

Intervention in Russia and the Peace Treaty

Czechoslovak Officer Tells How Delay Will Play Into German Hands---Boshevist Ideals Gone, Leaders Maintain Murderous Struggle for Power

LONDON and Paris may pull long faces about what to do in Russia, and debate waveringly the problem presented there, but in Captain Ferdinand Pisecky's mind there is not the slightest doubt. Captain Pisecky is for immediate intervention in force, to avert the possibility of a world spread of Bolshevism; and he believes that to delay action until after the Peace Conference is to play Germany's hand for her.

As secretary to Milan Stefanik, Czechoslovak Minister of War, Captain Pisecky was in New York last week on his way from Siberia to Europe for conferences with allied diplomats. While he was here he told how the continuation of disorder in Russia would make possible German commercial penetration and domination there, and would imperil those small nations in Southeastern Europe which are likely to be established at the green table in Versailles.

"If the peace treaty is ratified before intervention in Russia has been accomplished," he said, "it will be the ratification of a German peace. All the real purposes of this war will have been defeated. The need for action is instant and imperative.

"The Germans have become democrats only because they did not succeed as autocrats. Even a democratic Germany remains an industrial Germany, which means that a market must be opened for its vast products. Those products have been accumulated to the extent of billions of marks during the war, with the intention of dumping them into allied markets as soon as peace came. Now that the war has ended in favor of the Allies, those markets are closed to the Germans and will remain at least partly closed for some time. It matters not that no boycott may be countenanced by the administrations of the allied countries; it still will be a fact that the peoples will not want to trade with Germans.

"Thus there is only Russia open to the Germans. It is a significant fact that even in 1915, before the revolution in Russia, when I was a prisoner of war for three months in the Volga Valley, I bought at Tzaritsyn buttons made in Germany, and inscribed *Kriegsknöpfe*, [war buttons,] showing that, even in a state of hostilities, the Germans were selling in Russia their products, evidently manufactured after the war began. Trotzky is perfectly willing to aid in the business of German commercial penetration of Russia. He will profit from it.

"Red Germany and Red Russia mean a Red Poland and perhaps a Red Japan. The soil is prepared in Japan by high cost of living and the difficult circumstances of the working classes. If this comes it will mean that all the lives sacrificed in the war have been lost in vain, and that the work of the peace table will come to naught.

"We must not confuse Bolshevism with democracy. Real democracy means justice to everybody, freedom to all, and it is a wonderful constructive power. Bolshevism means freedom only for a group or part of one class and death to the others. It is wholly destructive.

"The continued reign of Bolshevism in Russia means Bolshevism in Germany. The Bolsheviks in Germany have been beaten in the first elections, but that does not mean they are beaten forever. The Russian Bolsheviks did not come into power only until some months after the revolution. The same thing may happen in Germany. There, as during the early months in Russia, the moderate elements are on the surface; but there is no assurance that a Lenine or a Trotzky will not come to the top.

"Who can say where the force of Bolshevism will stop, unless it is stopped

now in Russia. The Czechoslovaks are not asking for protection for themselves. They can take care of themselves, even those now in Russia. They are in a position to withdraw. They do not withdraw because they cannot bear to leave helpless Russians at the mercy of the Bolshe-



Captain Ferdinand Pisecky, Secretary to Milan Stefanik, Czechoslovak Minister of War.

viki, and because they know that, if Bolshevism spreads into Germany and Austria, Czechoslovakia will be imperiled. How is a small weak nation like ours to protect itself?

"Bolshevism victorious in Russia and in Germany means German dominion under another form; for the Germans will always master their Russian comrades and will use the methods of the old Prussian régime to effect their predominance of the Bolshevik world. It is childish to suppose that the Germans and Magyars will leave Russia if the Peace Conference orders them out. They will remain there whether or not it pleases the Allies. If order is not restored in Russia before the Peace Conference, then it will be impossible to restore order by agreement. The Bolsheviks will not renounce their power voluntarily. And, once their uniforms are laid aside, how are the Germans and Magyars in Russia to be detected? How is one to sort them out for any purpose?

"The Allies have intervened already in Siberia, and, wherever their forces have gone, the Russians have seized the opportunity to set up orderly Governments. As soon as the fear of the Bolsheviks is removed, the Russians show well enough that they know how to govern themselves. The Allies must say either yes or no to this question of intervention. They must either send 500,000 trained men into Russia or withdraw altogether. If there are any just reasons against the intervention in European Russia, the same reasons should have applied to intervention in Siberia.

"When I think about the attitude of the Allies and America toward the present situation in Russia, I always remember the indecision which was manifested toward Bulgaria before that country joined the Central Powers. There were Serbs on the one hand who knew the Bulgars and demanded permission to attack them before they could mobilize; on the other hand, there were those who listened to the Bulgarian propagandists in the allied countries, and who were persuaded that Bulgaria would never

dare declare war on Russia. Strangely enough, the sincere Serbian allies were ignored and the treacherous advice of the pro-German propagandists was followed. The result is well known.

"Somewhat the same situation prevails now. The Czechoslovaks, who have been fighting for seven months, who have won the admiration and liking of the Allies as well as America, have been sending messages to America asking aid, and Russian patriots like Count Lvoff and many others are earnestly explaining the necessity of strong, decisive intervention against the terrible tyranny of the Bolsheviks. And yet the allied Governments continue to read the proclamations of the Soviets.

"Everybody knows about the continuous massacre of the best Russians, not only of the bourgeoisie, but also, and more than ever now, of the Socialists, of the workingmen, if they dare raise their voices against his Majesty Trotzky. The Bolsheviks are declared outlaws, but in spite of that their crimes are protected by the incomprehensible passivity of the civilized world.

"Meanwhile the Bolsheviks are busily at work spreading propaganda intended to mislead and divide the world and to deceive the workingmen of every country. Many officials seem to prefer listening to the voices of secret or open friends of the Bolsheviks rather than hear the desperate cries of thousands slain and tortured, rather than believe the Czechoslovaks and the pleading of the suffering Russian Nation.

"The Bolsheviks are radical and un-



Czechoslovak "Fleet" at Vladivostok. The "Smelchak" (Audacious), Captured from the Bolsheviks.

scrupulous teachers of class hatred. Now, hatred is a negative power, always destructive, and in the case of the Bolsheviks this hatred is aimed at constructive energy. All their activities are destructive. Preaching liberty for the working class, they deny liberty, even the right to live, to the so-called bourgeoisie. One of their foremost watchwords has been freedom of thinking, freedom of speech, freedom of assemblage; but as soon as they seized power they proved themselves the most merciless and autocratic oppressors of everything and every person who did not meet their approval or abet their activities. Never in the darkest days of Czarism was the Russian press so enslaved.

"As to right of free assemblage, the Bolsheviks violently dissolved the Constitutional Assembly, a body genuinely representative of the nation, because the majority was against them.

"The Bolsheviks seized their power illegally, they usurped by violence the Government of a nation, and yet when they have the effrontery to speak in the name of the nation, there are still blind idealists to believe them. Whatever may have been the motives actuating the Bolsheviks at the outset, however lofty

their ideals, their régime has degenerated now into a mere sordid and murderous struggle for power. These men, whose first act was the abolishment of capital punishment, are conducting the bloodiest and cruelest government in the world's history. Now that they are in power they arrest, torture, and kill without hearing witnesses, without trial, without any legal process, whether the victims be bourgeois or Socialists. The most callous and cynical tyrants of recorded time are lamblike in comparison with Trotzky, Lenine, and Tchitcherin.

"Many persons in America and the allied countries consider the Russian situation an internal affair which the Russians must adjust for themselves. Every honest man regards his house and his family life as his own business, and would resent interference by an outsider. But if a man tries to kill his wife or his children, the neighbors and the police take a hand. That man's privacy is no longer respected. The claims of innocent and unprotected beings are supreme. This literally is the situation in Russia. The behavior of the Bolsheviks has deprived them of any right to respect or tolerance, and the neighboring nations must, if they obey the commands of conscience and justice, intervene, and must act at once.

"Although the Bolsheviks are in the minority, they are strong. They called to the Russian workingmen and peasantry the thrilling watchwords of freedom and of industrial welfare, and they were at first believed. I myself did not suspect them of dishonesty. This credu-

lity of the Russian people gave the Bolsheviks power and influence, the possession and disposal of banks, factories, and arms. Let us remember how the Turks, although in the minority, have imposed their rule on helpless peoples. It was so with the Bolsheviks, once they were in power, and they have abused their power more shamelessly than any Sultan.

"The Bolsheviks have reorganized their army according to the necessities of guerrilla warfare. They have restored discipline to an almost incredible extent. Disobedience to orders is severely punished, often by death. As a rule there are three companies in a battalion, three battalions in a regiment, three regiments in a division. The soldiers get 166 rubles [about \$78] monthly. The Winter has hampered and in some places stopped their operations. It remains to be seen whether there will be intervention before they can take the field again in force.

"Weary, disheartened at the long, fruitless wait for allied help, the Russian people are leaderless and resigned. This, of course, does not mean that they agree with their rulers. The Bolsheviks themselves are certain the Allies will not

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intervene. They tell many stories about the lack of harmony among the victorious nations and about their plans to throw Russia into disorder so that they may the more easily exploit her. They feel so secure that they do not hesitate to send their troops even to Esthonia and Livonia to slay and pillage small peoples who oppose them. They spread false tales about the Czechoslovaks, as that they are aiding autocracy and wish to restore C-radcm. and that each of the Czechoslovak soldiers is paid forty rubles a day.

"The Bolshevist Army is composed partly of Magyar and German prisoners of war, who were liberated in Russia, and who have given to the troops their effective military organization. They act also as a kind of police force within the armies, detecting and reporting disaffection in the other elements and, on occasion, thus venting their personal spites.

"The spirit of the army is merciless. The soldiers torture and starve Czechoslovak prisoners. With them are boys of 14 and 15 years, whose business it is to kill wounded soldiers on the battlefields after the engagement is over. We have captured some of these youths, and

have heard them boast of their work.

"An authentic instance of the conduct of Bolshevist soldiers toward those who oppose them may serve as an illustration: Last August the General Staff at Ussurijsk was in command of the former Russian Captain Sakovitch. Seven members of an anti-Bolshevist organization there, which had held meetings at Bikin, were arrested on a charge of intentionally blowing up a bridge. Whether there was merit in the charge I do not know, nor do the Bolsheviki know, for they did not take the trouble to inquire. The seven men were lined up forty yards from a machine gun and shot to death.

"Before the firing began, the wife of one of these seven men, a woman who had served three years as a nurse in the Russian Army in its Galician campaigns and elsewhere, and who had been decorated for bravery, begged that she might be killed with her husband. The soldiers laughed at her. They told her they had other intentions with regard to her. Young widows, they told her, were especially desirable. With the firing of the first shot, the wife became insane.

"In such circumstances it is not to be wondered at that the Russians greet allied and Czechoslovak soldiers as deliverers."

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