

STUDIES CROWD PSYCHOLOGY AT A COMMUNIST GATHERING

Moustachioed Effigy of Ferocious-Looking German in Evening Dress Is Hanged on Improvised Gallows and Then Left Flapping in the Breeze.

It had been a strange interview when I first called on the doctor and announced my presence. He sat bolt upright, smiling affably, and obviously ready for every conceivable contingency. The last thing in the world he was prepared to do was to believe me. I told him all I could about his nephew and he evidently thought I was very clever to know so much. He was polite but categorical. No, sir, he knew nothing whatsoever of his nephew's movements. It was good of me to interest myself in his welfare, but he himself had ceased to be interested. I might possibly be an Englishman, as I said, but he had never heard his nephew mention an Englishman. He had no knowledge nor any desire for information as to his nephew's past, present, or future, and if his nephew had engaged in counter-revolutionary activities it was his own fault. I could not but admit the placidly and suavely with which he said all this, and cursed the disguise which made me look so unlike what I wanted the doctor to see.

"Do you speak English?" I said at last, getting exasperated. "I detected a twinge—ever so slight." "A little," he replied. "Then, damn it all, man," I exclaimed in English, rising and striking my chest with my fist. "I am a Communist, and I am not a Communist because I am an Englishman and not a Communist because I am a Russian. I am a Communist because I am a Communist." "You are something about me. Except for me he wouldn't have come back here. Didn't he tell you he was staying together at Yvonne's, and he helped dress me, how he drank all my whiskey, how—"

The doctor all at once rose from his seat. The doctor smiled at me, but did not let his lips show the beginning of the interview suddenly burst into a half-laugh. "Was it you who gave him the whiskey?" he broke in, in Russian. "Of course it was," I replied. "That settles it," he said, excitedly. "Sit down. I'll be back in a moment." He left the room, and walked quickly to the front door. Half suspecting treachery, I peered into the hall, and feeling for the small revolver I carried, I walked around to see if there were any way of escape in an emergency. The doctor opened the front door, stepped on to the landing, looking suddenly up and down the stairs, and returning, closed all the other doors in the hall before re-entering the cabinet. He walked over to where I stood and looked me straight in the face. "Why on earth didn't you come before?" he exclaimed, speaking in a low voice.

Soon became friends. Melnikoff's disappearance had been a complete mystery to him. "Zorin," which he had no means of solving. He had never heard of Zorinsky, but names meant nothing. He thought it strange that he should be demanded for Melnikoff, and thought I had been unwise to give it all in advance under any circumstances, but he was the less overjoyed to hear of the prospects of his release. After every visit to Zorinsky I called on the doctor to tell him the latest news. On this particular morning I had told him how the evening before, in a manner which I disliked intensely, Zorinsky had shaved the subject, giving evasive answers. We had passed the middle of January already, and apparently there was no information whatever as to Melnikoff's case.

"There is another thing, too, that disquiets me, doctor," I said. "Zorinsky shows undue curiosity as to where I go when I am not at his house. He happens to know the passport on which I am living, and examination of papers being so frequent, I wish I could get another one. Have you any idea what Melnikoff would do in such circumstances?" The doctor paced up and down the room. "Would you mind telling me the names of the papers?" I asked. "I showed him all my documents, including the exemption certificate, explaining how I had received them. 'Well, well, you're a Communist, certainly it is useful friend to have, I must say,' he observed, looking at the certificate, and winking his head knowingly. 'You're a Communist, I cost you much, but one may ask?'"

Casts But Little. "He himself? Nothing at all, or very little. Besides the sixty thousand, and for Melnikoff," I calculated. "I have given him a few thousand for odd expenses connected with the case; I insist on paying for meals; I gave him a few thousand for a bouquet at the Palace Square, and I was very pleased; then I have given him money for the relief of Melnikoff's sister, and—"

"For Melnikoff's sister?" ejaculated the doctor. "But he hasn't got one!" "Vot tibi na! No sister—then where did the money go? I suddenly remembered Zorinsky's question, and asked if I could give him English money. I told the doctor. "Look out, my friend, look out," he said. "Your friend is certainly a clever and a useful man. But I'm afraid you will have to go on paying for Melnikoff's non-existent sister. It would not do for him to know you had found out. As for your passport, I will ask Shura. By the way," he added, "it is 12 o'clock. Will you not be late for your precious demonstration?"

I hurried to leave. "I will let you know how things go," I said. "I will be back in two or three days." The morning was a frosty one with a bitter wind. No street cars ran on Sundays and I walked into town to the Palace Square, the great space in front of the Winter Palace, famous for another January Sunday—"Bloody Sunday"—thirteen years before. Much had been made in the press of the present occasion, and it appeared to be taken for granted that the proletariat would surge to

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Crowd Psychology. Crowd psychology, I must say, I was not at all prepared to find an important factor on all public occasions since the revolution, but appreciated to the full only by the Bolsheviks. Every crowd, whether in Russia or abroad, and attended political meetings when free speech became a possibility for members how a speaker would get up and be loudly applauded by the whole audience; then another would rise and say the precise opposite, rewarded with equally vociferous approbation. I was struck again by a man who said something totally at variance with the first two, and how the enthusiasm would increase proportionally to the bewilderment as he was actually right. The crowd were just like little children. Totally unaccustomed to free speech, they appeared to imagine that anything who spoke must ipso facto be right. But just when the people, after the Bolshevik coup d'état, were beginning to demand reason and tolerance and deeds for promises, down came a super-Tsarist Bolshevik candidate, the huge candle-snuffer and clapping himself on the chest of public criticism, snuffed it out altogether.

At length an automobile dashed up, and amid faint cheers and to the accompaniment of bugles, Zinovief, dressed in the uniform of a Soviet, alighted and mounted the tribune. Zinovief, whose real name is Apfelbaum, is a very important Bolshevik leader. He is a considered one of the greatest orators of the Communist party, and now occupies the proud position of president of the Third International. The institution that is to effect the world revolution. It is his oratorical skill rather than his administrative ability that has made Zinovief's prominence. His rhetoric is of a peculiar order. He is unrivaled in his appeal to the ignorant mob, not judging by the specific angle in which he speaks, and on no thinking audience could he produce any impression beyond that of a man who is unconcerned with the world. He is a coward, shirked office in November, 1917, fearing the instability of the Bolshevik coup, and since then he has been the advocate of all the insane aspects of Bolshevism, and is always the first to lose his head and fly into a panic when danger-clouds appear on any horizon.

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Soviet President. The next speaker was more novel—Herr Otto Pertz, president of the German Soviet of Petrograd. Why a German Soviet president should live and move and have its being in Petrograd, or what its functions were, nobody seemed to know. The coming age of universal peace and brotherhood appeared to be above criticism and were always a mystery. Herr Otto Pertz was tall, clean shaven, Germanly tidy, and could not speak Russian. "Genossen! heute feiern wir," he began, and proceeded to laud the memory of the fallen hero, and to foretell the coming social revolution in Germany. The last thing I heard of the speaker was that within a week or two Spartacus (the German Bolshevik group), with a successful seizure power in Berlin, would join in a triumphant and indisoluble alliance with the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.

As Otto Pertz commenced his oration a neatly dressed little lady of about fifty, who stood at my side near the foot of the tribune, looked up eagerly at the speaker. Her eyes shone brightly and her breath came quickly. Seeing I had noticed her, she said timidly, "Spricht er nicht gut?" "Sagen Sie doch, spricht er nicht gut?" To which I of course replied, "Sehr gut." She relaxed happily into an admiration of Otto, murmuring now and again, "Ach! es ist doch wahr, nicht?" with which sentiment also I would agree.

Soldiers Shiver. The crowd listened patiently, as the Russian crowd always listen, whoever speaks, and on whatever subject. The soldiers shivered and wondered what the speaker was talking about. His speech was not translated. But when Otto Pertz ceased there was a great outburst of cheering. For some moments I was at a loss as to what was in progress, until at last a passage was made and, borne on valiant communist shoulders, a guy was

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Crowd Psychology. Crowd psychology, I must say, I was not at all prepared to find an important factor on all public occasions since the revolution, but appreciated to the full only by the Bolsheviks. Every crowd, whether in Russia or abroad, and attended political meetings when free speech became a possibility for members how a speaker would get up and be loudly applauded by the whole audience; then another would rise and say the precise opposite, rewarded with equally vociferous approbation. I was struck again by a man who said something totally at variance with the first two, and how the enthusiasm would increase proportionally to the bewilderment as he was actually right. The crowd were just like little children. Totally unaccustomed to free speech, they appeared to imagine that anything who spoke must ipso facto be right. But just when the people, after the Bolshevik coup d'état, were beginning to demand reason and tolerance and deeds for promises, down came a super-Tsarist Bolshevik candidate, the huge candle-snuffer and clapping himself on the chest of public criticism, snuffed it out altogether.

At length an automobile dashed up, and amid faint cheers and to the accompaniment of bugles, Zinovief, dressed in the uniform of a Soviet, alighted and mounted the tribune. Zinovief, whose real name is Apfelbaum, is a very important Bolshevik leader. He is a considered one of the greatest orators of the Communist party, and now occupies the proud position of president of the Third International. The institution that is to effect the world revolution. It is his oratorical skill rather than his administrative ability that has made Zinovief's prominence. His rhetoric is of a peculiar order. He is unrivaled in his appeal to the ignorant mob, not judging by the specific angle in which he speaks, and on no thinking audience could he produce any impression beyond that of a man who is unconcerned with the world. He is a coward, shirked office in November, 1917, fearing the instability of the Bolshevik coup, and since then he has been the advocate of all the insane aspects of Bolshevism, and is always the first to lose his head and fly into a panic when danger-clouds appear on any horizon.

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