

On Behalf of the Friendly Bourgeoisie in Soviet Russia

— by Louise Bryant —

By an astonishing mental perversion, conservative American papers have for the last two years designated those upper class Russians who joined with the British or the Japanese or the pro-German Mannerheim forces against their own countrymen as "loyal" Russians. As for that large percentage of the old aristocracy and the middle class, either not interested in politics and therefore accepting any regime without a struggle, and who certainly could never be induced to take up arms against Russia, under any circumstances, they are not taken into consideration at all or they are simply called "adventurers". And yet the middle class played a most important part in the victories of Soviet Russia. From their ranks are drawn most of the technical experts and many of the officers of the Red Army, as well as the teachers, doctors, and other professional people.

Unfortunately, most of us learn only by experience, and many Russians, after the Revolution, who were opposed to the New Order, had to live for a time outside of Russia before they came to realize how much they loved Russia. I remember several such cases even in the early months following the overturn of the Tsar. At the Astoria Hotel, where I was living in Petrograd, there were several officers and their wives, with whom I became acquainted. They were ridiculously scornful of every attempt of the revolutionists to build up a new nation. Two months after the Bolsheviks came in to power, they fled to Stockholm. I met them there half a year later, in the lobby of a fashionable hotel. They were frantic to go back. Their explanation is more easily understood by Slavs than by Anglo-Saxons. Begging eagerly for every scrap of news, they claimed that it was impossible for them to go on living in Sweden. "We do not fit here, the people are too cold. We weep and weep. Never mind, we can get used to the Soviets, perhaps they will not be so bad, and at least they are Russians. But to be exiled... that is a living death!"

The clerk in the same hotel gave me his version. "They are all crazy," he said. "I wonder why they came here in the first place, for no sooner do they get settled in their apartments than they ruin the peace of the whole establishment. Why, last week there was a contessa here and she had hysterics every night and beat on the walls of her room. One day she disappeared, leaving a note that said she had gone home to her 'dear, suffering country'. Her trunks and her jewels were forgotten, and we have no address. Russians here claim that she meant to walk on foot from the border, disguised as a peasant. And she was nearly sixty!" If this dear old "adventurer" ever reached Moscow, she probably became head of a hospital or took an important post in a People's University.

A few weeks ago, Mr. Isaac McBride, turning directly from Petrograd, brought the story of a rather touching incident which occurred during the last drive on Petrograd. At that time, 167 of the old regime officers who were in the starving and besieged city wrote a petition and sent it to the Russian officers fighting with the interventionists. They begged them not to continue any longer the war against the Soviets, they claimed that this form of government is the will of the Russian people and "we must bow to that will." Mr. McBride claimed that 75 per cent of the Tsar's officers are now with Red Army.

The most interesting and dramatic case of a Russian who had willfully exiled himself and his subsequent suffering was the case of a young captain of aviation I met recently in Seattle.

Early the second morning after my arrival the telephone rang and a musical but agitated voice inquired: "Are you Madame who speaks on the Russian Revolution?" And almost before I could answer he hurried on: "Please don't say you cannot see me, it is deeply important... very pressing and important."

Still half-awake, I inquired, "Important to whom?" And without hesitation he replied, "Important to me!"

I told the captain to meet me at dinner and I will never forget him as he stood in the doorway of the rather garish, too-new splendor of the Hotel Washington dining-room, in a ragged Russian uniform, and cast inquiring eyes over the diners. I rose and motioned him and he came forward, blushed a little. "It does not take much," he said, bowed and kissed my hand with all the elaborate politeness of the old order.

We had scarcely seated ourselves when he burst out excitedly. "I have killed two men!"

I confess I was absolutely astonished and could only stare at my companion. There was a moment of silence, then he said, "Shh! I continue!"

I nodded. Another silence, then: "They were Bolsheviks. Do you still want me to go on?"

With a good deal of relief I realized that I was not listening to an account of a tragedy which had occurred that afternoon, and I recalled the captain's questions, so I replied icily, "Please remember I'm an American reporter and I can take no part in your civil war."

His eyes searched my face. "But you defend the revolution!"

"Why should I make myself ridiculous by defending a revolution against one of the worst tyrannies that ever existed? No," I said, "my purpose in lecturing is to help of my countrymen to lift this inhuman Allied food blockade. I ask it as much for the good of America as for Russia. We cannot destroy women and children without destroying ourselves."

He beamed with understanding. "Yes, yes, you have the right idea, now I will confess everything!"

In true Russian fashion he began an introspective narrative, going back almost to his infancy. His father had been a judge under the Tsar, and faithful to his institutions. As a boy he was aware that thousands were sent to Siberia for their opinions and he had seen peasants flogged in the public squares. When he was fourteen years old he read "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (Harriet Beecher Stowe's story is very popular in Russia) and it gave him an idea. If slavery was wrong, it was also wrong to be cruel to the peasants. One day he said to his father, "Why don't we change our government so that all the poor will be happy and we will not have to beat the peasants any more?" He was too young to comprehend his father's resulting untrollable fit of anger. For the first and only time in his life, his father struck him. After that a strict watch was kept on his reading and on his associates. So carefully did they guard him that up to the time of the March revolution he had never come into personal contact with any of the revolutionists.

He attended an aristocratic school, and when the war broke out he became an aviator. The news of the overthrow of the Tsar seemed as unreal as a dream. But in his heart he was happy; instinctively he felt that there would be less misery. At that time he was on the Riga front and for nearly half a year his life went on unchangeably. He worked for the "Soldiers' Committees" with the same earnestness and honesty that he had worked for the Tsar. But all the officers did not take so kindly to the new authority. Some of his best and oldest friends began planning a counter-revolution. He was not in their confidence, but he heard whispers of their plots. A terrible night came when they were arrested and he himself was included. As they were marched away, the soldiers murmured among themselves. The evidence was so obvious that the soldiers were in favor of shooting the officers at once. But the Committee decided to send them to Kiev for trial.

Kiev was the home and the birthplace of the captain. Sad and awful was his homecoming. Strange thoughts ran through his mind as he walked those familiar streets, under guard. As the procession came to one of the tunnel-like entrances from certain streets which lead to the war, the idea of escape first entered his head. To use his own words:

"I felt I had no chance in the Tribunal because my companions were certainly guilty. At the thought of such a disgraceful death, a panic seized me. You know how it is with Russians. We get our lives. I remembered that my revolver was still on my hip. I drew it and suddenly shot my two guards. At the moment the rest of the procession had just disappeared in the tunnel and before they realized what had happened I had fled."

But when they elected their ticket They forget a poor hayseed like me.

They sold themselves out to the bankers And thought it would be a fine "Spree"

To steal all the green backs and silver And rob the hayseeds like me.

They went into league with the Devil For the sake of a high license fee But never a cent of the profits Has come to the hayseeds like me

But now I have roused up a little And their greed and corruption I see, And my neighbors are waking around me And I find that we hayseeds agree.

And so we have formed an Alliance From Oppression we're bound to be free And the ticket we vote next election... Will be made up of hayseeds like me.

At every election they fed me With taffy as sweet as could be,

"For days and days I fled. After all sorts of hardships and months of tortured thoughts I arrived in Semionov's territory. What I saw there will be branded on my heart forever. Oh, my poor Russia, that such a monster should live and torment her! Semionov offered me a place in his army, higher salary and rank. I pleaded illness and I was indeed ill. I was sent to America to recuperate."

"For several months after my arrival I suffered a severe nervous collapse. I remained in my room, never seeing anyone, never going anywhere. I read and read. Everything about the revolution I read, the lives of the martyrs, the whole long struggle... At last I new where I stood. I was with the people. I was against my father, against the Tsar. I was most bitter against the traitors who had bargained for foreign bayonets."

"As soon as I was strong again I went to the Russian Consul. I told him my story. I said I must go back now and atone for my crime. He nearly threw me out of his office. He said he would have me arrested. That was over a year ago. You can imagine my agony, my suspense. If I could only return I could be of some service to Russia. I am an educated man. I could be a teacher. I am a good aviator, I could read eyes for the Red Army. I am always reading and studying. That is how I managed not to go mad. I said to myself: 'All this knowledge I will lay at the feet of New Russia. I will say take it and take my life!'"

"Often I find it hard to discipline myself. You see I cannot bear your screaming, cruel press. Every time the White forces gain a small victory I am beside myself. I walk up and down and cannot find rest or peace. I who have killed my brothers, I who murdered men fighting for liberty!"

"How do you like?" I asked him. He looked down at his shabby clothes and said "I had a ring of considerable value which had belonged to my dead mother. I felt sure she would want me to do that if she could have known. No, it does not take much. I live in the shadow. I study and wait."

When I left Seattle, the captain came to see me. On the way he seemed quite cheerful, and even joked me, because I told him how much I loved Moscow for its color and beauty. Not in the same way that I love New York," he explained, because New York is only a part of America is your mother," he said laughing, "and Russia is your sweet heart. It is a pleasant way to feel about a foreign country. For me there is only my mother."

Just as the conductor called, "All aboard!" the captain burst into sudden hysterical weeping. He clung to me like a little boy. "You see how it is with me," he sobbed, "you see how it is — my body is here and my soul is in Russia!"

About Russia.

By Arthur Copping.

Here is another slender scrap of testimony telling against the side supported by all available witnesses. Be- thinking me I should have occasion to use Russian money, I asked a refugee family if they had brought any with them.

"Yes," came the answer. "I have a few thousand Kerensky and Bolshevik rubles, but I am not parting with them. We want money for our maid who came away when we did, but now wishes to return."

"Is her family there?" I asked. "No," came the reply, "she is all alone in the world, but on second thought she does not like leaving Russia."

Here, then, at any rate, was one person for whom Bolshevik rule possessed attraction.

Then I heard Yudenitch's officers mention as an obligation resting on patriotic Russians that they would have to shoot all the Bolshevik commissars, and that every Communist should be executed. Talking with Nicholas Klisshko, the Bolshevik Secretary at the Peace Congress at Dorpat. I asked how many commissars hold authority in Russia today. He answered that there were approximately 100,000 and as to the number of Communists he believed the strength of the party was not far short of 1,000,000.

This representative of Bolshevik Russia confirmed the reported good treatment of children, but as to the overfeeding of children he shook his head.

"No child goes without food. No child's food has to be paid for. But children do not get as much to eat as they ought to, and other persons go definitely short."

With his hands he indicated the dimensions of the daily bread ration. "Just one jolly big slice," I suggested.

"Yes," replied Klisshko, who has a knowledge of idiomatic English, "and not so jolly big either."

He said assurance had been given many times that provided she be left in peace to develop her internal affairs, Soviet Russia would honor the financial obligations incurred by the former Russian Government.

PLAN TRADE WITH RUSSIA

New York. — There is a great demand on the part of American business men to do business with Russia and not to be crowded out of the field by Europeans, is evidenced, according to Emerson P. Jennings, Chairman of the Executive Committee of temporary organization, of The American Commercial Association which has been organized to promote trade with Russia, by nearly a hundred letters which he has received within the last few days urging that everything possible be done to bring about a resumption of trade.

amption of trade. The Executive Committee will report this morning on the attitude which Secretary of State Lansing has taken toward the movement. Commenting upon these letters, Mr. Jennings said last night that many of these firms already have in hand orders from the Soviet Government, and that he had had confidential information yesterday from London that English firms are now receiving gold from Russia, that it is being deposited in London banks, and that shipments are being made against it. Moreover, he said, the Soviet Government is now advertising in London papers for bids on contracts for the development of slate mines along the Volga from which oil and tar are to be extracted. These developments, he insisted, made it incumbent upon the American business man to protect his own interests and see that others do not preempt the field.

The letters are all from thoroughly American firms which are not interested, according to Mr. Jennings, in the politics of Russia, but simply feel that where there is trade to be obtained, Americans should be among the first.

FOREMAN FUMES...

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to the blind and doddering dotards of a system that mankind the world over has condemned and whose destruction is certain within a few decades.

Here is a toast we propose for Col. Foreman and the Legion to drink at their next meeting — dare they do it?

"Down with all tyrants, profiteers, grafters and political self-seekers! America for the American People, not for the falsefactors of wealth!"

Isn't that a patriotic toast, Col. Foreman?

Oh, yes; but that toast would not please the blood-fattened plutocrats who finance the American Legion.

Real Democracy.

Ruminations of a Rebel

The plaintive appeals of the farmers for aid in solving their peculiar problem—the securing of help—proceeds a broad smile on the face of those given to subjecting present day conditions to analysis. They all sing the same song of inability to cultivate their acres by their own labor, and all join in a chorus of criticism against the agricultural worker who prefers to sell his labor power to the industrial bosses because of higher wages and greater opportunity for social enjoyment. It does not occur to the agricultural employer that the long hours which still prevail on the farm may possibly be one of the reasons for the loss of this much desired help. Time was when the "hired man" contentedly accepted the fourteen hour day without question. He now prefers to work eight or nine hours in the factory. His former employer has no just cause for complaint. His erstwhile wage slave, in transferring himself from the farm to the shop, is merely following a very natural inclination to improve his economic and social condition. Age-old "economic determinism" runs rampant throughout capitalist society. The employer hires labor with the view to exploit it. The wage slave cannot be blamed for availing himself of every opportunity to minimize his exploitation. Wonder if any farmer ever thought of solving the problem of help by limiting the area of his farm to the number of acres he could cultivate by his lonesome! Nope. That would eliminate all prospect of profit, which is unthinkable to the bourgeoisie.

I am not a prophet endowed with the gift of foretelling future events, but I am willing to gamble on the certainty that after the election next November there won't be enough of the Democratic Party left to merit recognition. It does not require extraordinary powers of discernment to correctly diagnose the present state of the public mind. Even the most conservative—those who have hitherto accepted without question, the lying stories in the daily papers and even sanctioned the unlawful acts of terrorism for which the Democratic administration is responsible—are becoming alarmed about their own safety if the present saturnalia of persecution is permitted to continue. It is just dawning on their minds that they may come down to breakfast some morning and discover that their prized

extravagance, and predict bankruptcy for the nation. You are needlessly alarmed, gentlemen. Isn't the Department of Internal Revenue working overtime collecting taxes? And if they fall short, can't Congress pass a supplemental bill to increase the governmental income? Besides, are not the resources of our great country illimitable? And are there not millions of patient, plodding, industrious working mules to wres from nature unlimited products? Some people would kick if they were being escorted to the electric chair.

There are at present about an even dozen political parties in the field and others are being organized at the rate of one a month. Some scurrilous, old Mos' of the candidates will represent capitalism with divergent views respecting its administrative policies. But one will hold aloft the torch of economic enlightenment and voice a demand for a new order of society. Millions of workers will respond to that demand even though it be expressed through the personality of a prison inmate. Gene Delis within a prison walls will speak and the multitude will hearken to the voice, crying in the wilderness of capitalist oppression. The signs of the times augur ill for the bourgeoisie and their political henchmen.

When the American Legion in Detroit, at the behest of the "best citizens" of that city, broke up the meeting of Bill Hayward, there was an expectation of remonstrance from the Detroit Federation of Labor. Was not Hayward at the head of a rival industrial organization, and what was more reasonable than to expect the Federation to applaud this wallow administered to a common enemy? Much to the surprise of the Chamber of Commerce, however, that aggregation of promoters of lawlessness were notified that a recurrence of suppression of free speech and public assemblage would be met, if necessary, by armed force by the Federation—that if the city administration cannot prevent hoodlums from terrorizing the people the Federation would assume the job. It will be interesting to note the result of the next "shiveree" pulled off by the Legion. Will the Federation make good its threat or content itself with passing another "we deplore"? There is a possibility that the Federation perceives in the Legion a menace to its own interests, in which event drastic action may be expected. The fact that a notice was sent to the Chamber of Commerce is a recognition of its culpability. Even this degree of enlightenment evokes congratulation and inspires hope of eventual labor solidarity.

Even the capitalist daily papers are commenting on the stupendous profligacy of the government. Congress is lavishly appropriating millions for this, that or the other purpose, but doubtless with a view to distributing the "pork" which will be returned in campaign contributions. The petit bourgeoisie are loudly denouncing this

The Boston Tea Party.

Continued from page 3.

oppression welled in the hearts of the people. Every school boy yearned for a chance to imitate these defenders of liberty and strike a blow against the usurpations of King George.

Of course some British historians have condemned the Boston Tea Party as an act of lawlessness; and occasionally we find some American, of English parentage or sympathies, taking the English view. Even Woodrow Wilson in his History of the American People (Vol. II, pages 163 and 185) speaks of the Tea Party as a "mob led by a South End tough." The redoubtable John Adams, however, another President of the United States, whose son also became President, and whose family record of public service is unsurpassed in American history, exclaimed when he heard of the direct action taken by the Tea Party: "This is the most magnificent movement of all. There is a dignity, a majesty, a sublimity in this last effort of the patriots, that I greatly admire. This destruction of the tea must have so important consequences and so lasting, that I cannot but consider in an epoch in history."

Professor John Fiske of Harvard College, the most brilliant, the most profound, and the most accurate of American historians, ends his essay on

PERLEY DOE.

WEEKLY MEETINGS

50 So. Howard St.
Akron Ohio.

FEB. 29th TOM LEWIS OF CLEVELAND.

ATTEND THESE MEETINGS.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED.

BACK FROM SIBERIA

The truth about Siberia is slowly coming out.

It is very interesting to us, because the most of it is favorable to democracy, and it confirms also the news that has been printed in the Union Record for the past year — news, the opposite of that carried in the private press.

Here is William H. Planert, who reached his home 5431 Adams street, Chicago, January 24, 1920, — after serving fourteen months in Siberia. He was a sergeant in the 27th Infantry and spent most of his time 2,900 miles west of Vladivostok. He considers the Siberian expedition a failure from every point of view and particularly so in that it played a part in helping a gang of "bloodthirsty cutthroats" — Kolehak, Semenov and Kolmokoff. He says:

The best of them, Kolehak, was

just the czar over again; the worst of them were simply cruel murderers. Kolmokoff shot eleven people in our town because somebody said they were Bolsheviks. We tried to prevent the murders, but they took the poor people away and killed them.

It was American money, British ammunition, American ammunition and guns, Japanese soldiers and French and Italian forces that kept up the bloody war for nearly two years by helping Kolehak, Semenov and Kolmokoff. Semenov was the pet of Japan.

When Sergeant Planert was asked about the Bolsheviks, he said:

So far as I could learn they are very good people. Those fighting the Bolsheviks are just the old czar over again. The Bolsheviks come in and take over all property and administer it for the benefit of all the people. From what I heard the people in Siberia are convinced that everybody

except the old nobility would be benefited by a bolshevik administration.

Sergeant Planert's report confirms the reports brought to America by Louise Bryant and Raymond Robins and others whose reports have found space in our columns; — and these believed in government circles.

How long are the people going to believe the private press of privilege?

FARMERS WAKING UP ACCORDING TO THIS

I once was the tool of Oppression And as green as a sucker could be; While monopolists banded together To beat a poor hayseed like me.

The corporations and old party Bosses, Together did sweetly agree, They thought there'd be little trouble In working a hayseed like me.

At every election they fed me With taffy as sweet as could be,

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