What Can Be Done to Save Russia Quickly?

Pressing War Problem Faced by the Allies Given New Light by Countess Kapnist

German Menace, She Says, May Be Offset by Iron Discipline and Personal Government

MME. INA METAXA
Born COUNTESS KAPNIST

THE Germans will not replenish their armies with Russians. They will not be able to press Russian man power into military service against the Allies and ourselves. Given time enough they can probably set the Russian peasant farmers at work producing food. Meanwhile they will get no important food supply from the Ukraine or elsewhere unless they succeeded last spring in organizing their Russian conquests in time for the planting of wheat.

These are opinions of Mme. Ina Metaxa, born Countess Kapnist, a Russian of Greek antecedents and a refugee from the Ukraine. With her husband she is at present in New York on the final stretch of their roundabout journey to his home in Greece. They could not come direct by way of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean from Poltava, and if they had tried to leave Russia by way of Sweden the Bolsheviki, Mme. Metaxa says, would have robbed them of everything valuable before they had reached the frontier.

Came Here by Way of Far East.

Accordingly, like many others in their case, they crossed Siberia last November and proceeded to San Francisco by way of Japan. Even then they were obliged before starting to convert most of their means for the journey into old laces, embroideries and the wondrous goat's hair shawls woven by the peasant women of Orenburg, so sheer that one extensive enough to envelop its wearer warmly can be drawn through a finger ring.

The reason why they were not robbed of these objects of art, says Mme. Metaxa, was that the Bolsheviki along the Siberian Railroad, unlike their comrades further west, are a little afraid to tamper with foreigners, which in a sense the Metaxas were, not knowing what retributive intervention may be preparing in the east.

Mme. Metaxa's analysis of the Russian reversion to chaos and her views of the Russian future are interesting as coming from a representative of the old imperial order, whose family for years was close to the court but retained a certain alien perspective.

She has admiration and even reverence for the former Czar, and gives him a clean bill of integrity and devotion to the cause of his allies, while admitting his fatal vacillation and his lack of the personal qualities to bind the populace to himself. His brother Michael, she says, is his superior in these respects. She also protests, with emphasis, the innocence of the Czarina as to the Rasputin scandal, of which she says the revolutionary agitators made capital, using movies to poison the popular mind.

Estate Seized by Bolsheviki.

Mme. Metaxa is herself a writer of distinction. Her husband, a lawyer, fought for Greece in the recent Balkan war. He is an economist, and was to have stood for office in Poltava before the debacle. Now the Metaxa estate there, first seized by the Bolsheviki, is in German hands. M. Metaxa, being a Greek and an enemy, can't return to it until Russia is purged of the German occupation.

The Metaxas hope for allied American intervention to restore law and order in Russia after the German power has been crushed. Japan could not intervene effectually, Mme. Metaxa thinks, because it will have to be done with great force and the utmost severity, and the Japanese, operating across Siberia with only the single track railroad for troop transport, could not manage it.

Neither could the occidental nations before Germany was disposed of; more troops would be required than they could spare. This consideration of expediency is the only one which she has in mind in believing that intervention must be deferred. The Bolsheviki, she says, will not fly to the arms of Germany if threatened by Germany's enemies. They were too far disillusioned at Brest-Litovsk.

The intervening Powers, she thinks, should allow the racially distinct and now detached border countries, Poland, the Baltic provinces, the Ukraine, to determine their future Governments for themselves. In the event of the Central Powers emerging victorious or in a strong position from the war, Mme. Metaxa believes that the Ukraine will probably join Austria. She says it is strongly Germanophile, a legacy of the German colonists who followed Catherine the Great. If the Central Powers are crushed she expects the Ukraine to become an independent State.

As for the fairly homogeneous interior of western Russia, the nucleus of the old empire in Europe, Mme. Metaxa thinks that after the restoration of order the people are likely to want a Czar with constitutional limitations. She says the throne, the Little Father, was the focus of the only species of patriotism which they understood. Outside the *intelligentsia*, the enlightened bourgeosie, whose leaders engineered the original revolution and who were perhaps one in four or five of the total population, the Russians have no conception of a republic.

At present the simple people, as Mme. Metaxa calls them, demoralized by the Bolsheviki, whose theories are undigested Marx and whose corrupt inspiration is originally German, are "free," and mean to remain so, "freedom" consisting of common ownership in all property, each man for himself without restraints, and no payment of taxes. The idea that taxes are needed to maintain a stable government and that a stable government is essential to make life worth living is wholly above the Russian peasant's comprehension.

Who Will Be the Next Czar?

Who is to be the future Czar Mme. Metaxa cannot predict. The Grand Duke Michael, she says, won't take it, although he might make a success of it with foreign assistance. No other of the Romanoffs known to be alive is qualified. The Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaivitch, the able General, is rumored in Russia to be dead, according to Mme. Metaxa, and if he were not he would be inacceptable as an iron willed reactionary.

Mme. Metaxa does not hesitate to pronounce Lenine and Trotzky German agents. She says she could not prove it in court, but considers that except a German agent only a fool could have played into the German hands at Brest-Litovsk, as these men did, and a fool, she says, Lenine at least is not.

Her version of his return to Russia from exile in Switzerland, after Kerensky's proclamation of amnesty is one which has been current in this country; the German Chancellor, approached by Russian revolutionists in Germany, consented to let Lenine pass through the country, and he was passed in a closed railway carriage and speeded by way of Denmark to Kronstadt.

There, she says, he was received with signal honor by Kerensky's orders, whereupon he at once began to undermine the young idealist. For Kerensky Mme. Metaxa has much respect, but she calls him a closet student of social and political conditions, and says that if he had known his countrymen as he ought he would never have dreamed of establishing a republic on American lines.

His speeches to the soldiers, she says, were wonderful indeed and brought about the abortive Russian offensive a year ago. But his Minister of War had abolished all army discipline and ordained that no order need be obeyed until after a referendum to the command.

This produced those councils of soldiers at the front which were such fruitful soil for the Bolshevik propaganda and the cloudland notion of the proletarian agreement with the Germans.

Many Disciplined Men Slain.

The excellent gendarmerie of Petrograd might have served Kerensky well, says Mme. Metaxa. It was a first class police force. Twelve thousand of its members, however, had been killed in the revolutions and the balance Kerensky had sent to join the armies. They were disciplined, loyal men, most of whom after the fall of the Czar had been quite disposed to serve whatever government might remain.

At the beginning of the war, Mme. Metaxa says, the enthusiasm for the Czar's cause was universal. She denies that the Russian military establishment was hopelessly corrupt and unprepared; instead, she says, it was as well prepared as that of France for a war which was expected to be over in six months. There were plenty of munitions. Through the first year all went swimmingly; German territory was occupied and the unaided Austrians were pushed back to the Carpathians, beyond which lay Vienna.

Bearing witness to the Czar's integrity, Mme. Metaxa declares she knows positively that the Germans made him a secret peace offer early in 1915. For quitting he might have much of Galicia and if not Constantinople the right of way through the Dardanelles. The initial popular enthusiasm had quieted revolutionary agitation and the Czar could have sold out and continued on a greatly strengthened foundation of autocracy. But, according to Mme. Metaxa, he refused to betray his allies.

German assistance to the Austrian defence of the Carpathian passes, bringing artillery which the Russians could not match, made it plain to the Russian people that they were in for a prolonged and uncertain conflict. Their temperament, Mme. Metaxa says, has never been one to stand up to such a prospect with resolution. Moreover, the army was deteriorating.

Fights Badly Under a Plebeian.

Many of the original trained officers, young men of the noble houses, had been killed and the substitutes were scarcely trained and plebeian. Ivan fights badly under a plebeian; he puts his trust in a gentleman. The war began to be unpopular both with the army and at home, and Mme. Metaxa accuses the enlightened radicals, the Cadets, of fostering its unpopularity.

They didn't want it to go well because they hoped to exploit the reaction and force a genuine constitution upon the Czar. It is these men, Lvoff, Miliukoff and their coterie, the formers of the first or provisional Government, whom Mme. Metaxa blames bitterly for the present lot of Russia. Her father, she says, believed in reforms, believed that they must come, but that war time was no time in which to force the hand of the old regime.

The popular disaffection fostered by the Cadets became unmanageable. Soldiers without their rifles began to congregate in the cantonment towns and listen to anarchic propaganda. The stripping of labor from the farms caused local famines. The fatal feeling against the Allies set in; it needed only German whisperings to transform this feeling into an identification of England and France with capitalistic oppression, and the Germans, having failed to corrupt the Czar, were watching their moment to bring about his overthrow.

"The Germans," says Mme. Metaxa, "knew the Russians better than their Emperor and better than the Constitutional Democrats."

First Idea Is to Avoid Taxes.

The first idea of the peasantry at home, after the Czar fell, was that they need no longer pay their taxes. A specimen of their reasoning under the Bolsheviki and the vision of common ownership was collected by Mme. Metaxa from some of them with whom she talked in her journey across Siberia. They would still pay no taxes; they would take away all property from the well to do; the social pyramid would become a plain, and all would be free and equal.

"But how will you live? What are you going to do?"

"Oh, work. He who won't work won't eat."

"But what will the arrangement be? Who will operate the industries?"

"The workmen will have the plants. We shall have them in common."

"Yes, but who will know enough to run them?"

"That will not matter. Russia is rich. You will see we shall produce enough for all."

The result is that throughout nine-tenths of Russia practically nobody is producing anything. In getting out of the country the Metaxas from their train saw thousands of acres formerly under cultivation now fallow. A few of the southern provinces have been feeding all the rest so far as it has been done.

There are no great reserves of wheat for the Germans in the Ukraine. Industrious farmers there and elsewhere have tried to hoard a little, each for himself. Mme. Metaxa doubts that the Germans will be able to get it out of them.

As to making soldiers of them, she says the Russians are through with fighting except among themselves. The Red Guards, former civilian workmen, now looters and Bolsheviki, will fight anybody who tries to bring them under authority, and are looking askance at the Germans, whom they suspect of such designs.

On the whole, Mme. Metaxa's prescription for Russia is iron discipline, administered from outside, and then a Czar, the symbol of authority which the Russians can understand.