

ruled by a foreign army and a clique of the Tisza aristocrats the very ones against whom both peasants and workmen rebelled.

**MEANTIME** the diplomats in Paris, after a week of looting and violence on the part of the Rumanians, have sent a note to Budapest saying that this sort of thing must stop. British and American representatives in Budapest had protested strongly against the action of the Rumanians—Captain Gregory, an American representative, declaring he would not assist in sending food to Hungary if the Rumanians were going to requisition it—"If the Rumanians will not leave I am going home." The Peace Conference has accordingly bade the Rumanians stop their pillaging—and though Hungary remains under the rule of a Rumanian army and a Hapsburg who seized power in a coup d'etat, the Conference piously assures everybody that it wishes "to preserve for that country a free expression of the national will." How the Conference note was received in Budapest an Associated Press dispatch has the following to report: "The Rumanians continue their requisitions, although late last night they acceded in principle to the demands of the four Allied generals that requisitions should cease."

**THE** effect of what the Allies have done in Hungary is described in a cable to the New York Globe from one of its European correspondents. "The Hungarian upheaval," says this dispatch, "gave the Allies a splendid opportunity of proving to the Russian people that they are fighting only Bolshevik excesses. Instead they proved to the great satisfaction of the Bolsheviks that they indeed are looking upon the fight against Bolshevism merely as a convenient method of defeating socialism and restoring the monarchist reaction. Now—while the anti-socialist newspapers of the entente countries are celebrating the supposed 'triumph' in Budapest—the Bolsheviks in Moscow and extreme socialists all over the world are celebrating what for them is a real victory."

**TWO** recent dispatches to the New York Times show how news is sometimes made to work as propaganda. On July 30th the Times printed a Washington dispatch discussing the inquiry of Ambassador Morris into the government at Omsk. "Morris's Reports Favor Kolchak" read the headline; and the dispatch itself declared that thus far the reports were "favorable to recognition," showed Kolchak "actuated by the highest motives," etc., etc. The reader gained a very favorable idea of Kolchak—as no doubt it was intended he should. And had Mr. Morris agreed with the Times no one would have been the wiser. But two weeks later the Times found it necessary to print a second dispatch from Washington: one which said that "Ambassador Morris's preliminary reports have all been unfavorable to the recognition of Kolchak," and such as to "emphasize the essentially military character of his government." To the frequency with which news dispatches have been used for propaganda in such a way as this, is due in large part the fact that we are still without peace in Russia.

## The End of the Kolchak Myth

**I**N an effort to establish the good faith of Kolchak's government at Omsk the propagandists have long been building the legend of its democracy. Kolchak, they have said, would restore popular government. But Kolchak began by destroying popular government—when he overturned the democratic, non-Bolshevik government at Siberia and set up a regime of his own. To cover this autocratic seizure of power the propagandists have worked overtime. Blocs of insignificant parties have been marshalled as evidence of widespread political support. Endorsements have been juggled to make it seem that the twenty million members of the Russian cooperatives had pledged their support to the Omsk government. In May the propagandists talked of the democratic army Kolchak led, an army made up of soldiers who greeted their leader as redeemer of new Russia. Peasants, they declare, were enlisting willingly in the holy cause. Everywhere Kolchak was advancing—winning easily against half-hearted opposition. To the American press a French wireless reported on May 13th that Kolchak was making plans "to begin an advance on Moscow."

Today, three months later, there is little that can be salvaged from the wreck of early summer hopes. "The position of the anti-Bolshevik army commanded by Admiral Kolchak (says a Washington dispatch to the New York Times, August 12th) is so critical that official Washington is now openly apprehensive of the collapse of the entire movement headed by Kolchak. . . . Entirely trustworthy information received by the government within the last forty-eight hours shows that the Siberian forces have retired an additional 160 to 170 miles—this being the third extensive retirement in the last few weeks."

Kolchak's retreat has been a rout—despite the extraordinary advantage of facing an enemy who was occupied on three other fronts. For the complete collapse of his May offensive, the propagandists, of course, have a ready answer. Lack of outside aid, they say. Kolchak needed munitions—and until it was too late we gave him none. That is an argument popular with Kolchak's apologists, but a poor explanation for the disinterested public. Aside from whatever advantages Kolchak had for production of munitions within Russia (until a month ago he held the vast coal and iron fields of the Urals and the steel plants at Ekaterinburg) we know in fact that the Allied Powers did send great shipments of arms and ammunition to Siberia. That fact is officially confirmed. Addressing Parliament on July 29th,

the British Minister of War declared: "We have made a powerful contribution in the way of munitions, which we are continuing to make." Possibly the British contribution to the different anti-Bolshevik forces in Russia has amounted to 500,000 rifles and 500,000,000 rounds of ammunition. That is the estimate of one well-informed British journal. And to British aid must be added the support Kolchak has drawn from Japan.

It was not rifles that Kolchak lacked most. His real weakness was his utter lack of popular support. From its inception the Omsk government has had only that authority which its bayonets could enforce. A Washington dispatch to the New York Times simply puts the truth politely when it says: "It is suspected in some important diplomatic quarters here that the new attitude taken by the United States toward the Omsk government, which is indefinitely postponing recognition of the Kolchak regime, is occasioned by a distrust of Admiral Kolchak himself rather than by the military reverses suffered by his army. It is known that some time ago Paul S. Reinsch, American Minister to China, cabled to the State Department a series of criticisms of Admiral Kolchak by American consular officers in Siberia. The essence of the advices was that Admiral Kolchak was distrusted by the Siberian population, that he could not exercise governmental authority because of the people's hostility to him, and that he was a reactionary."

Kolchak's friends in America will have an increasingly hard time keeping alive the myth of popular support behind the government at Omsk. With news of Kolchak's rout comes an announcement that the government of the United States has authorized the shipment of more arms to Siberia. A few more months, however, and the shipment of rifles will be no answer to the demand of the American people for an end to intervention. Americans will not be concerned about "recognition" of Kolchak or Lenin or Denikin. What they will demand, with the coming of winter, is *peace*—peace with all factions in Russia, with the Soviet government no less than with its opponents.

## Plays Without Actors?

ONE big fact is made clear by the actors' strike: you may call yourself a "producing" manager and believe yourself a "producing" manager, but without actors you can produce little except indignation.

Another fact, not quite so clear, is beginning to be suspected by everyone. This is the fact that without "producing" managers it is still possible to produce plays. The two things that are unques-

tionably needed are the plays themselves and players to play them. Some sort of housing and ticket-selling is required, and some sort of management. But the management may be and can be the servant of the actors. It need not be the boss.

Managers vary so greatly in their knowledge of the stage, their disinterested intelligence, their creative faculty, their tact and generosity, their fellow-feeling for the actor, that it is almost impossible to sweep them all into a class and fit them with their lowest common characterization. Among their most ardent defenders are well-established actors, actors whose relations with them have been worked out so satisfactorily that the very idea of fighting them as a class seems unjust and repugnant. But greatly as they vary and excellent as they may be in given cases, the theatrical managers as a class, even those who know most about the stage, are under the unfortunate disadvantage of being to a considerable extent parasites. They are lusty parasites, well nourished for their size and extremely unaware of their true character. But to them the chief thing is not the art or the profession. It is the business. They are in the business competitively, greedily and for profit. The business may thrive or may not thrive. But the profession, as a rule, has been cruelly subordinated to the exigencies of the business. And the art has simply gone to pot.

What the managers have given the American public is, with few exceptions, an immense amount of business promotion to a small accompaniment of art. We have had billions of electric bulbs, reams of advertising, a gallop of one speculative production on the heels of another and a great deal of claque and sentimental dust. This, in spite of Mr. Belasco's sacrifices on the altar of art and Mr. Frohman's tiny residual estate, has been the main result of the busyness of the theatre. In seeking to be profit-producing managers as well as producing managers, the emphasis has fallen resoundingly on the box-office. And the actors have lost out both as artists and as employees.

The strike is aimed at the managers in their role as employers. It cannot help affecting them in their role as theatrical producers. The finest possibility of the strike is a fundamental readjustment of the theatre in line with the actors' best conception of their art. There is more in the strike than a fight for a share of the profits, payment "by the piece" and "overtime" and the rest. There is the underlying need of the actors to escape from their subordination to the box-office and to assert their own paramountcy in the theatre. The measure of the success of the strike may well be the extent to which the managers are reduced from their position as bosses all along the line.