

# Trosky Gaols Lenine

Russia's present condition—How it came about—Instinct comes to the surface

By J. W. MACMILLAN.

It is impossible not to admire the cheerful self-confidence of those who are ready to tell us what is going on in Russia. In spite of the distance which separates that disordered land from Canada, the inchoate conditions prevailing there, and the unreliability of the news channels, there are people who profess to understand it all thoroughly and to advise a course of action which will meet the case. These cocksure persons do not agree among themselves. They are sharply divided into two antagonistic camps. One camp is sure that everything is wrong in Russia, and that nothing but the destruction of the Bolsheviks by the armies of the Allies will save the people of Russia from destruction. The other camp vigorously condemn any interference whatever, being sure that whatever disturbances there may be in Russia are merely the growing-pains of a genuine democracy which is rapidly achieving strength. The one thing certain is that neither of these camps is reasoning from any knowledge that it possesses, but that both are the victims of their sympathies, the one for order, the other revolution.

All that anyone, at this distance, can be certain of regarding Russia is that the boldest attempt of modern days to win to true democracy has been started there, and that the men into whose hands the power has fallen are a gang of political lunatics. Poor Russia, ignorant, blind, sullen, her manhood decimated by the war, her cities starving, her factories and railways paralyzed, has cast off the tyranny of the stupid and merciless bureaucracy which strangled her. She has got rid of Czar, police, army, industry, superstition and world-ambition, and is groping for some method by which her vast and scattered millions may find liberty and comfort. All earnest souls will wish her success. But, helpless and credulous, she has fallen into the hands of a small group of excitable weaklings, men with no power of control over the welter and chaos about them. They have essayed "to ride the whirlwind and direct the storm." Their words are strong and their actions weak. They speak of peace, truth, honor, justice, mercy, brotherhood; while their deeds are false and cruel. What is the explanation of it all?

Dr. E. J. Dillon, than whom no man can speak with greater knowledge and authority of Russian conditions, in his recent book, "The Eclipse of Russia," says that the keynote of Russian policy since the days of Rurik has been predatoriness. Its foreign policy has been the absorption of one after another of the weak peoples on its border. The exploitation of these countries has made the inner ring of the court wealthy and powerful, and the policy has been popular because it ministered to the pride of the nation. And its home policy has been of the same sort. The chief source of government revenue, until stopped at the outbreak of the war, was from the government monopoly of the vodka traffic; so that, in the directest way, the court threw on the misery and degradation of the people. Russia was a great wheat-exporting country, because the landlords took what the peasants needed for their own food. If the wheat-growers of Russia had first been fed from their own fields, as they are in Canada, there would have been no wheat to export.

"Like master, like man," and the average Russian faithfully imitated the example of the superiors who robbed him. He robbed the land. That insistent clamor for more land, which the peasant utters in his days of rioting, is born of the unproductiveness of the land he possesses. He wants new land, because new land is fertile.

The only method he knows of maintaining production is by turning to land from which the fertility has not been taken. What wonder that, when his expectations of better times

are roused, he dreams of robbing the landlords as they had robbed him. From the Czar down to the lowets mushik the idea of production through honest and constructive labor never occurred.

It is the inevitable response of the ruled to the methods of the ruler. Sometimes we forget that it is inevitable, and blame where we should pity.

When the American soldiers went to Cuba they found the Spaniard a more likeable character than the native. Any resident in Turkey, in the days before the war, except he happened on some village immediately after it had been "pacified," preferred the Turk to the Armenian or the Syrian. The Turk had the port of a free man, and the manners of a gentleman. He looked you in the eye. He walked beside you on the street. He was courteous and hospitable in his home. The victim populations, on the other hand, were cringing, sullen and deceitful. They had a hang-dog look, and they wanted to follow you rather than walk beside you. No wonder the hasty observer allowed his sympathies to veer towards the conquerors rather than their wretched victims. Centuries of cruelty and ferocity leave their impression. Let a people be cheated, lied to, pillaged, murdered and ravished during many generations and you must expect to find them timid, suspicious, and deceitful. The fact that they do not possess the qualities which freedom and security of life and property bestow is evidence to convict and condemn those who have oppressed them.

But they must be dealt with, by those who would be kind to them, with remembrance of their defects of character. The prevalence of the half-organized system of destruction in the name of construction, and slaughter in the name of kindness, in Russia to-day is to be explained by the character of the Russian people. And that character is the product of their misrule during five hundred years.

The potency of Bolshevism, anarchism, syndicalism, the I. W. W., and all kindred systems of political perversity is due to the fact that they appeal to the impulsive and unstable qualities of human character. They bare the instincts. They ease off the control which has been slowly achieved during milleniums. Law, custom, religion, and all the other sanctions of order and social control are derided and discarded. Men are encouraged to commit themselves to the unrestrained misrule of their passions.

When Napoleon said, "Scratch a Russian and you find a Tartar," he uttered a truth which the study of the human mind abundantly justifies. His error lay in the partial nature of his statement. He need not have singled out Russians, but might have included all the human race. It was true of himself. It was and is true of all mankind, that the barbarian is just below the surface. The basic thing in humanity is instinct. That is the inner engine which is always ready to start into vigorous operation. That is the inner explosive which any slight spark may explode. The human animal is not like a piano to be played on. He is like a bomb, to be set off. He is a creature of intense and varied desires, ready to go to any extreme in their gratification. It is this quality which marks him as the superior of all other living creatures.

Instinct was developed during countless ages of barbarian life. It is barbarian yet. During a few thousand years, which is but a momentary period in the whole career of the race, there has been evolved, in the higher races, a system of rational control of the instincts. How weak and frail this control is we are reminded every day, even among the most elevated and developed peoples. None of them are ever free from vice and crime, or the possible outbreak of violence. In any of them the spectacular and successful operation of acquisitiveness or combativeness or self-display is admired and

envied. Yet the instincts are kept under a measure of control, and so progress and comfort become possible. The restive individual, and everybody can find one such under his own hat, is kept tame and industrious, patient and co-operative.

The potency of the danger in all such movements as Bolshevism lies in the throwing off these restraints, and unleashing the primitive barbarian traits. The balance wheel of society is smashed, the governor loosened, and the safety valve plugged. The engine runs wild, and, being an engine of immense speed and power, it rapidly destroys itself.

This is the explanation of the action of the socialists of Germany at the beginning of the war. Their political and economic purposes were shattered like the thin surface covering of a shrapnel shell when the instinct of combativeness exploded within. And this is what has happened in Russia, under the pressure of fear, ignorance and destitution. Mankind has been hurled back into its raw elements. The effects of a few years of custom-building, and of inculcation of legal and religious sanctions, have been smashed to splinters by the upheaval of the volcanic instincts within.

At such a time the weakened rational restraints eagerly accept the sophisms and fallacies of anarchy. "Labor is the creator of all wealth and should own it!"—so the coachman concludes that if he had his rights the horses and carriages which he is in charge of should belong to him. "Bourgeois morality!"—so all these prohibitions of theft, deceit and the gratification of lust were the cunning devices by which the privileged cheated the common man of his inheritance. "Destruction is a constructive force!"—so the torch and dynamite, and the wanton looting and immolation of palaces and libraries, are wise and laudable actions.

I do not know whether or not the report that Trosky has sent Lenine to gaol is true. But I know that it might easily be true. It would be a characteristic anarchical act. It would be in line with the accustomed activity of anarchistic assemblies which consists largely in expelling its members for "recalcitrant opinions." It would be a fitting and natural outcome of the uncurbed operation of the elemental impulses of the human mind.

It is obvious that the right thing to do is to allay the disorder which has allowed the veneer of civilization to be broken to pieces. We know that the conditions most favorable to such a debacle are pervading fear and ignorance. Back of these lie certain physical conditions, some of which we outsiders cannot touch, and some of which we can remedy. The one outstanding and fundamental disastrous condition which we can reach and affect is the destitution of Russia. Let us send food. We can do that, at any rate. Later, no doubt, we can go farther without provoking the suspicion and resentment of the people. But we can prove to them our good intentions, and we can profoundly change the conditions which are causing Bolshevism, by feeding a starving people. And, in saving Russia from the desolation of anarchy we may be saving the rest of the world.

## CUNARD LINE BUYS BOATS.

Six Vessels Aggregating 29,734 Tons Bought From British Government.

It is announced that the British Government has sold to the Cunard Steamship Company six cargo steamships of an aggregate tonnage of 29,734. The vessels, standard cargo carriers, built by the British Government for use during the war, will soon be placed in active service by the company. The purchase price was not made public.

The vessels, which were of the "war series" have been renamed. Their new names and tonnages follow: "Vitellia," 4,400 tons; "Vindellia," 4,430 tons; "Verentia," 5,185 tons; "Venusia," 5,222 tons; "Vennonia," 5,225 tons; "Vellania," 5,272 tons.