

REVIEWS

Bolshevism. By JOHN SPARGO. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1919.—vi, 389 pp.

The Prelude to Bolshevism. By A. F. KERENSKY. New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1919.—viii, 312 pp.

Russia 1914-1917. Memories and Impressions of War and Revolution. By GENERAL BASIL GOURKO. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1919.—xii, 409 pp.

Vers la Catastrophe Russe. By BORIS KRITCHEWSKY. Paris, Librairie Félix Alcan, 1919.—271 pp.

The contrasts between the French Revolution of the end of the eighteenth century and the Russian Revolution of the beginning of the twentieth century are decided enough, but in one respect the two movements show a striking parallelism : each brought to the top, in a bitter war of factions, a radical minority who forced their extreme political and economic doctrines on their own countrymen at the point of the bayonet and raised a spectre of alarm for all the established governments of Europe. For forty years after the execution of Robespierre, monarchs and ministers (even those called "liberals") were appealing to the established traditions of the throne, the altar, the army, the school, for protection against the poisonous doctrine of the leveling "democracy" of Jacobinism. Whether Bolshevism is to play an analagous rôle in the life of the next generation is not for the historian to predict ; but this much is certain : the governments of Europe and America are keenly aware of the possibility, even where they are not apprehensive of the probability, of such an event. The Red Terror is the bogey in the background of the minds of reformers and reactionaries alike, the spectre behind the turbulent scenes on the world stage today.

Although but two years have passed since Lenine and Trotzky put an end to the Kerensky régime and gained control of what remnants of organized government there were left in Petrograd and Moscow, the literature on Bolshevism is already extensive. It is almost entirely polemic or apologetic, too, as might be expected in view both of the fateful

crisis for Russian democracy in the Bolshevik dictatorship, and of the challenge to the democracy of the world in the tyranny of the "purged" Soviet. We have impassioned pleas for the old order, like the Princess Radziwill's *The Firebrand of Bolshevism*, salutations of the new order, like Professor Ross' *Russia in Upheaval* or mere diatribes against the disorder, like Charles Edward Russell's *After the Whirlwind* and William Roscoe Thayer's *Volleys from a Non-Combatant*; and we have ardent apologetics on the other side, ranging from the products of Lenine's own prolific brain to the chirpings of the parlor Bolsheviks of New York and Chicago. When writers on the Russian situation eschew polemics, it is generally not to return to the calm of historical narrative and the poise of historical criticism, but to make a tale of their own observations and impressions, like the Princess Cantacuzene's diary of *Revolutionary Days* or Carl Ackerman's *Trailing the Bolsheviks*.

A treatment of Bolshevism equally removed from passion and superficiality is found in Mr. John Spargo's volume. Not that the author is impartial to the degree of indifference. The sub-title of the book, characterizing Bolshevism as "the enemy of political and industrial democracy", shows the author's opinion of Lenine's program. But where other critics of Bolshevism rant and orate, Spargo quietly expounds the doctrine. Instead of quoting livid passages of denunciation from the enemies of Bolshevism, he takes the very words of Lenine and other Bolshevik leaders, in their numerous articles, speeches and proclamations, as the basis of his criticism. "Whoever turns to these pages", he says in the preface, "in the expectation of finding a sensational *exposure* of Bolshevism and the Bolsheviks will be disappointed." His indictment is the more convincing as his argument is tempered.

The first third of the book is taken up with matter introductory to the appearance of the Bolsheviks, an historical sketch of revolutionary propaganda in Russia since the days of Nicholas I and a treatment in considerable detail of the revolution of 1905, the fortunes of the various Dumas and the effect of the early years of the war on the Russian people. Interesting as this narrative is, it compels the author to crowd the main subject of his book into far less space than it deserves and to confine the treatment of Bolshevism entirely to its effects on Russia itself. Of the tremendously important propaganda of Bolshevism in the mid-European countries; of the effect of the economic policy of the Allies toward the Provisional Government on the development of Bolshevism; of the bearing on Russian politics of the closing of markets which might have supported the Kerensky régime

(through British "economic imperialism", as charged by Gregory Zilboorg); of the valiant attempts of the All-Russian Cooperative Union to rescue industrial Russia from Bolshevist sabotage—there is no mention. We wish that Mr. Spargo had used the pages given to his long "historical introduction" for the discussion of these and like topics.

As a socialist and a keen student of Karl Marx the author is concerned to show that the Bolshevist leaders' claim to the title of Marxian socialists is entirely unfounded. They represent rather the theories of Marx's impatient critics, the Weitlings, Kinkels and Williches, who wished to cut across the inevitable historical development of the proletariat by a *coup d'état* of the minority, relying on the weapons of reactionism. In their resort to armed conspiracy, the Bolsheviks align themselves with the Black Hundreds of the old régime—and have even received recruits from them. In short "there is not much to choose between the ways of Stolypin and Von Plehve and those of the Lenine-Trotsky régime" (page 256).

One main object of Mr. Spargo's book is to disabuse American radicals of their sentimental sympathy with Bolshevism. He shows how the Bolsheviks have cynically betrayed every aspiration for real democracy and liberty in Russia. They were outvoted in every assembly or congress that could lay fair claim to be representative and then resorted to bayonets, like Napoleon at St. Cloud, to drive the delegates from their hall. They reproached the Kerensky government with delay in summoning the Constituent Assembly (a delay honestly needed for the guaranty of orderly and fair elections) and then themselves abolished the Assembly as tyrannically as the Czar's ministers dissolved Dumas. They won to their side certain sections of the peasants by outbidding Kerensky in the program of dividing the land and then cynically broke faith with them by taking over the great estates to be managed by officials as rapacious as the proprietors of the old régime—and less responsible. They covertly encouraged the conspiracy of Kornilov, against which Kerensky was struggling manfully, then loudly clamored against the "counter-revolution" which was developing "with the complicity of Kerensky acting in accord with the traitor Cadets". They preached pacifism and sowed the seeds of defeatism until they themselves got control of the military and then sneered at disarmament as a "reactionary proposal" and spurned the quality of mercy as a puling weakness. "A suppressed class", wrote Lenine in May 1918, "which has no desire to learn the use of arms and bear arms deserves nothing else than to be treated as slaves. They must

use these weapons not to shoot their brother workman in other countries, but to exterminate the bourgeoisie of their own country."

So the program of Bolshevism returns to a military despotism imposed by a minority in the name of eventual order—the perennial excuse of tyrants. "There is a Prussian quality in Lenine's philosophy", says Spargo: "He is the Treitschke of social revolt, brutal, relentless, unscrupulous, glorying in might, which is for him the only right." The remedy for the Bolshevik delusion is not in the counter attack of Kolchak, who may bring a Grand Duke into Petrograd on his crupper, but in "the removal of the oppression, poverty and servitude which produce the despair of soul that drives men to Bolshevism." But that goal is far distant in distracted Russia—and "practical" statesmen are more concerned with the next step.

A work of utterly different character from Spargo's is A. F. Kerensky's *The Prelude to Bolshevism*. The title of the book and the name of the author raise in the reader's mind the expectation of a first-hand account of the stormy summer and autumn months of 1917; for Kerensky was the outstanding figure in Russia from the reorganization of the Provisional Government in May to the Bolshevik *coup d'état* of November. But to the reader's great disappointment the book turns out to be a tedious, verbose report of Kerensky's testimony before a Commission of Inquiry on the Kornilov conspiracy. It is as dull as the minutes of any court of record. The only relieving (or instructive) passages are explanatory historical digressions, *obiter dicta*, apologetically enclosed in brackets. The whole purpose of the book is to refute the charge that it was either the weakness or the treachery of the Kerensky government that led to the fateful triumph of the Reds. Bolshevism was indeed strengthened by the Kornilov revolt, which Lenine magnified into "a conspiracy of the whole of the bourgeoisie and of all the upper classes against democracy and the working masses". Kerensky was powerless to stem the tide of the "second revolution", partly because of incurable schism in the ranks of the socialists, partly for lack of the indispensable support of the Allies, who failed to realize in 1917 as they do now that the hope of democracy lay in the fortunes of the gifted young lawyer who rose in his brief tenure of power to the heights of unique leadership in Russia. For most readers outside of the storm area of Russian factions Kerensky's impassioned apologetic will seem superfluous. He had no need to clear his skirts of mud with which few if any believed them spattered.

In General Basil Gourko's reminiscences of the years 1914-1917 we have an admirable presentation of the war and the revolution from the

standpoint of a moderate of the old régime ; loyal to the Czar but not obsequious, while the fortunes of the Romanoffs lasted ; ready to obey the Provisional Government, so long as it was itself obedient to the supreme duty of the hour—the defense of Holy Russia against the Teutonic invasion. Gourko was a soldier of the first order, a cavalry commander in the East Prussian campaign which ended in the catastrophe of Tannenburg, general of the special wing of defense on the southern frontier (created in view of Rumania's entrance into the war), temporary chief of staff with the Emperor at Mohileff, and finally commander in chief of the armies of the western front until his imprisonment and exile by the Provisional Government for refusing to adopt policies which outraged his judgment as a soldier and his conscience as a patriot.

The reader is often wearied by long passages on the technique of campaigns and the intricate relations of a host of military officials whose names have no meaning or interest for him. But in the midst of this chaff there is much fine grain ; Gourko's description of his intimate hours with the Czar, for example, is intensely interesting. So also are his pictures of the important political figures with whom he came into close contact : Rodzianko, Goutchkov, Kornilov, Protopopov and others. There is little discussion of political theory and no factional partisanship. Gourko has the soldier's pragmatic mind. Like Danton he is for conciliation and comprehension at home. " If blood is to be shed, let it be the blood of our foes." Every now and then he shows flashes of statesmanlike insight which remind one of the Mouniers and the Mirabeaus of the French Revolution. He struggled manfully against the demoralization of the army, and when he had to yield to the rising flood of demagogism, he retired in dignified quiet. His book is without a trace of rancor or revenge. It is a defense not of General Gourko but of beleaguered Russia.

Finally, in Boris Kritschewsky's *Vers la Catastrophe Russe* we have a series of letters written from Petrograd between October, 1917, and February, 1918, for the Parisian socialist newspaper *L'Humanité*, of which the lamented Jaurès was editor. The style is flamboyant, the presentation is journalistic and the scene is very much foreshortened. But the vivid pictures by an observer on the spot of what was happening in the streets of Petrograd and around the doors of St. Mary's and the Taurida will have a value for the historian. Especially interesting is Kritschewsky's constant return, for his Parisian readers, to the analogies and contrasts between the Russian Revolution and the French Revolutions, the Paris *jours* of 1792 and 1793 and Napoleon III's *coup*

d'état. Like Spargo, he sees in the program of Lenine a base betrayal of the Russian democracy, but while the American socialist says there is "little to choose between the ways of Stolypin and Von Plehve and those of the Lenine-Trotsky regime", the Russian socialist finds Stolypin even more considerate than the dictator of Bolshevism of the forms, at least, of law and order. Kritschewsky has no solution to offer and sees no hope, except in a definite victory of the Allies, for the restoration of peace in Russia. But victory has come since his last despairing letter was written, yet Lenine still rules in Petrograd. Why, asks the author, has the Russian people suffered this new imposition of tyranny? Because, released only yesterday from the bonds of Czarism, it has not yet become either a nation or a conscious democracy.

D. S. MUZZEY.

Ireland and England. By EDWARD RAYMOND TURNER.
New York, The Century Company, 1919.—ix, 504 pp.

Ireland's Fight for Freedom. By GEORGE CREEL. New
York, Harper and Brothers, 1919.—xiv, 199 pp.

Rarely in the last half-century has the publication of a book in the United States rendered a greater service than that of Professor Turner's dispassionate, judicial and scholarly study of the subject about which so much falsehood has been uttered, commonly called the Irish Question. The spirit of the author is admirable. It is the spirit of a scholarly gentleman who seeks for the truth by laborious research and then presents it with as much kindly tact as he can use toward those whom the telling of the truth is sure to convict of misrepresentation or inflame to passionate recrimination. After reading the misleading utterances on the subject of Ireland by Barrington, Dr. Emmett, Clancy, Mitchell, Ford, Tynan, O'Connell, Devoy, Mrs. Green, Hackett, Sheehy-Skeffington, Tierney and many others, the earnest seeker after truth will rejoice that a scholar, trained in historical research, has at last written on the Irish Question. The few not very serious blemishes in the book are to be explained by the fact that the author is not as well grounded in law, political science, administration and taxation, subjects with which the Irish Question is closely interwoven, as he is in the canons of historical research and exposition. If he had been, he would not have missed the opportunity on page 145 of telling, in a few lines the plain truth about the famous Report of the Childers Commission, which so many Irishmen, both Nationalists and Sinn-Feiners, roll as a sweet morsel under their tongues.