastern Siberia, and they are just as certainly sending on in advance Commissars provided with false passports, who say that they will easily undermine and overthrow the S.R. republics in Eastern Siberia. I met one of those envoys at the house of a Bolshevik functionary in Krasnoyarsk. He was leaving for Vladivostock the same day.

Besides the "Force for the Internal Defence of the Republic," each town has a large police force, but it is called a "National Militia." These forces, taken together, should be strong enough to maintain internal order.

The map, which was shown me to illustrate Trotsky's grandiose scheme for converting an army of soldiers into an army of labourers, gave the location of all the Red troops in the Urals. They stretch, roughly speaking, from Ekaterinburg to Cheliabinsk, and include a detachment of about 5,000 Red cavalry whose horses were being used, on February 1, to carry wood to the railway line and to cart away snow. The horsemen themselves were employed in similar work. Several military engineering units were stationed at Zlatoust and another industrial town in the Urals, and were helping to repair the railway and the factories, but Trotsky refused to let them be broken up, though only in that way could their technical experience be fully utilized. A Bolshevik official pointed out to me some soldiers belonging to a unit which had come from Orenburg, and drew my attention to the fact that they were being kept together so as to be pre-

pared in case of any aggression from the direction of India or Persia.

In the Krasnoyarsk, Minusinsk, Irkutsk, and Trans-Baikal regions, the Reds are encouraging the formation of partisan bands, strictly subordinate to them. S. Mamantov, the leader of the Minusinsk partisans, says that he is at the head of 10,000 men, armed entirely with rifles taken from trains which he held up. Those rifles were, he thinks, being sent by the English, French, and Japanese, to Kolchak at Omsk. There is now a plentiful supply of arms and ammunition in Siberia, not only for the regular Red Army, but also for all the partisan bands which the Soviet Government may raise. On the other hand, these arms may be ultimately turned against the Reds, for Bolshevism has swallowed in Siberia more White troops than it can ever digest, and in some towns I could hardly tell whether I was amongst Bolshevik or anti-Bolshevik soldiers. Besides, the Red Army organization leaks very much. All the way from Omsk to Ekaterinburg Red stragglers tried to board trains, and were repulsed from them with far more brusqueness than was ever shown to the White stragglers boarding Kolchak's trains. Their condition in the bitterly cold weather was pitiable. They had no food, were not allowed to sleep in the stations or in the towns, and proposed to travel on foot to destinations as distant as the Volga and beyond. On expressing my surprise once to a Commissar at the roughness with which he treated soldiers and workmen, I was told that only the representative of a Workers' Government could act in that manner towards lazy members of the Proletariat. "In England," quoth this Commissar, "your capitalist Government is afraid of the workmen, and consequently it is always flattering them, throwing them sops, and making them promises which it can never fulfil. By this means it is trying to postpone the evil day when the workers will seize everything, but here the workers *have* seized everything, and we, as their representatives, have a perfect right to speak in a tone of authority to railwaymen, factory-hands, and soldiers, who are not doing their duty to the State."

### THE EDUCATION OF THE PROLETARIAT

In the chapter entitled "Trotsky in Ekaterinburg," I speak of "butchers' boys who had qualified for professorships."

A typical paragraph of this kind, which was headed "A Peasant's Son," tells how Ivan Polukarov, the son of a Siberian peasant, entered the Red Academy of the General Staff two years ago when he was twenty-three, and became, at the end of that time, an able Staff officer. The papers are full of news about the opening of new schools for workmen by the Soviet Government and the Professional Unions. There are long descriptions of a school for artists opened recently at Nizhni-Novgorod—free

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courses in studio work, drawing, painting, and sculpture; school for agricultural experts opened at Tambov—220 students; handicraft schools in Spassky (Ryzansky Government) for bookbinders, coopers, and basket-makers. It is announced that all the Russian factories are working overtime, and that the workmen are giving the money thus earned to the Red Army, which also receives from the Government the articles thus manufactured. I know, however, that the number of Russian factories which are doing any work at all is very negligible. There is certainly a great intellectual ferment, but not much solid work is done owing, as the Reds themselves confessed to me, to the following reasons: (1) There are too many Government departments, and they only get in one another's way; (2) the departmental machinery is excessively complicated; (3) the departmental chiefs waste their time in letting crowds of people see them, and have consequently no time to do any real work; (4) heads of departments draw up ambitious programmes which are "scrapped" on account of those heads being very frequently changed; (5) a great waste of energy in all directions and a great overlapping of work. Almost everything of technical or scientific value which the Bolsheviki have done is based on plans, specifications, and preparatory work which were carried out under the Old Régime. All the technical reports which I saw the Bolshevik chiefs working on had been compiled in the time of the Tsar.

My eye was once caught by the following headline in a Bolshevik newspaper: "Illiteracy Must No Longer Exist." The article of which it was the caption told of how the Soviet of Krasnokokshaisky Uyezd, Kazunsky Government, had decided "to abolish illiteracy in the case of all persons of both sexes between the ages of seventeen and fifty." As there were not enough teachers to carry out this laudable decree, literate peasants were made to teach the illiterates. This "revolt against illiteracy," as the Bolsheviki call it, is common all over Russia, and it is considered such a disgrace for a soldier in the Red Army to be unable to read and write that comrades able to do so teach him.

A Commissar once described to me the career of Budyonin, the Red cavalry leader who was once an officer's batman and is now one of the Soviet's most successful Generals. "There is always," he added, "at least as much talent in the masses as in an equal number of the classes; and, owing to their great numerical superiority, the whole bulk of the masses have far more talent latent in them than all the *bourgeoisie* and aristocracy put together. We are basing our whole system of government on that principle, and the facts of life are on our side. Take England. A son of the governing classes there gets an expensive education at Oxford, and may, when he leaves Oxford, enter public life and rise easily, if he has even moderate talent, to the top of the tree. A poor man, though he may have far greater talent, has

nothing like the same chance. Ill-educated and handicapped, he struggles till he is forty at making himself financially independent; and at forty his spirit is broken and he cannot do much. There are exceptions, of course, but only a fool will say that in England the son of a poor man has, as a rule, an equal chance with a scion of your 'great governing families.' Every revolution proves that what you call 'the lower classes' is an inexhaustible reservoir of talent, and that the oligarchs are generally dull, pompous, and selfish old men whose master passion in life is to keep the monopoly of power as much as possible in their own families. The present decay of governmental authority in capitalist countries is partly due to the fact that, under the extreme stress of the war, the various imperialistic Governments were compelled to let outsiders have access to their political and military secrets, and to see the various Grand Lamas hidden away in the recesses of their Courts, Cabinets, and War Offices, with the result that a large number of honest men are disgusted by the fools they met with in high places and by the idiocy of the policies which those fools pursued. The High Priests of the Temple of Capitalism are now trying to replace the veil that hid the faces of those oracles from the profane gaze of the vulgar, but it is too late. The spell is broken; the sordid secrets are revealed; and the end of it all will most certainly be—Bolshevism.

"Compare the disgusting flabbiness of the Romanovs and of the 'gentry,' officer, and *bourgeois* classes in this country with the alertness and resolution of the Russian workmen.

"You English think that a cavalry leader like Haig can only arise in an aristocratic family. The Russian Imperialists thought so too, and therefore they selected Mamontov to lead Denikin's cavalry. We opposed to him Budyonin, an officer's batman, who soon swept Mamontov off the face of the earth. You say that Budyonin is no longer one of the people, that he must necessarily develop like Murat, Hector MacDonald, Sir William Robertson, and other talented plebeians, and join a higher class. But he will do nothing of the kind, for he is a strong Bolshevik, and will always be one of the Proletariat. This is the difference between our revolution and all the revolutions that have gone before. Our statesmen and soldiers will always remain with the people, not only because of their own strong Communist principles, but also because, once they ceased to belong to the people, they would be destroyed either by the people or by the old gang, which having, like all *émigrés*, learnt nothing and forgotten nothing, would come back wanting their old places."

The utterer of the above tirade was M. Dovgolevsky, a Socialist who has passed most of his life in Western Europe, and who is now trying to reorganize the Russian railways. The weak point in his argument is this: The ruling class in the West may be as weak and foolish as he makes them out to be, but the same number of workmen would prove to be infinitely more corrupt.

They have already proved so in Russia. A ruling class must be raised above temptation of corruption by some kind of pride—pride of caste, pride of birth, or pride of intellect; but rule by a Proletariat or by those "Money-bags of Mammon," whom Carlyle so roundly denounced, and to which, unfortunately, we are all tending, is bound to be a corrupt and despicable kind of rule. Both the English and the German bureaucrat were comparatively honest, because they had one or other of the above kinds of pride, though in many cases they were worse off financially than if they had been in business. For the same reason the British officer at the head of a patrol generally showed more self-sacrifice than a non-commissioned officer would have done. Our British Army probably contains some of the stupidest officers and the smartest N.C.O.'s in the world, yet if the former were all displaced suddenly by the latter, as in Russia, who that knows the army can doubt that the private would suffer by the change?

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