

Rumania, Betrayed, Keeps Up the Fight

Forced Into War by German Influence Before Moment Was Ripe—Russian Traitors Kept Kaiser Informed of New Foe's Plans So That King Ferdinand's Army Was Soon Crushed

By K. BERCOVICI.

RUMANIA'S rejection of the German peace ultimatum brings to memory the opinion the world at large had of this Balkan State at its entrance into the war after dickering and bickering for nearly two years with both the Allies and the Teutons.

It was pointed out that Rumania had gorged herself with the gold she obtained by selling her grains and other agricultural products to whoever paid best—playing one Power against the other in the market, until grains and gold were weighed on equal scales.

Thus, when Rumania finally entered the war the world had no sympathy with her, no admiration for that country that had sold itself to the highest bidder; man power as well as grains. The world had little admiration for the Rumanians when they overran the plains of Hungary and had very little sympathy when they were massacred and driven back until seven-eighths of Rumania was ground under the iron heel and cannon of the enemy. We heard talk of the restoration of Belgium, of Serbia, of northern France, but we hear very little of the restoration of Rumania.

Why Rumania Delayed.

Let us first see why Rumania delayed her entrance into the war. The Rumanians are a Latin people. Their King, Ferdinand, is a German, and a Hohenzollern to boot. Though Rumania is a constitutional monarchy, Rumania was never completely governed by Rumanians. In the Ministry were always enough Germanophiles to insure a leaning on the side of Germany in case of emergency. Matters of extreme importance were settled in Vienna or Berlin.

When the war broke out Rumania was in the following situation: From Berlin pressure was brought on the King that he enter the war on the side of the Teutonic allies. But Ferdinand knew that his people, being Latins, would not fight against Latins; would not fight against France, for which every Rumanian has great love; nor against Italy and England, with which they have always been friendly.

A declaration of war on the side of the Teutons would have meant civil war and the dethronement of the King. This Ferdinand did not want to risk. On the other hand, to enter on the side of the Allies spelt disaster. The longest frontier of Rumania is the one separating the country from Austria-Hungary. The next in length is the Danube, separating the country from Bulgaria, the third in length the River Pruth, the frontier of Russia.

Two Foes and a Traitor.

Thus Rumania had to face two enemies on her longest frontier lines and had only one allied neighbor, Russia. In other words, Rumania had to face two enemies with her back to a traitor.

Rumania knew that Russia was betraying herself and her allies to the Germans. They knew that in Rumania, because they know Russia from long experience. They were more than once Russia's allies and had to pay dearly for the privilege, as, for instance, in 1877,

when they saved the Russian army at Plevna. As a recompense Russia annexed Bessarabia, the most fertile province of Rumania. It was this fear of Russian friendship that drove Bulgaria to the Teutons and kept the Greeks neutral and dangerous. "One always loses with Russia," is an old Balkan proverb.

How wise Rumania was to delay her entrance into the war became clear in the course of the Stuermer inquiry in Petrograd, when it was proved that the German Staff was punctually informed as to every intended move of the Rumanian army and of what Russia would do as an ally. Rumania was forced into the war before she was prepared. Russia sent her an ultimatum that if she did not immediately declare herself the Russian army would cross the Pruth as an enemy.

A Nation's Death Knell.

It was then agreed that Russia was to furnish the heavy artillery and such ammunition as the Rumanians lacked, Russia to be paid for all this by the other allies. This was the death knell of Rumania. The result was a foregone conclusion. Rumania went to the slaughter.

They expected the Russians to help them. A good many, however, knew better. The result we all know. The heavy artillery never appeared back of the Rumanian armies. The plans were sold in advance to the Teutons. The fortifications of Bucharest, the capital of the country, were dismantled on some obscure order and the Russian Staff found no time in which to destroy the granaries of Braila and Galatzi and all along the railroads, in which were millions of bushels of wheat already paid for by the English.

The Rumanian army and the Rumanian people were slaughtered as per programme—two enemies on their front with a traitor at their back. From eyewitnesses I know that the German atrocities were still more horrible in Rumania than in Serbia or Belgium. The work was done more efficiently. The German army had had two years experience.

An Allied Misfortune.

One dared not then speak of Russia as a traitor, because she still was an ally. We spoke of her mistakes. It was the greatest misfortune of the Allies that they ever were allied with Russia. It certainly would have been better if Russia had been an ally of Germany. The Allies would then have profited from Russian perfidy. The Allies would then have been in possession of Germany's plans instead of the Germans being in possession of the Allies' plans.

But the Allies were guilty of criminal ignorance of Balkan politics. Had it not been so, England would never have had to pay 200,000 men for the Dardanelles failure; it would have required much less than the half of that number to take Constantinople from the land side through Tchataldja in the same way as the Balkan countries had essayed a few years ago. England should never have forfeited the friendship of the Bulgars. But then—England did not want Constantinople in the hands of Russia. This would have eventually meant a bolted door to Asia.

The Allies should have known better. They should never have allowed Russia to press Rumania into the war while the granaries on the Danube and the depots of the railroads were filled with English

paid for wheat. The Allies should have taken that away first. It was Germany who insisted that Russia press Rumania into the war while the granaries were still full.

The Allies should never have relied on Russia's delivery of artillery. It is a well known fact that in Russia battleships disappear from the dry docks, that a papier mache man-of-war was improvised for the Emperor's inspection, that graft is not only a national institution, but a craft, a virtue, an art, that from Peter the Great till now Russia has shown herself as a country without a conscience.

All this and more the Rumanians knew when they were led to the slaughter—400,000 men led like sheep to the slaughter.

We must understand this before judging Rumania. Rumania's entrance in the war was not delayed by greed, but by knowledge of what was to follow. In this respect it is pointed out that as the Russians had a few of their men in the general staff of Rumania, the plans formed there were not only given to the Germans, but they were laid in such a way as to give the German army the least trouble; the shortest possible route was chosen to drive the Rumanian army into the jaws of death.

Losses in Artillery.

How all the artillery the Allies furnished the Russians to help Rumania fell into the hands of the German army is history. How the Russians did not even destroy the bridges behind them when they retired across the Danube, how the Germans followed up and toyed with them, are matters of too recent date to need recapitulation.

There was great rejoicing when the Russian Czar was deposed. The Rumanians hoped that the period of treachery had passed forever. The Stuermer revelations were an eye opener only to the western allies. In the Balkans all this was common knowledge. The Balkan statesmen, and even the common people, knew what friendship with the Russ meant. But they feared to open their mouths, because they knew that no amount of proof could have convicted a Russian noble in a court of his peers. They also feared the vengeance to come after such a disclosure.

In the Balkans it was thought that England and France, on being convinced of the Czar's weakness and his court's treachery, helped engineer the overthrow of the Little Father. When Kerensky was recognized by the allied Powers it served to confirm them in their suspicion. Kerensky's declaration that he was willing to prosecute the war to a final conclusion gave heart to stricken Rumania and preparations were made for an offensive.

When Kerensky Fell.

The remnant of the army was put in fighting shape. The general staff was reorganized. Young blood was added to the military organization. It must be understood that Rumania could communicate with her other allies only through Russia. All other avenues were closed. What little assistance she could hope for could only come through Russia.

But just when the Rumanians were getting in shape to strike, the Kerensky Government was overthrown, and the



FORMER PREMIER STUERMER OF RUSSIA WHO HELPED TO BETRAY RUMANIA

Bolsheviki came into power. There were then 200,000 Russian soldiers in Rumania. The Bolsheviki started their demoralizing propaganda among them. The new "tavariski" began fraternizing with the enemy instead of fighting him. The Russian soldier suddenly developed great love for his enemies and made Christian overtures to them; at the same time he treated his brothers in arms as bourgeois, "stupid animals, who are still the subjects of a King."

Those 200,000 Russian soldiers had to be fed by the Rumanians, while they roamed about at will. At times they even had the temerity to interfere in internal policies. The Bolshevik Government ordered the Rumanian Government to enter into peace parleys with the Teutons. When Rumania refused an order was sent out for the arrest of the King and the erstwhile ally threatened to march against Jassy, the temporary capital of the country and the seat of the Government.

Russia Now Open Enemy.

With Russia as an avowed enemy, Rumania was completely isolated. She could expect no help from her allies. The Bolsheviki then began their pressure, and if it was not timed with a German offensive, that was probably due to German diplomacy. The Bolsheviki, shouting to the world that they wanted every nation to work out its own fate, did their utmost to force the Rumanians to adjust their heads in the Teuton yoke.

Up to now the Rumanians have refused to do so. They have only added an open enemy to their list. It is better than having him as a traitor at their back. It is possible that the Rumanians will resist to the last and be crushed the same as Serbia and Belgium were. It is again possible that the instinct of preservation will bid them make peace with the enemy.

Of all the Balkan countries, Rumania was the only one that had developed industries and promised to develop more. Sugar refineries, petroleum distilleries, plants making coal tar products and tanneries were successfully competing with German concerns. Rumania was called the Belgium of the Orient, and like Belgium, it had to suffer the fate of those who oppose the will of the Kaiser.

Russian Peace Regarded as a "Scrap of Paper."

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man domination of the Bolsheviki was accepted as a fait accompli.

It has been learned authoritatively in Washington that the military benefits which Germany anticipated from the Russian collapse have not been entirely up to expectations. There has been, of course, the ability to transfer troops from the eastern to the western front, an operation which was begun weeks ago and has been virtually completed. The actual signing of a so-called peace pact will not materially affect this matter one way or the other. It will be necessary for the Germans to keep skeleton armies on the eastern front to exercise domination over a very volatile and uncertain situation, and thousands of Teuton troops will have to continue the duty of policing and

maintaining order in conquered territory.

No one knows at what moment the Bolsheviki may be thrown out of power and the Russian situation become again acute. All this has to be considered by the Germans. The vast territories over which Germany will apparently seek to exercise control will require German or Austrian troops at every point. It will have to be an actual physical domination by the presence of armed soldiers and this in itself involves a herculean task.

There has been keen disappointment in Germany over the fact that the release of German and Austrian prisoners by Russia has meant so little in a military way. On paper it should increase the Teuton armies by approximately a million men. But the prisoners after being released are unable to get to the border because of the collapse of transportation facilities,

they have no food or equipment and there seems to be no means of getting them into any state of organization. Press reports from Petrograd refer to four thousand German and Austrian former war prisoners who are starving in the chaos and disorder of the Russian capital.

Secretary Lansing has information indicating that it may be upward of a year before the Germans can really reap industrial benefits from the Ukraine or from the conquered Russian provinces. Wheat is not lacking in the southern part of Russia, but there is no means of transporting it to Germany at present. While the populace in Petrograd and Moscow was starving last fall there were huge stores of untouched supplies rotting near Odessa because they could not be moved.

Germany's organization work in Rumania is taken as an example of the methods

likely to be employed in Russia. Here the Germans accomplished the huge task of getting oil from the Rumanian oil wells to Germany and also arranging for a flow of other supplies. Military experts speak of this work as a remarkable example of Teuton genius for organization. But it took upward of a year to be put into operation.

It is assumed that it will take fully that long for Germany to organize an adequate system for obtaining supplies from Russia. And meantime the United States and the Allies expect to bring about a decision on the western front. President Wilson says that 1918 is to be the decisive year. The Russian peace debacle will not count until later, and there may be no "later" if the new plans of the Allies are carried out according to schedule.