

# THE RED FLAG

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## Whose Death?

WHEN Italy decided to scrap a scrap of paper, and entered the war with the Allies, it was, of course, in the interest of freedom and democracy.

The events of the past week, however, seem to suggest that freedom and democracy had less to do with that decision than control of the Adriatic.

President Wilson said Italy must not have Fiume. Premier Orlando said Italy must have "Fiume or death."

Italy got Fiume notwithstanding the American veto. So all is lovely until we hear from the "young nation" our press is shedding tears over—the Jugo Slavs. (The "Sun" editor in his abysmal ignorance says Czecho-Slavs.)

The difficulty was overcome without our assistance, it being none of our business. We are indifferent alike to the claims of young nations or ancient ones. What we are interested in, however, is whose blood is to be shed.

Had the Big Three decided in their wisdom to make Fiume a free port or to hand it to the young nation, what then? Death, of course.

The members of the working class of Italy would have been called upon to do the dying. Their death would have been the dread alternative.

The peculiar feature is that no matter how many towns, on the Adriatic or elsewhere, Italy controls the miserable existence of her working class will not be alleviated one iota.

If it suited the purpose of the real owners of Italy, Rome itself would be surrendered as was Savoy and Nice in 1860, and when Garibaldi, the hero of the then aborning Italian nation came as deputy from Nice to the Italian chamber to find himself as an alien. They city of his birth had been ceded to France.

Reading some of the editorials in our local press we get the idea that Italy as a nation dates from antiquity. As a matter of historical fact it goes back no further than 1860. And the manner of its rise is as disgraceful as that of Poland's decline. Cavour said, "If we did for ourselves what we are doing for Italy we should be sad blackguards"; and Azeglio, in advising Persano, the admiral of the Italian navy, not to publish his diary, said that since Poland's partition no such "colossal blackguardism" had ever been published by any public man."

Bribery, corruption, intimidation, battle, murder, double-crossing, mobs, out-and-out lies between friends and patriots—all for Italy. And when the Bourbons had been driven from Sardinia and Naples, the Austrians from Venetia, and the temporal power of the Pope wrested from him, were the workers of Italy any better off as subjects of Victor Emmanuel than they were as subjects of Francis II., Franc Joseph, or Pope Pius IX.?

Here history steps in with one of her characteristic touches of irony. For notwithstanding the Canadian and Irish volunteers who shed their blood for their church at Rome (see Daily Province editorial, April 30), or the tremendous increase in

# Russia Under the Soviets

Being a series of articles based upon an interview with Wilfred B. Humphries, American Red Cross man, recently returned from Russia

By W. A. PRITCHARD

## II.

As a representative of the American Bureau of Publicity, and later of the American Red Cross, he was compelled by the nature of his work to travel extensively over Russia and Siberia. Thus he was afforded many excellent opportunities to study the people of Russia, their habits and outlook upon life. He found that the former owners of great estates wanted their property back, that the former officers in the Russian army wanted their uniforms and all those privileges, etc., that those uniforms symbolized, and that the manufacturers wanted their factories. There were further a number of apparently sincere people who thought the time was not ripe for the establishment of a working class state.

The Bolsheviks justified their expropriation of land on the ground that they had taken it from the descendants of expropriators, that they had taken for the people what had been taken from the people. They argued that they were confiscating only the great estates and the great industries. If, for example, a man had five thousand acres, with a house and machinery, they would let him keep the house and machinery and about enough land for his own use and they would take the rest. Their idea was that he and his family should have what they could work themselves.

"The Bolsheviks did not carry out their own land program. They didn't believe in cutting up the land into small holdings. They wanted land cultivation done scientifically, on a big scale, by the use of modern implements, including great tractors. One farm should produce sugar only, another should produce wheat. No farm should produce a dozen things. Their purpose was to take the land for the peasants, that is, for the people at large, all the people, the inheritors of the earth. They were following the spirit of the Marxian philosophy. But they found that, if they were to carry the peasants along with them, they would have to work out the principle of small holdings after the old-fashioned way, in the end the least productive. Later they hoped to be able to persuade the peasants that it is far better from every point of view to encourage agriculture on a large co-operative scale. Already the Russians had reached a pretty high development in their co-operative movements. Many years ago great co-operative creamery establishments were started by the Danes in Siberia. Now there are many enterprises in Russia and Siberia managed by the Russian workmen. The Russians seemed to have a natural liking for working together in co-operative rather than competitive ways. The Bolsheviks say that they don't want a government that shall own everything. They see the dangers that would result from this kind of bureaucracy. They wish to take over only those enterprises that have reached the monopolistic stage. The others they would like to see established on the principle of workmen's control.

the British volunteer forces following the annexation of Nice by France, it was the Battle of Sedan, 1870, which gave Italy dominion over the city of Rome. Germany's victory over France was the direct cause of Italy's consolidation.

The workers of Italy, however, had to leave its sunny skies, its cities of fame, its far-famed masterpieces of art, and slave for a dollar per day in the United States of America after Italy became a nation.

Death or Fiume! What a piece of intolerable insolence.

J.H.

## "What Is Being Done in This Direction Now?"

"In each factory there's a workmen's committee. Each committee sends delegates to a local council of workmen's control. These local councils in turn send delegates to the All Russian Congress of Workmen's Control, convened, as a rule, once every three months. A central executive committee is elected by the congress. It is called the Supreme Council of National Economy. These Soviets of Workmen's Control provide for the auditing of the books of the concerns under their jurisdiction. They exercise an intimate supervision over the finances. They are particularly solicitous about regulating the supply of raw materials, seeing that they are apportioned first to the industries socially most useful. They also look after the sanitary conditions in the factories, regulate the hours of labor and the wages, and settle labor disputes. The control is maintained on the principle that the workmen are not mere employees, they have a vital interest in their work."

## "Do You Think That the Bolsheviks Really Understand the Principles of Government?"

"They understand the principles that used to be used in government and that are still used to a considerable extent. They are opposed to them and intend to have little or nothing to do with them. All they care for is a government that shall function effectively according to the will of the people that do the work. Naturally, much that they are undertaking is experimental. But a good many of their ideas are pretty generally accepted by the economists today. For instance, they are determined to put an end to all monopolies in things that the people need. Strong as they are for the workers in an industry they don't propose to allow even the workers to prey on the public. They wouldn't let the Baku oil workers demand any price they wanted for their oil. They wouldn't let a similar injustice go on in coal or iron. They organized for the benefit of the people the steel trust of Russia. They expected to achieve all the economies that would go with a successful trust anywhere, without encouraging any of the injustices and tyrannies. The steel trust is now directly controlled by the central Soviet government and operated on a national scale. But, wherever it is possible to make a success of the co-operative system the Bolsheviks prefer it to government ownership; success from their point of view, I mean, with consideration always for the people."

## "How In So Short a Time Could the Bolsheviks Acquire Efficiency You Give Them Credit For?"

"You must bear in mind the Russian people have been preparing for the revolution many years. The Soviets first showed their strength at the time of the revolution in 1905. When it failed they were supposed to go out of existence. But, in a sense, they went on existing underground. They became powerful after the czar was overthrown. They were the actual power long before Kerensky lost his grip. The first revolution, in March, 1917, was political. The second was industrial. If the Allies and the United States had accepted the situation created by the second revolution there might have been world peace a year ago. Through Raymond Robins, head of the Red Cross in Russia, the Bolshevik government sent word to the Allies and the United States that if they would recognize the government and would promise not to try to overturn it, it would go on with the war against the Germans. This proposal wasn't even replied to. It was made during the ten days' interruption of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, when the barbarous nature of Germany's terms became evident. It is my belief that at Brest-Litovsk the German imperialists made one of their most stupid blunders. In the end it proved fatal to them."