

THE BOLSHIEVSKI

Insurgents Who are in Control of Russia To-day—
What They are and What They Represent—
Divided Into Three Classes.

Bolshevik Take One (Literary Digest.)

No great alarm when the Bolsheviks seized Petrograd was felt by American editorial observers, who predicted an early collapse of the revolution. Bolshevik success, of course, would mean a Russo-German peace that would solve Germany's food problem and release 147 German divisions, or over 3,000,000 men, for use in the west. But "there is little chance of an immediate peace," declared the New York World, "because there is no government with the authority or power to speak for the Russian people or the Russian nation." In fact, the ultimate effect of this seizure of the Government by the extremists, according to some competent authorities, will be to "purge Russia of the poison which has turned democracy into a nightmare." For, as Mr. Roger Lewis, an Associated Press correspondent just returned from Petrograd, remarks, it gives the Bolsheviks the rope with which to hang themselves; and this view is shared by the Russkoye Slovo, a Russian daily published in New York. Says Mr. Lewis, writing in the New York Tri-

bune: "The Maximalist coup d'etat, resulting in a temporary overthrow of Kerensky and his Government has brought Russia perceptibly nearer her remote destiny—that of bringing order out of chaos, and building out of the broken pieces of democracy a stable, permanent government."

"The collision between the two political camps into which the country has been divided is an event which has been ardently hoped for by every Russian sympathizer since the revolution. For in such a conflict the Bolsheviks are doomed to final and decisive defeat. The Bolsheviks may occupy all the palaces and strongholds of Petrograd, as they did during their insurrection of last July; they may impose their will briefly upon the members of the Government, and claim control of the capital, but they cannot dominate for more than a brief period the indignant loyal forces of the Russian nation."

"The Bolsheviks as an element of opposition have constituted a dangerous and sinister menace to the country, poisoning the loyalty of the people, obstructing industry, and defying the Government to exercise its authority. But the Bolshevik party in power, assuming the responsibility of a government, is a helpless and futile anomaly."

To make this clearer, he thus sketches the composition of the Bolshevik party, which he divides into three groups:

"First there are innumerable German paid agitators and propagandists, whose sole purpose is to reduce the country to complete anarchy. The second class is composed of fanatics, escaped criminals, released political prisoners, and expatriated Russians whom political amnesty brought back to the country. These, the sense of accumulated wrongs, real and imaginary, of half a century, has driven into a frenzy of anarchistic revolt, and without sharing the motives of their German leaders, they find their doctrines quite congenial."

"The third and largest class is a tremendous body of ignorant workmen and soldiers with nebulous notions of democracy, who have been taught by their leaders that freedom is a debauch of idleness and that properly interpreted liberty means a complete reversal of power, which will give them a gratifying tyranny over their old masters."

"This, briefly, is the Bolshevik, Maximalist, or extreme Socialist faction in Russia. It is made up of the disgruntled unit, defective elements in the population, which, without conscious disloyalty to their country, have formed the easiest possible prey for German propaganda."

To speak of a government by such a faction, he argues, is palpably absurd in Russia. "And the Bolsheviks leaders themselves know it. The day before I left Petrograd, in a friendly argument with one of the Bolshevik leaders at their headquarters, in the Smolny

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Institute, I told him that I hoped the Bolsheviks would take over the government, demonstrate their complete incompetence to represent a Russian democracy, and bring the party as speedily as possible into the discredit which it deserved.

"Ah," he said, "but we don't wish to govern or to have any responsibility. Frankly, we don't know how. But what we want is for these 'bourgeois' to govern and to discredit themselves."

"That explains the Bolshevik purpose and the Bolshevik function is one of obstruction. As an opposing faction, criticizing the 'capitalistic' or 'bourgeois' government for under-merit principles, it is gathering and threatening to gather a large portion of the population which finds that democracy has brought them neither food, wealth nor power, and argues, therefore that the Government is guilty."

"But give the Bolsheviks power and responsibility and a chance to demonstrate their own political lack of constructive ability or definite purpose, and the remedy for the country's ills is in their movement automatically collapses."

Turning to the New York Russkoye Slovo, we read: "The Bolsheviks of Petrograd, led by the executive committee of the Petrograd Council of Soldiers and Workmen Deputies, snatched the nominal governmental authority from the hands of the Provisional Government. They have declared the Provisional Government as no more existent, and the Provisional Council of the Republic as dissolved. They have asserted that all governmental authority is in the hands of the All-Russian Council of Soldiers and Workmen Deputies, and that the executive committee of the Petrograd Council, as its present, full governmental authority until such time as they shall be able to pass it over to the All-Russian Council."

"This is what happened in Petrograd. The Bolsheviks call this a coup d'etat, a revolution. But it is neither the one nor the other. It is a rebellion, pure and simple. It is a revolt against the legal, established Government, recognized by the Russian people. It is treason to the people of Russia, and Russia will regard the actions of Trotsky and his companions as a rebellion—as high treason."

"Petrograd has become the nightmare of Russia. But Petrograd is not the whole of Russia. Russia will not follow the mad Petrograd. A handful of men and fanatics will not be able to seize power over the whole country."

"The Bolshevik 'Government' in Petrograd will re-enact the bloody Paris Commune. But the comming of our days will be shattered to splinters by cannon and machine guns. No doubt the bloodshed and the loss of life will be appalling. But there is no doubt that this newest attempt at rebellion is also doomed to dismal failure."

Many days before the Maximalist coup d'etat of November 7 the extreme element among the Soldiers and Workmen's Deputies had frankly admitted that they were planning civil war. But when a deputation of Don Cossacks urged Kerensky to take drastic action against these open plotters, reports a Petrograd correspondent of the Times, "he pathetically replied that he could not do so, as a despot, a tyrant, a friend of the bourgeoisie, and a betrayer of democracy."

Nor were other indications lacking that the strong man of the revolution was beginning to lose confidence in the heart-breaking struggle against anarchy within and a powerful and subtle enemy without. Addressing the Preliminary Parliament on October 23, he recalled with emotion Russia's brief but brilliant offensive of July, exclaiming: "If only we could rekindle the enthusiasm of those days in the heart of each of us, we should have peace by Christmas, an honorable peace for free Russia, with the war fought to an honorable end." But "the army," he exclaimed, "has been broken, the trenches seem to have lost the sense of duty and honor," he added. "It seems to be possible to end anarchy only by German bayonets," exclaimed War Minister Gen. Verkhovsky, on the same occasion. And it was only a week later that the

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harassed premier gave to the Associated Press that famous interview which was so generally interpreted as a confession that Russia was out of the war. "It will be remembered that he said in part:

"Russia at the beginning bore the whole brunt of the fighting, thereby saving Great Britain and France. She is now worn out by the strain, and claims as her right that the allies now shoulder the burden."

"The masses are worn out economically. The disorganized state of life in general has had a psychological effect on the people. They doubt the possibility of the attainment of their hopes."

While some of our papers at the time expressed sympathy with Kerensky in his weariness of spirit, others were outspokenly impatient. "Kerensky as the leader of a well-aimed but cause was an impressive and sympathetic figure," remarked the Wall Street Journal, "but Kerensky crawling under the bed becomes an impossibility, even Russia." "The French might suggest that if the Russians are worn out it is by talk, and remind them that revolutionary France whipped the armies of Europe," said the Chicago Tribune, which added: "The allies are all struggling loyally to overthrow the German militarist juggernaut. Russian democracy has lost its breath arguing out every shade of politics in the whirling brains of its radicals, and if it sits down by the road now while its comrades fight on, excuses will be hard to find and recriminations will come home to roost." If Russia is worn out, remarked the New York World, it cannot be by war. For—

"Belgium, driven from all but a fragment of her soil, is not worn out. Serbia, exiled from home, but grim and terrible, is not worn out. France, invaded, bleeding, for three years the inviolable fortress in faith and courage of the whole Entente cause, is not worn out. These countries, like Russia, have been in the war from the first day. Russia, like them, has invaded armies as an incentive to fight on. But the grounds of Kerensky's pessimism became evident a few days later when he was deposed and his Government overthrown in Petrograd by the Maximalist coup d'etat, under the joint leadership of Nikolai Lenin and Leon Trotsky. With the co-operation of the Petrograd garrison these counter-revolutionists took possession of the capital without bloodshed and immediately issued a proclamation declaring that the new Government will propose 'an armistice to the end of an immediate and just peace,' will hand over the land to the peasants, and will summon the Constituent Assembly. The program of the new authority is thus defined by the military revolutionary committee of the Petrograd Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates:

"1. The offer of an immediate democratic peace.

"2. The immediate handing over of large proprietary lands to the peasants.

"3. The transmission of all authority to the Council of Soldiers and Workmen's Delegates.

"4. The honest convocation of a constitutional assembly."

In the Entente embassies at Washington we are told, this Russian declaration is regarded as a triumph of insidious German propaganda—a view more than hinted at by Kerensky himself when he declared that "the people who dare raise their hands against the will of the Russian people are at the same time threatening to open the front to Germany."

The refusal of the Allies to discuss war aims at the Paris conference is resented by the Bolsheviks, who have had their own peace terms ready for submission for some time. This peace program, which consists of fifteen articles and covers the whole ground from Panama to Persia, was drawn up by the central executive committee of the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates. It is perhaps sufficient to say that it requires the central powers to evacuate Russian territory, Roumania, Belgium, Serbia, and Montenegro, which they are not likely to do without compulsion. Lenin makes no reference to these terms now, but advocates immediate peace, which would presumably have to be on German terms, as it takes two to make a bargain.

The fact that Petrograd is virtually a Bolshevik city made it easy for extremists to seize control there. But as Ambassador Bakhmeteff points out, "the intent and spirit of Russia as a whole should in no way be judged by the news from Petrograd." And in proof of this he reminds us that in the recent elections in the provincial and county local bodies only 10 per cent of the Bolshevik candidates were elected. These Bolshevik or extreme radicals, include many returned exiles from Siberia, as well as Germans and Austrians who have escaped from Russian prison camps, and German agents. In the New York Globe we read:

"The Maximalist or Bolshevik, element comprises the most extreme class of the Russian revolutionary

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