

A NEW RUSSIA? TWO VIEWS

In The Outlook for April 7, 14, and 28 Mr. George Kennan, whose authority on Russian affairs is universally acknowledged, discussed "Russia After the War." Mr. Lavine, a young Russian Jew, who has been in this country for some time, here takes issue with one of Mr. Kennan's conclusions. Following his article is Mr. Kennan's reply.—THE EDITORS.

I—YES, BUT NOT THROUGH REVOLUTION

BY ISAAC DON LAVINE

THE assumption made in the pages of *The Outlook* by the foremost authority on political Russia in this country, George Kennan, that there is not only a possibility, but even a probability, of a revolution in Russia after the war is based on historical precedents. The war with Turkey in 1877–8 and the revolutionary activities in Russia that followed it, the Russo-Japanese War, and the unsuccessful revolution of 1905 constitute these precedents. In order to prove, however, that history will repeat itself in the present case as well it is evidently necessary to establish the similarity between the present situation and those that followed in the two instances mentioned, or, in other words, it is necessary to show that in case of the Allies' victory there will be put in motion forces of the *same* quality and momentum that were produced by the two cited wars in order to bring about the *same* results, *i. e.*, a revolution in Russia after this war.

What are these forces resulting from war and where are they to be found? Are they of an internal or external character, and are they located in the national or international situation arising from war? The answers depend on how we regard war. Is war *primarily* a national or international affair? We will all agree that *primarily* it is an international affair, and therefore its effects and results are primarily international. The causes, then, of all national, internal phenomena taking place in a country after it had been engaged in a war are to be located in the international, external state in which the country has been thrown as a result of that war. A revolution is a national, internal phenomenon. But when it comes as a result of a war—and war primarily is international in its effects—it is due to international conditions brought about by the war.

Will the same international conditions result from the present war as from the wars of 1877–8 and 1904–5? Or, what amounts to the same thing, will there be put in motion

forces that would bring about a revolution in Russia? A careful study of the situation will show that not only will these conditions not be the same, but they will be decidedly opposite in their effect. The wars with Turkey and Japan were, on the part of Russia, bureaucratic, mediæval; they had produced little effect on the economic development of Russia, and, whatever effect they had, it was not a stimulus to the transforming of Russia into a capitalistic state, but, on the contrary, it had a retarding, petrifying effect on the country, and tended to keep it as long as possible in its feudal state. The present war is, on the part of Russia, democratic, progressive; it will bring about closer relations between the undeveloped Russia and the most enterprising commercial states of the world; it will enslave Russia to capital, foreign gold will engulf it financially, but capital will give it political freedom. Liberty has always come to a nation when capitalism took the place of feudalism.

It is, then, in economic development that we are to look for the New Russia. Russia, so long as her natural resources are undeveloped, her millions of peasants unaffected by commerce and industry, will remain an unlimited autocracy. But what France and Great Britain are going to do is to pour billions into Russia, and that country will see an age of industrial and commercial activity on a scale which the world had never seen before. Capital, with its quickly accumulating enormous surpluses, will rush into the fertile plains of eastern Europe and will accomplish more towards educating the Russian people than all the revolutionary literature that has been distributed among the peasants for generations. They will learn their needs, not from orators and brochures, but in mines, factories, and plantations.

There can be no doubt that with the awakening of Russia to a capitalistic era there will rise higher and more powerful the voice of the people demanding reforms, and

that voice will not remain unanswered, as it did up to this time. It will command the attention of the Government because it will be in the interests of the foreign capitalists not to have a revolution in the country. The Czar will be slowly made to change his attitude toward the people, and gradually to grant them some rights, not because of the love the British and French entertain for freedom, but because of their tremendous investments in Russia. In short, France and England, vitally interested in the smooth economic development of their ally, will see to it that no revolution breaks out in its country.

There is no reason, however, for expecting immediate great changes in Russia after the war. These will not take place very soon, simply because so long as the masses are kept in the dark they furnish cheaper labor or higher profits to the investors. Foreign capital will at first co-operate with the Czar's Government. But the mission of capital is educating the people, and since Russia's working class, though small in comparison to its population, cannot be ignored as a factor, before long the co-operation of the French and British with the Czar will

become a source of influencing him for granting some liberties to the people.

In this respect the Russian people have already profited by the war. The influence exerted on the Czar heretofore by the retrograde Prussian Government has been substituted by that of radical France and England. It is Germanic influence that is largely responsible for the corruption of the Russian nobility. It was Germanic influence that had ever backed reactionary Russia. But on the day Germany declared war against Russia the seed of a New Russia was planted. It is a child of capital. It is now in the process of germination. It will appear among the nations of the world, not as a republic, the result of a revolution, but as a constitutional monarchy, the product of evolution.

The foundations of a New Russia have been laid with the elimination of Prussian influence from the Czar's Court; its erection will take place with the development of the vast resources of eastern Europe and Siberia; and its completion will be inaugurated with the expansion of its commerce and industries to an extent commensurate with its colossal wealth and enormous population.

II—WHY REVOLUTION IS TO BE EXPECTED

BY GEORGE KENNAN

I AM sorry that I cannot wholly agree with Mr. Lavine, although he probably knows Russia as well as I do, if not better. I admit that a foreign war is "primarily an international affair," but its effects are not always confined to international relations. On the contrary, it often changes materially the domestic situation by increasing burdens and intensifying discontent. When a nation, after a long struggle for freer institutions, engages in a foreign war at the command of its monarch, it naturally expects that its sufferings and sacrifices will be rewarded by a grant of the civil rights and powers that it has so long sought. When, however, after the war, it finds that its burdens have increased while its services have not been recompensed, when it discovers that the Government which it has supported and defended is disposed to take everything without giving anything, it becomes more dissatisfied and rebellious than ever. This is why a foreign war in a despotically governed country so often precipitates a revolu-

tion. But the revolution, it seems to me, is not "due to *international* conditions brought about by the war," but rather to *domestic* conditions which the war has aggravated and intensified. The people rebel because they feel that they have been unfairly treated, and because a situation which was barely tolerable before has been made absolutely intolerable, not only by governmental ingratitude and injustice, but by an increase in the weight of the yoke.

Mr. Lavine seems to be of the opinion that the foreign capital which will "rush into the fertile plains of eastern Europe after the war," and the consequent stimulation of "industrial and commercial activity," will "accomplish more toward educating the Russian people than all the revolutionary literature that has been distributed among the peasants for generations." Again I am sorry to find myself in disagreement. In my best judgment, Great Britain and France after the war will not be in a condition financially to "pour billions into Russia." On the con-