

RUSSIAN CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT PASSING THROUGH SERIOUS CRISIS

Communists Declare They Are Improving Co-operatives and Delivering it From Capitalistic and Bourgeois Super-Growth.

That Bolshevism is destroying the Russian co-operative movement is the opinion of W. Sellheim expressed in an article in the International Co-operative Bulletin. "The Russian co-operative movement," he writes, "is passing through a serious crisis. The Communist Party which is in power in Russia now, finds that the old co-operative movement is no longer constructed on new lines in conformity with the new Communist order of life."

"Having full power, the Communist Party is now carrying out the reconstruction of co-operation. In doing so the Communists declare that they are not destroying the co-operative movement, but are fighting against it, but are simply improving it, and delivering it from capitalistic and bourgeois super-growth."

"Co-operatives and Socialist co-operatives, who have always looked upon co-operation as a way toward Socialism, find that the measures of the Communist government are not only militating against the co-operative movement, but are destroying it at its very roots. Instead of a live organization, capable of developing and acting, the co-operative movement is being reduced to a mere mechanism, deprived of motive power, and, therefore, doomed. This causes irreparable loss to the economy of the country and to the interests of the laboring people. An economic system built upon such foundations cannot work productively, just as a mechanism in the construction of which the fundamental laws of mechanics have been ignored, cannot work."

Service to the Community. Mr. Sellheim then tells how Russian co-operators, while submitting to force, continued to work in the old co-operative organizations, making full use of their knowledge and experience in order that, in face of the unfavorable conditions, the co-operative movement might be made to render the greatest service to the community, and to prevent, if possible, the economic collapse of the country.

"To avoid misunderstanding, it is necessary to make the reservation that co-operation, as a definite form, as a system, or method of social economy, leading to Socialism, is in the least touch the question of the attitude toward the Soviet power in general. In the purely political domain the co-operative movement, as a rule, remains neutral, and in the struggle for or against the Soviet power it does not wish to take part."

Distribution Carried On. A few examples of Government interference in the self-government of the co-operative movement, and the article concludes, "The role and functions of co-operative societies, or consumer communities, of the provincial unions and Centrocosses have been reduced, or, more correctly, are to be reduced, exclusively to the task of distribution of goods, with a few exceptions, are placed outside the scope of the co-operative movement. According to the scheme, the 'reformed' co-operative societies must constitute a distributive machinery for the distribution of these goods and products which will be supplied to them by state institutions. All the manufacturing enterprises which were created by and belong to the co-operative movement, such as factories, workshops, etc., are to be transferred to the corresponding Government centers. The distributive co-opera-

tive machinery may be commissioned by the state to prepare goods on contract, and such products and goods prepared for the amount of the state are handed to the state supply and economic institutions, which may hand them over in bulk to the distributive machinery for distribution amongst the population."

HEAVY INCREASE IN DEATH RATE AMONG INFANTS

Forty Per Cent. Higher in Vienna Than During the Previous Year.

An increase of 40 per cent. in the death rate of children under one year of age in Vienna is shown in a report made by the American Red Cross, which has reached Paris, according to a special cable to the Gazette. The report gives the official vital statistics for Vienna for the first six months of the current year, and indicates a large excess of deaths over births. This excess is 6,443 without the inclusion of nearly 2,500 children who died in their first year. The death of infants in 1919 were about 3,000, and if the infant mortality continues at the same rate for the second six months of the year, the total for 1920 will show a total of about 5,000 deaths. In the first six months the death rate was more than 18 per cent.

These figures show that the situation in Vienna is more serious than ever, in spite of the efforts of the authorities to combat infant mortality. At the same time the birth rate is increasing for the first time since 1912.

The situation in other parts of the country is reported to be becoming better than in Vienna, and at Graz, a city of 177,000 inhabitants, on the Hungarian frontier, the vital statistics show a very considerable improvement, thanks to the efforts that have been made to combat tuberculosis and improve food conditions for children. The "Save the Children Fund" have inaugurated a campaign in Canada to help these unfortunate children in war-stricken Europe. The "Save the Children Fund" hope to raise \$500,000 in Canada by Christmas. Your small donation will help. Send them to Miss A. E. Windsor, care of S. T. Aiken, 497 Yonge street, Toronto. They will be most gratefully received and promptly recognized.

"P. R." GROWING IN FAVOR.

Proportional Representation is becoming more popular daily. Requests for information are being received from various organizations in all parts of Canada. During the past week Mr. Donald Hooper, secretary of the Proportional Representation Committee of Canada, explained the system to the Ottawa Women's Club and will, during the month of November, explain the system to the Hamilton Chambers of Commerce.

The Ontario and Alberta Governments are enquiring into the system. Manitoba has already given it a trial and has found it the best possible system for renewing faith

Shall We Abolish Parliament?

By H. J. Mosby.

We live in momentous times. The history of these days will be of extraordinary interest to future generations. Long established institutions are being swept away in the maelstrom which has followed the war, and cherished traditions are in danger of extinction. Few can say whether the ultimate tendency of present events is for good or ill; of one thing only can we be sure—the whole structure of society is undergoing a complete change.

In all ages there has been a group who have gone on ahead of the rest; pioneers who have paved the way for the mass of struggling humanity in the rear. In all ages, too, there have been those who have imagined themselves to be advanced, who have, in fact, had an entirely reactionary influence. The present epoch in the world's history is no exception. We stand today upon shifting sands. We hardly know what tomorrow will bring forth. We are divided into factions, carrying on incessant internecine strife. Yet amidst the welter of opinions and the babel of tongues there are two main currents of opinion. On the one hand, we have the vast mass of the people who desire only order and safety, and the preservation of authority and security and true democratic advancement, and on the other, we have a minority of extremists who are working for a completely fresh organization—or lack of organization—of society.

Recently a fresh move was made by this minority in Gt. Britain in the shape of the formation of a species of cabinet which claims to represent the vast majority of the working classes—the Council of Action, as it is grandiloquently called. The formation of this body is noteworthy from the point of view that it represents a definite step which has been taken towards the overthrow of the authority of Parliament. In other words, it marks a definite challenge to the principle of democracy. The situation today is that we have reached a stage when the minority of extremists have thrown down the gauntlet definitely to the traditional government of the country.

It is interesting to note the salient points in the evolution of the Parliamentary system.

The Evolution of Parliament.

At the time of the Norman Conquest the country was governed and public affairs were administered by the lords of the manor, who derived their authority direct from the King, who was the supreme arbiter of the national decisions. As time passed, however, the various kings lost a considerable amount of their authority to the barons, or lords of the manor, who became to a great extent supreme lords in their own domains and merely yielded certain taxes and services to the sovereign.

In due course there grew up a baronial party in opposition to the king, and this opposition culminated in the reign of John in the demand for the signing of Magna Charta. The barons were forced into co-operating with each other against the king by reason of his tyranny and misrule. As they were the strongest, and practically the only class in the country capable of expressing their opinions, the duty of making the king, who was the embodiment of royal authority, devolved upon them. The rising in 1215, which forced John to sign the Charter which set out the rights of all classes, was a national rising. It was the first real expression—however incomplete it might have been—of the national consciousness. It is from this year, therefore, that we must date the awakening of the nation to the necessity of the taking some part in government; and although the barons merely represented the aristocracy of the country, they performed a useful service in taking the lead in what was to develop into a long and bitter struggle for representative government.

It was fifty years later that Simon de Montfort, finding himself the leader of another revolt against

royal tyranny and incompetence, called the first Parliament in British history which could in any sense be called representative. The lords, the allies and the boroughs were represented in addition to the clergy and the barons, and by virtue of the close co-operation which such a council engendered between all classes de Montfort was for some time enabled to maintain his government. It will be seen, therefore, that the whole nation began to send representatives to a common council or Parliament in order to concert measures for protection against a national danger. In other words, the people, or the masses, who were articulate, revolted against tyranny, and elected as their real government, a council nearly representative as they could make it.

It would take too much space to trace the history of Parliament through centuries in detail, but the first called his Parliament for the purpose of voting supplies for the war with France, and was compelled to transfer some of his privileges and authority to it in exchange. So almost every king was compelled to call a Parliament in order to obtain money, and each time more and more authority was transferred to the representatives of the people, until finally Parliament became stronger than the king, and was recognized as the guardian of the public purse.

It is clear, therefore, that Parliamentary Government became necessary in order to conduct the affairs of the State in an orderly and businesslike manner, and in order to protect the people against tyranny.

Parliament was necessary because it was the only means through which the people could express their opinions; in a word, it was the only way in which the people could know as democracy. It is to Parliament that we owe the acquisition and the retention of the multifarious liberties which we enjoy today; it is the watchdog of freedom and order.

Is Parliament Effete?

It is indisputable, therefore, that the institution of Parliament has been of the greatest possible advantage to this country in the evolution of Government, and in the protection of the liberties of the people against the tyranny of minorities. The present crisis, however, a minority which claims that it is effete, and has outgrown its usefulness in society. It is always difficult to decipher the facts from out of the froth which characterizes the utterances of the particular minority in question—the Communist-Bolshevik-Socialist-Anarchist motley, but so far as there is any unanimity about them at all, it seems that a claim is made for the Soviet system of Government. It is claimed that today Parliament is useless, and that the Soviet system is an ideal method of government. It will be necessary, therefore, briefly to examine this claim, the agitation for which has culminated in the formation recently of a Council of Action—a direct challenge to Parliamentary Government. The case for Parliament may be summed up in a sentence. Parliament is the only possible vehicle of complete representative government; representative government, or democracy, is the only possible practical form of government today and therefore Parliament is the only possible supreme authority in the State.

The Soviet system of Government is in effect an attempt to set up by common workers of several industrial government by industrial sections. It is clear that even were this plan carried out to perfection the industrial workers would have no influence in the state proportionate to their numerical strength, which would really mean that there would always be a tiny, but more powerful industrial group to secure for themselves conditions of the greatest advantage to themselves to the detriment of other sections of the population. The worker groups would tend always to be at the mercy of the larger, and as a result government would be in the hands of the strongest groups. Moreover, experience has shown in the case of Russia that an undue advantage is given to one section of the population; that is, the working class section. As a result the political power of the remaining sections is reduced to almost nothingness. The Soviet system is, therefore, undemocratic, and the argument resolves itself into one for and against democracy as a system of government.

No Tyranny!

It is useless for the advocates of the abolition of Parliament to say that the people will not vote, and that therefore the system is undemocratic. The people have the opportunity to vote, and as time goes on they will more and more exercise their power. Under such a system as the Soviet, large numbers of the people would be deprived of all practical capacity for the expression of their opinion. In a word, socialism means tyranny in practice, and has been shown to be so in Russia. It is to the Parliament, evolved in the thirteenth century as a protection against tyranny.

Democracy means government of the people, by the people, and for the people, and it refers to the whole people, not to any particular section of them. It is just as tyrannical for a small group to presume to dictate to the whole of the people as it is for one man, be he king or capitalist, to do so. There are a number of people who want one law for themselves and another for other people. The working classes are not the salt of the earth any more than are any other class. Royalty, all classes are of equal value to the whole, and it is the recognition of this which has provided the driving force of democracy, and it is because this is so that democracy is the best form of government.

The people as a whole are no more inclined to tolerate tyranny today at the hands of certain sections of labor, or any other group for that matter, than they were in the time of de Montfort—The Democrat.

SIX MONTHS OLD BABY ON VAGRANCY CHARGE

HAMILTON, Nov. 2.—A six-months old baby is a prisoner in the jail here under the charge of vagrancy. The infant's mother, Mrs. J. Evans, was sentenced a few days ago to jail for four months for theft from a local departmental store. As the law does not permit of any person being detained in jail over a certain period without conviction, and as the child could not get along without its mother, it had to be committed as a vagrant. The Independent Labor Party is making an effort to gain the release of the mother and her baby.

A large portion of the fish consumed in the Pacific Coast States comes from Mexican waters, off the coast of Lower California, which abound with mackerel, halibut, rock cod, and many other edible varieties.

CANADIAN WARSHIPS WILL ARRIVE BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

Canada's three warships, which were presented to the Dominion by the Imperial Government to form the nucleus of a Canadian navy, will arrive in Canadian waters shortly before Christmas. Definite word has been received by the Department of the Naval Service, from the captain of the cruiser Aurora, that the Aurora and the destroyers Patriot and Patricia will sail from Plymouth on or about November 30. The vessels will cross the Atlantic via the Azores and Bermuda, arriving at Halifax about December 17. The three ships will remain at Halifax for a short time, when they will probably go south to the West Indies, and subsequently around to the British Columbia coast, in the intention to have the fleet alternate between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the Dominion.

Be up and doing—but be careful what or whom you undertake to do.

SECURES FULL CONTROL OF THE G. A. U. V. SHARES

TORONTO, Nov. 2.—All the shares of the Grand Army of Canada Co-operative Stores, Limited, were said to have been transferred to G. S. McIntyre, a prominent member of the G.A.U.V., who has practically secured control individually of the 20,000 shares which comprised the G.A.C. series in the enterprise.

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