

Attitude of Allied Diplomacy Towards Bolshevist Regime

The second installment, written by William Hard, of the experiences in Russia during the Bolshevist regime of Col. Raymond Robins, head of the American Red Cross mission, appears in the Metropolitan Magazine for July.

We extract from it the following:

The Russian army was helpless and hopeless, yes. But could some support be got from the Allies? Would the Allies promise to intervene, with help, with some sort of help, if at Moscow the Russian Soviets, instead of ratifying the peace, (of Brest Litovsk,) should repudiate it?

A memorandum was written. In it an inquiry was addressed to the Allies. Their answer belongs to the third chapter of our diplomacy in revolutionary Russia. In this second chapter there was simply the memorandum itself. It asked the Allies what they would do in certain circumstances.

The Allied Diplomatic Circles Guess Wrong Again.

But Lenin already suspected what they would do. So did Trotsky.

Trotsky had said to Robins one day:

"Haven't you Americans got a Russian Railway Mission, of Americans, somewhere?"

"Certainly."

"Where is it?"

"Nagasaki."

"Gone to Japan?"

"Yes."

"What's it doing there?"

"Eating its head off."

"Why don't you send it in here?"

"Why, Mr. Commissioner, you know there are many Americans—"

"Yes, they think I'm a German agent. Well, now, suppose I am. Just assume, for argument, that I am. You admit I have never told you I would do a thing and then failed to do it. My motives may be bad, but my actions go with my promises. Is that right?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, out of some motive, which you may assume to be bad, I am willing to share the railway system of Russia half-and-half with the United States; and if you will bring your Railway Mission into Russia I promise you that I will give its members complete authority over half the transportation of all the Russia of the Soviets."

"What do you mean—half?"

"I mean this:

"I will accept anybody you Americans want to name as your railway chief and I will make him Assistant Superintendent of Russian Ways and Communication, and his orders will be orders. Then, as well as we can, we will divide all our available transportation facilities into two equal parts. You will use your half to evacuate war supplies from the front and to carry them away into the interior, so that the Germans will not be able to get them. We will use our half, you helping us, to move our food supplies from the places where we have a surplus to the places where we have a deficit. You see?"

"Clearly. You want us Americans to reform and restore your railway system for you so that it can carry food successfully and so that you can feed your people and keep your Government going."

"Yes. But I propose to pay you in precisely the coin you most need and want. Colonel Robins, have you ever seen a gun-map of our front?"

Trotsky unrolled it before him. It showed some six hundred miles of locations of cannon and of shells—nests of cannon, dumps of shells, usable stuff, quantities of it, the material leavings of a once mighty army. It showed cannon that had never been fired—cannon new and of the latest type, with their shells beside them.

"There it all lies," said Trotsky. "It's of no more use to us. Our army does not fight in any more foreign wars just now. Lenin says the Ger-

mans will advance. If they do, they will take all that stuff. We can not move it back. We can do small things on our railways now, but not big things. Most of our technical railway managers are against us. They are against the revolution. They are sabotaging the revolution. Our railways are headless. The whole point is: our railways need new heads. Will you supply them?"

"I'll inquire."

"But be sure you make this clear: My motive, whether good or bad, is entirely selfish. I get a reorganized and effective railway system for Soviet Russia. And your motive so far as I am concerned, is entirely selfish, too. You save a mass of munitions from all possibility of falling into the hands of the Germans. You get a benefit. I get a benefit. Mutual services, mutual benefits, and no pretenses! What do you say?"

"I'll find out."

So again Robins ran to diplomatic circles with what he thought was good news and again it was received without interest. Again he heard the wisdom of the palaces. The peasants were really rising now. Lenin and Trotsky were really falling now. The real Russia, the Russia loving the whip, the Russia loving the strong man, Kaledine, Alexeiev, somebody, was asserting itself. Up from the Ukraine. Up from the Don. Up from the Urals. No use bothering with Lenin and Trotsky. No use at all.

So those guns and those shells remained where they were, and so the Germans took them and made use of them on the bodies of Frenchmen and Englishmen and Americans in the March drive and in the June drive of 1918 on the Western front; and Lenin and Trotsky were still standing.

Lenin and Trotsky came to think that the Allies would never co-operate with them for any purpose. They came to think the Allies would co-operate with any sort of White government sooner than with any sort of Red. They came to think that the Allies were not so much interested in saving Russia from Germany as in destroying the Red government at Petrograd. They thought too much, but they had much reason.

In Russia, in the territory of the old Russia, along its eastern frontier, there had emerged three governments. There was one in Finland. There was one at Petrograd. There was one in the Ukraine. The one at Petrograd was Red. The other two were White. In all three regions there was a struggle between Whites and Reds. It was the same struggle, involving everywhere the same fundamental social issue.

In Finland, the French gave formal recognition to the White government. It was a "law and order" government. It was fighting and killing Trotsky's and Lenin's Red Guards. It was a "good" government. It at once called in the Germans and accepted German troops and turned Finland into a German dependency.

In the Ukraine, the Allies gave the White government their active favor and support. This government also was a "good" and a "law and order" government. It also was fighting Lenin's and Trotsky's Red Guards. From Allied money it received an official present of 130,000,000 francs. Four days later it called in the Germans and filled the Ukraine with German troops; and, of its own free will, not under foreign compulsion, but purely for domestic Red enemies, it turned the wheat fields of all southern Russia into German wheat fields and Odessa into a German port.

The government at Petrograd, among these three governments, was the only one that was Red, but it also showed another difference. It was the only one that never called in German troops against its domestic enemies and also the only one that at any time ever did Germany the slightest harm. It did it the prodigious harm described by General Hoffmann. It rotted the fibre of imperial

loyalty out of a whole section of the German army and out of a whole section of the German population.

But this Government was as weak in physical power as it was strong in propaganda. Its army was dissolved—dissolved by economic and moral exhaustion ensuing upon intolerable effort. The American Committee on Public Information, which co-operated with the Bolshevist Government in propaganda but then became one of the Bolshevist Government's bitterest enemies, said, nevertheless:

"Russia fought on to utter exhaustion, and her army yielded only when the power of further effort was gone."

In these circumstances, looking at the three governments and observing that the Government at Petrograd was by far the largest and by far the most important, what did we do?

To the Government at Petrograd we refused to give any officers for keeping goods from going into Germany, and to the Government at Petrograd we refused to give any railway experts for the restoring of the railway system and for the transporting of munitions away into the interior and away from the Germans; but to the governments of Finland and of the Ukraine immediately thereafter outrightly pro-German, we gave diplomatic support and even military physical support in combats with the soldiers and with the friends of the Government at Petrograd. In the Ukraine, serving the Ukrainian White Government, officers appeared and munitions appeared from Allied sources and under Allied orders.

Trotsky made this fact the peroration of his angriest and greatest speech—the one in the Third Congress of Soviets at Petrograd in January. He saw the Russian Soviet Government attacked equally by the Allies and by the Germans. He ended: "And at this very moment, while the French Ambassador sits at Petrograd, we see French cannon, directed by French officers, shooting our comrades on the plains of Bessarabia."

In that atmosphere Trotsky conducted his diplomacy, and in that atmosphere Lenin went to Moscow to attend the Fourth All-Russian Congress of Soviets and to debate the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. Robins, under orders from the American Ambassador, went to Moscow, too. He had now seen another chapter of our diplomacy.

He had seen it consist of a stifled indoor contradiction. He had seen it consist of staying in Russia and of being unfriendly to the existing Russian Government. So he had seen it come to the conclusion described by General William V. Judson, when Military Attaché of the American Embassy, in a letter to the American Ambassador. General Judson said:

"All American aid to the Russian people is at a standstill, while the German emissaries are everywhere, working day and night in the interests of the enemy."

Robins clung, though, to his last hope. Lenin and Trotsky had written that memorandum. He awaited, they awaited, in Moscow, the reply from London, from Paris, from Washington.

("Bolshevist Russia" will be continued in the August Metropolitan.)

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