

press sources today"—original source of Scandinavian information not stated—"that conditions in Bolshevik Russia are very unsettled, while there is underway a great exodus from Moscow, the Bolshevik capital."

## The Strategic Withdrawal

Nevertheless, the retreat continued. Kolchak's army fell back into Asiatic Siberia—lost Tiumen, another base of supply. Was it a serious loss? The special correspondent of the Times in Washington wired on August 18 that "from almost every point of military strategy" the position of the Omsk army was superior to what it had been "before the recent withdrawal of the Kolchak forces began." (Times, August 19.) An Associated Press dispatch from Tokio (published three days later) was less encouraging; reports apparently reliable, it said, indicated "that the Omsk government's position is growing weaker instead of stronger because of the advances of the Bolsheviks and the desertion of Siberian troops." We had heard very little, up to this point, about the desertion of Siberian troops.

The attempts during the month of September to keep an appearance of life in an already dead movement were heroic. On September 6, a headline in the Times announced:

### KOLCHAK RALLIES FROM HIS REVERSES

The dispatch that followed (a special to the Times from Washington) declared that from what was "gathered" in the "Russian Embassy" the tone of telegrams from Omsk during the last ten days had been "more encouraging and comforting"; Kolchak was "making plans for dealing with the situation."

And though, a few days later, a wireless from Moscow claimed the surrender to the Bolsheviks of what remained of Kolchak's Southern Army, there was at this time a little flurry about Kolchak's regaining the offensive. He had, by the end of the month, pushed the Soviet troops back seventy-five miles, "along the whole front," and taken 15,000 prisoners. (Associated Press, Omsk, September 28.) And on October 13, a wireless message from Omsk to London claimed again that "the Bolsheviks are retreating along the whole line." According to a London dispatch:

"The message also reports that a Bolshevik wireless dispatch had been received which admitted that in a plebiscite in Moscow, the workmen had declared themselves against the Soviet and as supporting Admiral Kolchak."

Certainly, with the Moscow proletariat coming out for Kolchak there was reason to keep faith burning.

## The End of the Kolchak Myth

The collapse of the "All-Russian Government" came suddenly, and for readers of the Times, perhaps a little unexpectedly. A brief two weeks more, and there arrived direct from Omsk news that gave warning of the impending smash. An Associated Press dispatch (dated October 29) reported that "the Siberian armies of Admiral Kolchak have been falling back rapidly since their recent reverses on the line of the Tobol River." These reverses foreshadowed the loss of Kolchak's capital. Nevertheless, an Associated Press dispatch from Omsk, on November 6, reported that the departure of the Allied Missions was "not believed to denote any immediate danger to Omsk." But the danger, for all that, was there. Nine days later Kolchak had fled his capital with the last remnants of his army, and the Bolsheviks had marched in. It is typical of reports of the whole campaign that even in the loss of the capital itself there was consolation to be found:

"Sentiment despite the reverses suffered by the All-Russian armies continues in favor of Kolchak and the evacuation of Omsk is not regarded as jeopardizing the stability of the government and the integrity of the army." (Associated Press, via Novo Nikolaevsk, November 11.)

So ended the Kolchak offensive. It ended, as it began, on a note of cheer. There was a thin stream of later news: the weary withdrawal to Tomsk; the further retreat to Irkutsk; the British War Office statement (Associated Press, London, January 1) that Kolchak had "ceased to be a factor in Russian military affairs."

An extraordinary offensive it had been indeed. It never got within four hundred miles of its objective. It ended two thousand miles behind the line from which it started. On its behalf, when it was moving westward, extravagant claims were put forward; in retreat, there was constant assurance that an early turn was coming.

Failure of the Allies to send war material was the chief cause of Kolchak's rout? You will find Times editorials to assure you of that. But you will find also Mr. Lloyd George, saying in the House of Commons, on November 8: "We have given real proof of our sympathy for the men of Russia who have helped the Allied cause, by sending one hundred million sterling worth of material and support of every form."

That was not enough? No. Something more indeed was needed. What Kolchak's offensive demonstrated was that soldiers, too, were necessary. And the soldiers did not materialize—those Russian soldiers who, the interventionists had promised us, would so willingly flock to Kolchak's standard.

## VIII. Denikin

The Denikin government, even more clearly than the government of Omsk, was a product of military power. Under the Tsar's régime, Denikin had held high office. He had once been Chief of Staff; later, in command of the Russian armies on the south-western front. Apparently he was an able soldier; but until his sudden rise to power there was certainly nothing in his career to mark him as that sort of radical democrat who alone could hope to rule successfully in revolutionary Russia.

What put Denikin at the head of a government was simply the support of Cossack troops. The following dispatch tells the story:

"Copenhagen, Nov. 20.—The Ukrainian government has been overturned and Kiev has been captured by troops from Astrakhan, according to Kiev dispatches to the Swedish newspapers. The Ukrainian National Assembly has fled and a Provisional Government has been established by the captors of the city, who are apparently commanded by General Denikin, leader of the anti-Bolshevist forces."

There was no "coup d'état." Denikin simply marched in and smashed the government headed by Skoropadski. That government, however, was "pro-German"? It has been variously described. Mr. Harold Williams, cabling to the Times from Geneva, on November 20, asserted that "General Skoropadski's last cabinet was pro-Entente, and instead of independence of the Ukraine demanded a union with federated Russia." Whether pro-Entente or pro-German, Bolshevik or Bourbon, one thing is clear. It was no sort of popular referendum that put an end to the last Ukrainian cabinet. It was a Cossack army.

### Democracy in the Ukraine

Now despite the fact that Denikin had been Chief of Staff under the Tsar, despite the fact that he had chosen the Tsar's own Foreign Minister (Sergius Sazonoff) to represent him internationally, an attempt was nevertheless made to establish the credit of Denikin's government as a democracy. Effort to create such an impression, while never so insistent as in the case of Kolchak, followed the same lines. Evidence principally of two sorts was introduced.

First: There were declarations of a democratic program. Some of these statements came from the government itself. For such statements, needless to say, neither the Times nor its field service shares any responsibility. Such matter was properly transmitted as news. But there were certain other occasions when the correspondent himself undertook

to describe what the government was up to. Thus Mr. Harold Williams cabled from Ekaterinodar on July 2, 1919:

"The scheme is clear and simple. It comprises: Russia, one and undivided, with broad local self-government extending in certain regions to autonomy; land reforms giving ordered satisfaction to the land hunger of the peasantry, an advanced labor program, a National Assembly, elected by universal suffrage, to determine the form of government, whether republic or constitutional monarchy. . . ."

Was this an accurate report of the intentions of the Denikin government on the date it was cabled? In such a case, it seems to us, the correspondent and his employer owe a responsibility to the public for an examination into the sincerity of programs which one of them offers as evidence of Denikin's democratic intentions, and the other prints.

The second sort of evidence introduced to substantiate the democracy of Denikin's régime consisted of reports of the loyalty he commanded. There were not many such reports, compared with the number of similar declarations circulated in behalf of Kolchak. But there were enough to suggest that Denikin had found popular backing. Thus Mr. Williams cabled from Ekaterinodar, on June 8:

"When Denikin passed in his car through the streets of Kharkov women weeping for joy pressed forward to kiss his hand and those who could not do that, kissed even the mud-guards of his car. Endless deputations greeted him, among them one of factory workers who thanked him for their deliverance from the Bolshevik liberty."

And again, from Taganrog, on November 20, Mr. Williams reported that "the number of volunteers for the army far exceeds the capacity of the army to receive them."

Finally, so far as concessions to Ukrainian nationalism were concerned, Mr. Williams reported that Denikin had "made allowance for all reasonable demands by pledging himself to a considerable degree to the principle of regional autonomy, and to permitting the cultivation of the Ukrainian or Little Russian language and literature." (Rostov-on-Don, September 13.) From the start, less attention was paid to the political side of Denikin's venture than to its military results. Nevertheless such reports as these lent a certain aura of democracy to the leader of anti-Bolshevism in the South. Denikin had undertaken the construction of a democratic government, had found popular support and had "made allowance for all reasonable demands" on the part of Ukrainian nationalism.