

A Voice Out of Russia

(Continued from Page One)

nificant group of adventurers, behind the backs of whom there are foreigners? The people, or generals? The decision is clear.

The Soviet government has found it difficult to bring the economic life of Russia back to normal. The peasants have received the land, but remain without agricultural implements, nails, and textile goods. The workmen have obtained control over production, but remain without bread and without coal. Production itself has slowed down. The most important factor in this situation is the isolation of Russia. She is practically excluded from the world exchange. She is now like a besieged fortress, a fortress which the enemy wants to take, if not by force of arms then by hunger. By what right? For what? It is said that we have committed two sins: first, we do not want to pay the debt to France. Yes, in principle we do not consider ourselves responsible for the Czar's loans, because part of them were expended for the oppression of the Russian people. But practically we do not refuse to discuss this matter—this is quite clear from the note of Tchitcherin of October 26. Second, it is being said that we have betrayed the Allies. In my opinion the Allies have betrayed us and are now dividing among themselves the booty which was promised to us. But we do not protest against this. Proclaiming a peace without annexations and contributions, Russia has renounced her participation in the division of any booty. But having sacrificed for the Allies 7,000,000 of her sons, she is justified in demanding that she be left alone. But let us assume for a second that we are guilty of breaking a treaty; then what about Italy who broke the treaty with the Central Powers? She is being complimented on it!

But we also have a third sin, of which people do not speak aloud: we are weak, but our land is rich—why not make use of it? I understand this perfectly well. Together with England we partitioned Persia and only a short while ago we dreamed of the partition of Austria and Turkey. And now we are being partitioned! I understand it all. I understand the English and French very well, but I cannot understand the Americans at all. We owe you very little; we have no treaties with you and never had any, and in the division of Russia you do not intend to participate. Why then do you keep your soldiers in Russia? The interests of the United States do not conflict with the interests of Russia. More than that, no other country is more interested in the realization of the ideals of the freedom of the seas and the league of nations, which your president is faithfully upholding in Europe, than Russia. All our seas are not free. Our government is most of all international. Moreover the interests of exchange between Russia and America at present should be mutual. During the war the United States has tremendously developed her production, and she needs foreign markets. Russia could be one. She needs goods. She cannot of herself increase production and stimulate industry. Yet we have plenty to pay with; our natural resources are enormous. The question of how to utilize these resources in order to pay for your goods may be decided upon by mutual understanding and discussion either in Washington or in Moscow, but surely this cannot be decided by mutual destruction in the swamps of Archangel. The Soviet government has attempted many a time to begin such discussions.

This argument is usually disposed of by referring to the Bolshevik danger. First of all, the responsibility of power has compelled the Bolsheviks to become more moderate. Second, the Soviets and the Bolsheviks are not one and the same. The Bolsheviks at the present time dominate the Soviets—to a great extent because of the policy of the Allies. Yet, fearing Bolshevism, you are cultivating it. More than that, by your actions you justify its ideology. As far as the philosophic side of the question is concerned, we differ from the Bolshe-

"Æ." ON THE NEW ORDER IN RUSSIA

[Below we reprint from the "Voice of Labour" a letter written by "Æ." to Wm. O'Brien, Secretary of the Irish Labor Party, and intended to be read at the Mansion House meeting. It is a noble tribute from the ablest of living Irish writers and economists of the constructive order to the most brilliant of successful revolutionists of all time, and is as the voice of the most western hailing the most eastern people of Europe.]

17 Rathgar Avenue, Dublin,

November 14, 1918.

Dear O'Brien: I hear that a meeting has been arranged in Dublin at which some form of recognition or salutation to the Russian Revolution will be made. I hope the mists which have obscured that mighty upheaval will soon be cleared away and the real character of the revolution made known. I have no doubt that much to be regretted or deplored has taken place, but I have come to the conclusion, partly from personal statements made to me by people who were in Russia during the revolution, and from confirmation of their statements, which have been made public, that the stories of violence and bloodshed have been greatly exaggerated. A Canadian acquaintance who was in Russia for four years, returning this summer, told me that he had seen since his return minute, precise, and detailed accounts of massacres and the destruction of buildings in Moscow. "I was there at the time," he said, "and there was not a single shot fired and the buildings were intact." Colonel MacCormick, President of the American Society of Engineers, who witnessed the Revolution, wrote this spring in a New York paper that nine-tenths of the stories of outrages and murders were pure inventions of the old regime, and they were circulated by the German Government, accepted by the Allied Press, and this helped to increase the gulf between Russia and the Allies, which it was the aim of the German Government to widen. Even if these stories were true, this could be said in extenuation, that the autoeracy kept the people of Russia ignorant and they could not be blamed much if they did not act with wisdom. The Russian peasants and workmen were regarded by the ruling classes as little above the brute, and were treated accordingly, and if men are treated as brutes it is too much to expect when aroused they will act with gentleness. The leaders of the Revolution had the heritage of a country desolated by war and wrecked economically by a corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy. Swift action was necessary if worse was not to happen, and I doubt whether any government—English, French, or German—in a similar position, would have dealt more mercifully with minorities which obstructed them. It is said the Revolution is not democratic, that general elections were not held to give moral sanction to the new regime. This is a strange criticism arising, in countries like our own where a practical dictatorship has been established since the war began, where the most revolutionary changes were made without any reference to the electorate. When victory is sure

viki in the matter of natural impulses. The Bolsheviks say that such impulses are only class interests. We, realizing that class interests are the most important interests of mankind, nevertheless believe that mankind has other interests: religious, moral, rational and esthetic. At present this point of view is being subjected to a difficult trial. There is some ground for your accusation that the Bolsheviks are serving the interests of one class only. But what about those who attempt to tighten a steel lasso around the neck of Russia, those who forget that she came to this condition fighting with the Allies and for the Allies—whom are those interventionists serving? The class interests of the propertied class or the ideal of justice? Is it really possible that these ideals are only a myth?

—George V. Lomonosoff.

our rulers begin to think of elections, and in Russia no revolutionary leader has made any pretence that the existing system of Workers' and Soldiers' Committee could be permanent. When the revolution is safe they will act as our own rulers, who have waited until victory was secured before they spoke of seeking the approval of the country.

We do not know enough yet to praise or blame the leaders of the revolution in respect of their dealing with those who opposed them. But we do know enough from dispassionate observers to see that heroic efforts are being made to reorganize Russia, to build up a new social order on democratic and co-operative lines. . . . These developments are not noticed in the press here, which selects all that is sensational, whether accurate or rumor, and ignores the work of reconstruction. I have read papers which in the same article denounced Lenin and Trotsky as paid agents of Germany, and also commented on the disastrous effect of their propaganda on the morals of the German soldiers and workmen. These men could hardly be paid by the German autoeracy to undermine its influence over its own people. On the eastern front Trotsky and Lenin, the men of ideas, won against Hindenburg and Ludendorf, the men with guns. We beg to suspect that the "Daily Mail" for once allowed truth to be printed in its columns when its correspondent in Russia wrote that, strange as it might appear to people in England, Lenin and Trotsky were men of real intellect, and probably knew more about international politics than Mr. Arthur Balfour. We can see over the smoke of conflict the scaffolding of the new Russia arising. The conflict over its foundations will pass, but the building will be continued, and the democracies in other countries should see that their governments allow the Russian people to work out their own destiny. Even those who are enemies of the Revolution have to admit that ninety per cent. of the Russian people are supporters of the present government. And no League of Nations, however armed with self-righteousness, could have a moral right to overturn the social order in a country which is supported by the people themselves. We do not hear of Russians rising in masses against the rule of the Soviets, but of Czecho-Slovaks, Japanese, and other foreigners deputed to punish the Russian people for their crimes against humanity. Their crimes I believe to be twofold. They desired to be at peace when the rest of the world was at war, a very serious offence, as we in Ireland know. They also desired to have economic democracy when the Great Powers had got no further than a desire to make the world safe for political democracy, and were, I believe, even a little dubious about that state of society, though experiment has proved that pure cultures of capitalism can be cultivated in a political democracy and develop there with the rapidity of bacteria in a jug of Dublin milk.

Yours sincerely,

GEO. W. RUSSELL.

UKRAINIANS WILLING TO TALK TO ALLIES

PARIS, Feb. 11.—The Ukrainian Soviet Government has announced that it is willing to accept the invitation of the Allies to the proposed conference of Russian factions, according to the Temps, but it considers the date fixed, February 15, too near at hand.

The government also expresses a preference for holding the conference at Paris instead of Prince's Islands. It is understood, however, that the French Government, which originally transmitted the invitation through its wireless service, has since been trying to get an agreement that hostilities will cease all over Russia and adjacent countries, including Archangel, before the conference assembles.

Otherwise, it is stated, the Entente governments will not consent to confer with the Soviet representatives.