

# THE RUSSIAN REVOLT and THE INTERNATIONAL

By G. Tchitcherine (Russian Socialist Groups).

In view of the immensity of the historical effects of the Russian Revolution, in view of the dazzling new perspectives it is opening before the development of human society, immeasurably great are the tasks facing the proletariat of Russia and its responsibility towards the workers of all countries, immeasurably great likewise is the responsibility towards the Russian proletariat which the international situation creates for the workers of other countries.

The suddenness of the "lightning" Revolution of March, 1917, the facility with which it was accomplished after many decades of titanic struggles which to numerous distant onlookers seemed hopeless for a long time to come, its completeness and the novelty of the thoroughly democratic forms of political life it brought into being, the semblance of unity of all forces of Russia in opposition to the fallen over-decayed regime which after the success of the Revolution became its idolon fori, all this conceals from the less thoughtful onlooker the unexampled complexity of the real situation in Russia and of the tasks facing the profoundly diverse actors in the great drama.

The peculiarity of Russia is the great variety of the stages of economic development co-existing in its internal structure. Modern capital in its highest concentration, world-finance and imperialism have forged their way into a land that had in many respects not proceeded very far from natural production and that hides in the immensity of its badly connected vastnesses thoroughly primitive forms of society, adjoining super-modern factories provided with the latest novelty in technical perfection. In the internal structure of the most numerous of the classes of Russia, the peasantry, we find the same complexity. Not very far behind was serfdom, a social form of the early middle ages. A few years ago, the dominant form of economy in the principal agricultural parts of Russia was still, under the cover of modern pecuniary liability, in its essence permanent labour services by the peasants to the manor not unlike those that predominated in Western Europe in the late middle ages. And at the same time the simultaneity of modern capitalism, with its laws of competition and its highly developed technical machinery, made it necessary for these same peasants, while gradually emerging from their primitive state, to adopt highly modern forms of husbandry and of combination, in the shape of the tens of thousands of productive peasant co-operatives which have covered Russia with mushroom alacrity during the last years and are now one of the backbones of the new regime. And last, but not least, modern warfare has brought together the disseminated peasants, has united them among themselves and with the industrial workers in the worm of the army, which, once revolutionized, has become a norganized body of the popular masses and an instrument of their political self-expression, while remaining at the same time also an instrument of capitalist ideology and an object of imperialist hypnotising.

## THE LETTERS AND THE HYPNOTISTS

In the Russian Revolution we see in kaleidoscopic variety the fully developed industrial worker armed with the last word in class-consciousness, belonging to the Zimmerwaldian "left wing" and calling his fellow-workers of all countries to the struggle for Socialism, and we see the half-slave of yesterday enjoying the first enthusiasm of newly-

won bourgeois liberty and of the recognition of his human personality; we see the revolted peasant of the old Jacques seeking as yet to emerge into modern rural small bourgeoisie, and we see grandiose peasant-combinations with developed machinery and with an office in the Finsbury Pavement; we see great imperialist financiers and captains of industry, bourgeois Ministers with a thorough grasp of world-politics, subtle intellectuals trained in all the complicated ideas and in all the tricks of capitalist domination over the mind, and we see heroes of primitive accumulation quite similar to those of the eighteenth century in France, we see small craftsmen delighted at a freedom of movement and activity unknown to them before the Revolution.

But behind all this variety lurks financial capital, binding together the primitive and the advanced forms of economy, and exploiting for the strengthening of its own domination the ideologies of primitive bourgeois revolutionism and its naive enthusiasms. There was no unity of the society of Russia when the Revolution was made; it was a rising of the masses, the first in the whole world during the present war. When the Revolution was victorious, then came pseudo-unity. Imperialism endeavours to appropriate it, to adapt it to its own needs. Side by side with Zimmerwaldian proletarian ideology of 1917, the enthusiasms and ideas of 1793 have poured over Russia—and Imperialism grasps at them and exploits them. Primitive bourgeois revolutionism, defiling our proletarian revolutionary emblems with "patriotic" mottoes, has become an instrument of high capitalism for the establishment of the latter's domination. Behind the enthusiasm of the half-slave of yesterday, enjoying bourgeois liberty and striving to defend it against "internal and external foes" on the model of 1793, there operates capitalism, through this medium subjecting the masses to its rule and thus counteracting its real foe, the international revolutionary proletariat.

The latter is the other force behind the motley variety of the scenery, really facing Imperialism. All the various stages of development, co-existing in Russia, are bound together behind the scene by the octopus of financial capital. And all the democratic popular forces, as far as essentially opposed to oligarchical capitalist rule, can become the followers of the revolutionary proletarian force, in the measure in which it succeeds in opposing the "patriotic" capitalist hypnosis.

The Russian Revolution is a Janus. Imperialism exploits it all over the world, with its help fans war-enthusiasm in Europe and in America. In this action in Russia Imperialism operates with reminiscences of 1793, it mobilises intellectuals with their elaborate machinery of seductive ideas, honey-tongued Social-Patriotic imposters, old figurants of remote stages of the revolutionary development to whom the new problems are a book with seven seals. The future will show which force will be the stronger. Either it will be imperialism; in which case the result will be that a great new Imperialist State will increase the number of the existing imperialist States, the enthusiasms of the revolutionary moment will abate, the obsolete economic forms will soon dissolve, and a period of purely imperialist rule will have to be faced. Or the revolutionary class-conscious proletariat will be strong enough to withstand all the machinations of capitalism, will be the driving power of all the popular forces against imperialism; that will mean that a period of great revolutionary struggles will follow. The Russian Revolution is a Janus; of its two natures, which will prove the

stronger? The rulers manipulating the masses, or the masses opposing the rulers?

The outcome depends largely on our fellow-workers of other countries. If popular movements against the rulers in other countries follow the Russian Revolution, the later will pursue its revolutionary course, and this revolutionary course will be international. If the deluded masses uphold everywhere imperialism, imperialism will slowly strangle the present revolutionary manifestations in Russia, and its rule will be established for a long time to come.

## HORACE GLADSTONE TWILLEY,

Conscientious Objector to Military Service, Leicester, England.

May 25th, 1916.—Surrendered to police under protest; remanded on £20 bail for one week.

June 1st.—Handed over to military authorities; taken by force to Glen Parva Barracks.

June 2nd.—Refused to sign papers.

June 3rd.—Brought before major; again refused.

June 5th.—Brought before commanding officer; sentenced to "28 days' field punishment No 2"; in irons 2 hours daily; dragged to parade ground; refused to obey all orders.

July 3rd.—Sent to join unit at Richmond-Yorks.

July 4th.—Refused to parade; sentenced to 14 days' detention and trial by court-martial; remanded for that purpose; sent to cells at Richmond Castle.

July 12th.—Tried by District Court-Martial.

July 15th.—Sentenced to 112 days' imprisonment.

July 17th.—Taken under armed escort to H. M. Prison Durham.

August 29th.—Removed to H. M. Prison Wormwood Scrubbs, London.

August 30th.—Brought before Central Tribunal; adjudged to be a "genuine conscientious objector."

August 31st.—Returned to Durham Prison.

September 7th.—Offered, and refused, "Alternative Service" (Army Reserve, Section W.).

September 11th.—Visit from mother; 20 minutes interview allowed.

September 14th.—Given 24 hours to reconsider decision and told I would "be treated with utmost rigour of military law "if refusal persisted in; again refused.

September 18th.—Given 10 days more—again declined.

October 14th.—Handed over to escort; taken to unit at Brampton, near Rotterdam.

October 15th.—Allowed one day's freedom with mother and Wilfred (with friends) at Rotterdam.

October 16th.—Went back to camp; refused to parade; remanded for District Court-Martial; taken under escort to Pontefract Barrack.

October 20th.—District Court-Martial, Colonel Armstrong presiding; I pleaded "Not guilty"; case for prosecution "Not proved."

October 26th.—Again tried by D.C.M. before company on parade.

October 30th.—Promulgation of sentence; one year with hard labour; commuted to six months without hard labour.

November 2nd.—Taken under escort to London.

November 3rd.—Taken to Wormwood Scrubbs Prison, arriving 12 noon.

November 4th.—Again urged to accept "Home Office Scheme" "alternative service).

November 16th.—Saw our great leader, Clifford Allen.

December 21st.—Visit of mother and Wilfred.

December 25th.—Christmas Day in prison—a happy day; friends sang carols and songs throughout day outside prison walls.

January 1st, 1917.—Allowed to write to mother.

February 2nd.—Taken with 50 "absolutists" to Wandsworth Prison—"a glimpse of the throbbing world."

February 27th.—Completed 4 months of sentence; slight improvement of diet.

March 3rd.—Visit of mother and Miss Gittins.

March 27th.—Sent down for discharge; escort did not arrive; handed to Military Police; taken to Tower of London.

March 28th.—In the Tower of London; make friends with the soldiers.

March 29th.—Escort arrives at 6.30 a.m.; leaves London, St. Pancras, 9.50; met at Leicester by friends; dinner at cafe with mother and friends; taken to unit; allowed to stay right at home (joy unspeakable!).

March 30th.—Refused all orders; charged before captain and remanded for D.C.M.; placed under observation; conversation with captain; billeted at home; being released on word of honour to appear at stated times; evening at No-Conscription Fellowship Meeting.

March 31st.—Khaki discarded.

April 1st.—Visit friends in morning; speak to Sunday School in afternoon; evening at Wycliffe Church; take Communion; cordial reunion with friends.

April 2nd.—During day at unit as prisoner.

April 3rd.—Lunch with friends.

April 4th and 5th.—Visit from many comrades, relatives, and friends.

April 6th.—Told I could be sent to Glen Parva for discarding khaki; court-martial sentence, 18 months' imprisonment; taken to Welford Road Prison, Leicester, England.

G. RICHARDSON.

## AN ENEMY OF DEMOCRACY.

With the question of militarism uppermost in most men's minds, we deem it advisable to point out—that while militarism is everything that is imputed to it, it is not always a cause of the things we deplore; but invariably an effect. No doubt it is one of the greatest enemies of all true progress, but it has played a very important role in the colonization schemes of all the great powers; and has been the best friend of exploiters the world over in forcing markets for the disposal of their surplus values as well as opening up new territory for exploitation. As a factor it has played a part in all governments since the dawn of slavery up to the present time, and the function that it originally performed in sustaining the principle of slavery will unremittingly be carried on until the dawn of freedom and the coming of a true democracy.

To the ruling classes it always has been, and is to-day, the guardian angel that keeps the gates of Eden and prevents the sinners from entering into possession of their long lost heritage, which is only seen in its true colors when the exploiters fall out. "When rogues fall out honest men come into their own." A brief survey of the present struggle will suffice to prove that it is not only an instrument that can be used to defeat the ends of competitors without but can also be used to defeat the aims of the workers within its own borders. Let us not forget that the function it originally performed in the enslavement of races and the protection of stolen property, can only be abolished by the restoration of the stolen property to its rightful owners, "the common people."

Responsible Cabinet Ministers tell us that we are not waging war for purposes of conquest—but "Liberty and Democracy." Well, maybe so! but just note when the terms of peace come to be settled if we don't take our lesson from the "revised version."

Men's thoughts are much according to their inclination; their discourse and speeches according to their learning and infused opinions; but their deeds are often as they have been accustomed.—Francis Bacon.