

Faith in the Bolsheviks Disappears

Hope that the Bolsheviks would somehow continue to fight faded rapidly by the end of January, and terminated abruptly on February 12 by the declaration of the Soviet government that the war was over. A new period opens almost immediately. It is the period of the preparation for intervention.

Up to the time when Russia went out of the war the dominant tendency of the news is to be optimistic about the government in power. In their turn, Lvov, Milukov, Kerensky, Kornilov and Trotzky had been reported as favorable to the Allied cause. Even the Bolsheviks, denounced while in opposition to Kerensky, were treated without obvious prejudice once they were established, and while they were still defying Germany. The judgment of reporters and caption-writers was governed, on the whole uniformly, by the will to believe that Russia would assist the Allies. That the events falsified this optimism again and again shows how strongly the wish intruded upon objective judgment. For while reporters in Russia did advert on numerous occasions to the basic demoralization of the war-weary people, those dispatches flickered and disappeared in the prevailing desire to maintain an eastern front. That this motive was stronger initially than any hatred of Bolshevism, any fear of the Red Peril, is shown rather emphatically by the very friendly character of the news during the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk. The informal recognition of the Soviet Government by Great Britain, the idealization of Russia contained in President Wilson's address of January 8, elation over the strikes in Germany and Austria, and a good deal of war-weariness in Western Europe,—all coincide with news about Russia which is, to say the least, sympathetic to the Soviets.

From the Revolution of March, 1917, to the final collapse of the eastern front in early February, 1918, it is just to say that a strong bias is reflected in the presentation of the news. It is the bias of hope, and this bias persistently plays down news of Russia's weakness and plays up announcements and events which sustain hope. There were plenty of exceptions, of course, and we have tried faithfully to give them full value in what has preceded. We assert nothing more than the existence of a dominant tendency in the general course of the news, a tendency contradicted by indisputable events. Up to this point at least, we do not believe that on the face of the news any case appears pointing to the existence of an organized propaganda working behind the censorship. The evidence, in our opinion, disproves such a charge, and vindicates the good will of those who prepared and reported the news. The difficulties revealed are professional: where the news is misleading in the net effect it is because the emphasis has been misplaced by the powerful passions of a great war.

The period which follows the withdrawal of Russia shows a radical change in the character of the news. In order to understand that change it is necessary to recall that the final loss of Russia was a frightful disappointment, that the German offensive of March was the supreme military crisis of the war. The period we are approaching now transcends all others in its desperate significance. It begins with what looked to the western world like downright betrayal, for the Allies stood face to face with a Germany freed from Russian pressure on the eastern front. These facts bear heavily on the quality of the news which follows. The patriotic men who were engaged in furnishing the news about Russia had hoped in vain through twelve anxious months. That the threshold of their credulity was almost immediately lowered should surprise no one.

IV. The Appeal for Intervention

On February 12, 1918, the Times published its obituary on Russia as a belligerent. On February 26 appeared the famous Grasty interview with Foch. (Special to the New York Times, Paris, February 25):

"If America will look ahead I am sure she will see another field in which she can render immense service without relaxing her efforts on the western front. She should give her attention to the Orient.

"Germany is walking through Russia. America and Japan, who are in a position to do so, should go to meet her in Siberia. Both for the war and after America and Japan must furnish military and eco-

nomic resistance to German penetration. There should be immediate steps in this important matter. Don't wake up after it is too late. Don't wait until the enemy has too much of a start. . . ."

Japanese and British marines landed at Vladivostok early in April, and British troops on the Murman peninsula. Towards the end of May the Czechoslovak troops in Russia were in conflict with the Soviets. In July American troops were landed in Vladivostok; in August American troops were landed in Archangel. On August 4, 1918, the State Department issued its famous and puzzling pronouncement, saying: first that "military inter-

vention in Russia would be more likely to add to the present sad confusion there than to cure it. . . ." Second, that "military action is admissible in Russia now only to render such protection and help as is possible to the Czechoslovaks against the armed Austrian and German prisoners who are attacking them. . . ." Third, "to steady any efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves may be willing to accept assistance. . . ." Fourth, "to guard military stores. . . ." Fifth, to safeguard "the country to the rear of the *westward-moving* Czechoslovaks"

Five and a half months intervened between the withdrawal of Russia from the war and the formal acceptance of the policy of intervention by the American Government. As early as April there had been some intervention, but August 4 marks the public and official triumph of the idea. What was the character of the news in these months? Ignoring all editorials, magazine features, etc., of which the volume was very large, selecting only from the news, we have noted about 285 items bearing upon the problem of intervention.

We have classified the 285 items according to the theme they illustrate. Thus:

German Domination of Russia	49
Russian Anti-Bolshevism	34
Japanese Intervention	69
Allied Intervention	48
American Intervention	26
The Czechoslovaks	31
The Red Peril	5
Prisoners in Siberia Peril	3
Relief for Russia	3
Japanese in Peril	2
Guarding Stores	2
Anti-Intervention	13

That the Red Peril should have played so insignificant a part in the news at a time when the debate about intervention in Russia's internal affairs was hottest is one of the curiosities of this history. It is also one of the most significant things about it. The notion of a fundamental antagonism between the Soviet government and the American is not insisted upon until after American troops are on Russian soil. (See Section V of this report.)

The great reason for military action displayed in the news is the German domination of Russia. It is Foch's reason in February; it is Senator King's reason in his Senate resolution of June 10th; it is Mr. Taft's reason the same day. (Times of June 11.) The argument was simple: the eastern front is gone. Germany has an unblocked path through Russia and Siberia to the Pacific, through Russia and the Caucasus to India. Germany will organize Russian resources and perhaps Russian man power; then she will win the war. Somewhere or other an eastern front must be reestablished.

The Bolsheviks will not and cannot do this. The problem is therefore to be solved by Allied, Japanese, and American soldiers cooperating with Russian anti-Bolsheviks. The providential rebellion of the Czechoslovaks in May, June and July provides the nucleus.

This argument dominates the news in the Times up to August, and more or less until the armistice with Germany. The armistice, of course, destroyed the argument. But the intervention continued. After the armistice intervention is justified by the Red Peril; before the armistice it is justified by the German Peril. Little fighting was done by American troops in Russia before the armistice. These troops went to fight Germany and remained to fight Russians.

The German Peril

The news looking towards intervention is thickest from just after Foch's interview to just before the great German offensive of March 21. It declines rather suddenly after the President had vetoed the idea, and then begins again strongly in May with increasing intensity through June and July up to the time of the President's conversion. The first unsuccessful phase in early March, 1918, is before the fright caused by the German success. The second successful phase coincides with the farthest advance of the Germans towards Paris. President Wilson's final decision on August 4 is four days before the day which Ludendorff calls the turning point of the war. Thus intervention was *launched* as part of the grand strategy of the war against Germany. The news is all to that effect. "Sees Russia Now as Ally of Germany"—"Germans Overrun Siberia"—"Germany Boasts an Open Route to India"—"German Leads Bolshevik Army"—"Bolsheviki Yield Russia's Riches to Berlin"—"Russians Sell Out to the Germans"—these are headlines typical of the items we have listed under "German Domination of Russia," in the months between Russia's withdrawal from the war and the formal acceptance of the policy of intervention by the American Government. Occasionally dispatches come through presenting another picture. It is reported, for instance (as in the Times on June 17), that Germany is finding her Russian venture somewhat disappointing in its results. But these reports are not followed up, verified, or insisted upon. The accepted news is that Germany is dominating Russia. Assuming the substance of this news to be true, there was still a practical question. Vladivostok was 5,000 miles from the old Russian front. The only other entrance to Russia was on the Arctic Ocean. The Japanese alone had an army to use, if they were willing to use it, and they were over 5,000 miles from Germany. Archangel and Murmansk were