A Test of the News

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An examination of the news reports in the New York Times on aspects of the Russian Revolution of special importance to Americans

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ἔσπετε νῦν μοι μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι
ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαί ἐστε, πάρεστέ τε ἴστε τε πάντα,
ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἷον ἀκούομεν οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν

"Enlighten me now, O Muses, tenants of Olympian homes,
For you are goddesses, inside on everything, know everything.
But we mortals hear only the news, and know nothing at all.

ILIAD II 484-86.

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Contents

Introduction

IT is admitted that a sound public opinion cannot exist without access to the news. There is today a widespread and a growing doubt whether there exists such an access to the news about contentious affairs. This doubt ranges from accusations of unconscious bias to downright charges of corruption, from the belief that the news is colored to the belief that the news is poisoned. On so grave a matter evidence is needed. The study which follows is a piece of evidence. It deals with the reporting of one great event in the recent history of the world. That event is the Russian Revolution from March, 1917, to March, 1920. The analysis covers thirty-six months and over one thousand issues of a daily newspaper. The authors have examined all news items about Russia in that period in the newspaper selected; between three and four thousand items were noted. Little attention was paid to editorials.

The New York Times was selected as the medium through which to study the news, first because the Times, as great as any newspaper in America, and far greater than the majority, has the means for securing news, second, because the makeup of the news in the Times is technically admirable, third, because the Times index is an enormous convenience to any student of contemporary history, fourth, because the bound volumes are easily accessible, and fifth, because the Times is one of the really great newspapers of the world.

The Russian Revolution was selected as the topic, because of its intrinsic importance, and because it has aroused the kind of passion which tests most seriously the objectivity of reporting.

The first question, naturally, is what constitutes the test of accuracy? A definitive account of the Russian Revolution does not exist. In all probability it will never exist in this generation. After a hundred years there is no undisputed history of the French Revolution, and scholars are still debating the causes and the meaning of the revolt of the Gracchi, the fall of Rome, and even of the American Revolution and the American Civil War. A final history of the Russian Revolution may never be written, and even a tolerably settled account is not conceivable for a long time. It would be footless therefore to propose an absolute measurement of news gathered amid such excitement and con-

fusion. It would be equally vain to accept the account of one set of witnesses in preference to any other set.

The "whole truth" about Russia is not to be had, and consequently no attempt is made by the authors to contrast the news accounts with any other account which pretends to be the "real truth" or the "true truth." A totally different standard of measurement is used here. The reliability of the news is tested in this study by a few definite and decisive happenings about which there is no dispute. Thus there is no dispute that the offensive of the Russian army under Kerensky in July 1917 was a disastrous failure; no dispute that the Provisional Government was overthrown by the Soviet power in November 1917; no dispute that the Soviets made a separate peace with Germany at Brest-Litovsk in March 1918; no dispute that the campaigns of Kolchak, Denikin, and Yudenitch were a failure; no dispute that the Soviet Government was still in existence in March 1920. Against such salient facts the daily reports about Russia in this period are measured. The only question asked is whether the reader of the news was given a picture of various phases of the revolution which survived the test of events, or whether he was misled into believing that the outcome of events would be radically different from the actual outcome.

The question of atrocities and of the merits or demerits of the Soviets is not raised. Thus, for example, there was a Red Terror officially proclaimed by the Soviet Government in the summer of 1918; and apart from the official terror, excesses occurred in many parts of Russia. No attempt is made here to sift the truth of the accounts, to determine whether there were exaggerations, or how far the White Terror equalled the Red Terror. The attempt is not made because no dependable account is available with which to measure the news reports. There was a round measure of truth in the report of terror and atrocity. For analogous reasons no discussion of the virtues and defects of the Soviet system is attempted. There are no authoritative reports. Able and disinterested observers furnish contradictory evidence out of which no objective criteria emerge. Under these circumstances an accurate report of the Soviet Government and the Terror is no doubt more than could have been expected from a newspaper.

But what might more reasonably have been expected and what was more immediately important for Americans, was to know in the summer of 1917 whether the Russian army would fight, and whether the Provisional Government would survive. It was important to know in the winter of 1917-18 whether the Soviet Government would make a separate peace. It was important to know in the spring and early summer of 1918 whether the Russian people would support Allied intervention. It was important to know whether the Soviet Government was bound to collapse soon under Allied pressure. It was important to know whether the White Generals—Kolchak, Denikin, Yudenitch were, or were not, winning their campaigns. It was important to know whether Poland was defending herself or invading Russia. It was important to know the disposition of the Soviet Government toward peace at the time of the peace conference. It was important to know whether there was a Red Peril before Allied troops entered Russia, or whether that peril dates from the German surrender. It was important to know whether the Red regime was tottering to its fall or marching to the military conquest of the world. On each one of these questions depended some aspect of policy involving lives, trade, finance, and national honor. It is important now to know what was the net effect of the news on these points.

For the reader's convenience certain tentative conclusions from the evidence are stated here:

1. From the overthrow of the Czar to the failure of the Galician offensive in July 1917.

   The difficulties in Russia, and especially in the Russian army, are not concealed from the attentive reader, but the dominant tendency of the captions and the emphasis is so optimistic as to be misleading. (See Section I.)

2. From the military disaster in July 1917 to the Bolshevik revolution of November.

   The difficulties of the regime play a bigger part in the news, but a misleading optimism still continues. In this period, the tendency to seek a solution through a dictator-savior appears in the mistaken hope placed upon the Kornilov adventure, a hope quickly falsified by his collapse. It may fairly be said that the growth of the Bolshevik power from July to November must have been seriously underestimated in view of the success of the November coup. (See Section II.)

3. From the Bolshevik revolution to the ratification of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

   This period is on the whole the best in the three years. Different points of view are given, and the emphasis is generally neutral. After the recovery from the shock of the second revolution, the reports are inspired by an eager curiosity about the diplomatic battle between the Bolsheviks and the enemy. At the height of this diplomatic battle the news is handled in a rather uncritically pro-Bolshevik fashion, as a result of the optimistic assumption that the Soviets would refuse to make peace with Germany. (See Section III.)

4. From the ratification at Brest-Litovsk, which coincided approximately with the Great German offensive in March 1918, to the decision for Allied intervention in August 1918.

   Under the stress of disappointment and danger the tone and quality of the news change radically. Organized propaganda for intervention penetrates the news. This propaganda has two phases. There is a short and intense period in late March and early April, which stops rather suddenly with the announcement that the President has decided against intervention. There is a prolonged and intense period beginning about May which culminates in the American approval of intervention. (See Section IV.)

5. The months immediately following the signing of the armistice.

   The Red Peril, which had hitherto played only an insignificant rôle, now takes precedence in the news from Russia and serves as a new motive for Allied intervention. (See Section V.)

6. The Spring, Summer and Autumn of 1919. Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenitch are heralded as dictator-saviors of Russia; for their campaigns, extravagant claims are made when they are moving forward; in retreat there is a steady assurance that a better turn is coming. (See Sections VI, VII, VIII, IX and X.) Meantime the world is warned against a Russian invasion of Poland—though Polish troops are as a matter of fact deep in Russian soil. (See Section XI.)

7. The Winter of 1919-20 and the Spring of 1920.

   Once more, with the failure of the White Armies, the Red Peril reappears.

The news as a whole is dominated by the hopes of the men who composed the news organization. They began as passionate partisans in a great war in which their own country's future was at stake. Until the armistice they were interested in defeating Germany. They hoped until they could hope no longer that Russia would fight. When they saw she could not fight, they worked for intervention as part of the war against Germany. When the war with Germany was over, the intervention still existed. They found reasons then for continuing the intervention. The German Peril as the reason for intervention ceased with the armistice; the Red Peril almost immediately afterwards supplanted it. The Red Peril in turn gave place to rejoicing over the hopes of the White Generals. When these hopes died, the Red Peril reappeared. In the large, the news about Russia is a case of seeing not what was, but what men wished to see.

This deduction is more important, in the opinion of the authors, than any other. The chief censor and the chief propagandist were hope and fear in the minds of reporters and editors. They wanted to win the war; they wanted to ward off bolshevism. These subjective obstacles to the free pursuit of facts account for the tame submission of enterprising men to the objective censorship and propaganda under which they did their work. For subjective reasons they accepted and believed most of what they were told by the State Department, the so-called Russian Embassy in Washington, the Russian Information Bureau in New York, the Russian Committee in Paris, and the agents and adherents of the old regime all over Europe. For the same reason they endured the attention of officials at crucial points like Helsingfors, Omsk, Vladivostok, Stockholm, Copenhagen, London and Paris. For the same reason they accepted reports of governmentally controlled news services abroad, and of correspondents who were unduly intimate with the various secret services and with members of the old Russian nobility.

From the point of view of professional journalism the reporting of the Russian Revolution is nothing short of a disaster. On the essential questions the net effect was almost always misleading, and misleading news is worse than none at all. Yet on the face of the evidence there is no reason to charge a conspiracy by Americans. They can fairly be charged with boundless credulity, and an untiring readiness to be gulled, and on many occasions with a downright lack of common sense.

Whether they were "giving the public what it wants" or creating a public that took what it got, is beside the point. They were performing the supreme duty in a democracy of supplying the information on which public opinion feeds, and they were derelict in that duty. Their motives may have been excellent. They wanted to win the war; they wanted to save the world. They were nervously excited by exciting events. They were baffled by the complexity of affairs, and the obstacles created by war. But whatever the excuses, the apologies, and the extenuation, the fact remains that a great people in a supreme crisis could not secure the minimum of necessary information on a supremely important event. When that truth has burned itself into men's consciousness, they will examine the news in regard to other events, and begin a searching inquiry into the sources of public opinion. That is the indispensable preliminary to a fundamental task of the Twentieth Century: the insurance to a free people of such a supply of news that a free government can be successfully administered.

In devoting so long a study to the work of a single newspaper the authors have proceeded without animus against the Times, and with much admiration for its many excellent qualities. They

trust that the readers of this report, among them the proprietors and editors of the "Times," will not regard it as an "exposure" of the Times, but as a piece of inductive evidence on the problem of the news. The authors do not wish to imply, because honestly they do not believe, that the less conservative press is necessarily more reliable. As editors of a liberal weekly journal they know from experience that there are large glass windows in their own house, and they are keenly aware of the fact that reliability is harder to attain in the haste of a daily newspaper than in the greater deliberation of a periodical. If, consequently, nothing were at stake but the question of praise and blame, if nothing were to be accomplished beyond a score in the duel between liberal and conservative, then this report would not have been made. Something much greater is at issue, for the reliability of the news is the premise on which democracy proceeds. A great newspaper is a public service institution. It occupies a position in public life fully as important as the school system or the church or the organs of government. It is entitled to criticism, and subject to criticism, as they are. The value of such criticism is directly proportionate to the steadiness with which the ultimate end of a better news system is clearly and dispassionately kept in mind.

I. To the July Offensive

The Russian Revolution occurred during the war with Germany. It was an event that affected immediately and directly the lives, the fortunes, and the dearest hopes of all nations engaged in the war. The Revolution began during the second week of March in the year 1917. This date is highly significant. It is about six weeks after the German Government had announced unlimited submarine war, and six weeks after the rupture of diplomatic relations by America. The Allies were confronted at the same moment by the uncertainty as to what Russia and what the United States would do. The United States was in the act of making up its mind to begin to fight. The question which dominated all the news out of Russia was whether the Russians would continue to fight.

Thus, the circumstances of the Revolution were not such as to invite impartial inquiry. What the reader of newspapers was chiefly concerned about was the fighting power of Russia on the great eastern front. He could hardly have expected a current history of so vast a revolution. He did expect, and he had reason to demand, reliable reports about the morale and strength of Russia's armies. For on those reports he had to arrive at judgments of supreme practical importance.

The reliability of the news for the first four months can fairly be measured by this one concrete test: did it give a tolerably true account of Russia's military strength? Did the news lead to correct or incorrect expectations?

The actual military power of Russia was tested against Germany just once. In July 1917, about three and a half months after the Revolution, the army attacked on a wide front in Galicia. After a small initial success the offensive collapsed, the Germans attacked and pierced the Russian front; there were mutinies followed by a rout. The official Russian Communiqué (per British Admiralty per Wireless Press, Petrograd, July 22) said of the disaster: "This is the result of the instability of our troops, disregard for military orders, and the propaganda of the Maximalists." What had the news for the weeks from March to July been?

Two Views of Russia's Power

The Times of March 16 published the report of the successful revolution. Together with admirably full accounts of events in Petrograd, there began a series of semi-editorial news dispatches. Thus (special cable to the New York Times, London, March 16):

> "As the situation is explained to The New York Times correspondent, the revolution *simply means* [italics ours] that German sympathizers within the Russian Government have been overthrown, and that no chance remains for a separate peace being secretly arranged with Germany. This, it is felt, is the real basis of the revolution. . . ."

Such was the official public British theory. In the same issue Mr. Bonar Law (unidentified dispatch from London, March 15*) was quoted as saying that the revolution was due to Russia's purpose to fight the war out. This was, of course, not a statement of fact, but the expression of a wish.

This wish was father to much of the news which followed for several months. Concurrently, there were, however, other interpretations of the Revolution. On March 16 the Times published, of

*A dispatch is called "unidentified" when it has no other reference to source beyond place of origin and date. That is, the carrying agent is not named.

course obscurely, an interview with Leon Trotzky:

CALLS PEOPLE WAR WEARY

BUT LEO TROTZKY SAYS THEY DO NOT WANT SEPARATE PEACE

> Leo Trotzky, a Russian revolutionist now in America, said last night in the office of the Novy Mir . . . . that the committee which has taken the place of the deposed Ministry in Russia did not represent the interests or the aims of the revolutionists, that it would probably be short lived, and step down in favor of men who would be more sure to carry forward the democratization of Russia . . . . That the cause of the revolution was the unrest of the mass of the people who were tired of war and that the real object . . . . was to end war . . . . throughout Europe. They do not favor Germany . . . . but wish to stop fighting."

Two days later, issue of March 18 (Berlin March 17, by wireless to the New York Times via Tuckerton, N. J.) the Times printed a report saying that the general opinion in Berlin was that the new government could not last long and that the lower classes were wishing for peace at any price.

There were thus two alternative theories: one the official Allied theory that Russia would fight; the other, the theory of an unknown Russian revolutionist in New York and of "general opinion in Berlin" that Russia would not fight. The bulk of the news which followed appeared to sustain the official theory.

Three and a half months elapsed to the offensive of July. The reader had by that time perused 107 issues of his paper, practically all of them containing news of the Russian Revolution. He had received hints of profound economic disorder, of demoralization in the army, and of confused dissatisfaction with the Allies. He was in a position to guess that the striking power of Russia was not great, if he read all the obscurely placed dispatches, read between the lines of the other dispatches, and sternly declined to let his hopes govern his judgment.

But if he read casually, and chiefly the captions and emphasized news, the impression of hopefulness, or at least of whistling to keep up hope, would have been strong. Captions or prominent news on the following days all of them stated or implied a Russian will to fight.

March 16², 19, 20, 21, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30²—9 issues, 11 items.

April 2, 10, 12, 14, 18, 19², 20², 21, 22, 24², 28, 29, 30²—13 issues, 17 items.

May 3, 4, 7, 9, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21², 23, 25, 28², 29², 31—16 issues, 19 items.

June 2, 3, 4², 5, 6², 7, 8², 9, 11, 13², 15, 16, 17, 18², 19, 21², 22, 23, 24², 25², 27², 28², 29, 30²—24 issues, 35 items.

Total 62 issues, 82 items.

Thus oftener than every other day for the whole period the reader was assured that Russia would fight, or that the Russian army was strong, or that the difficulties were being surmounted. Ordeal by battle proved all these assurances to be false.

Was a darker picture ever suggested? It was. In 49 different issues of the Times there were perhaps 66 items of pessimistic character. Numerically this seems to strike a tolerably even balance:

Optimistic: 62 issues, 82 items.
Pessimistic: 49 issues, 66 items.

Reputable and Disreputable

But closer examination of what has been included under "optimistic" and "pessimistic" reveals a far greater discrepancy than the figures show. Take for example the first day's news (March 16). We have called optimistic the unidentified London dispatch (March 15) quoting Mr. Bonar Law that the revolution was due to Russia's purpose to fight the war out; we have also called optimistic the dispatch from London (March 16) printed on the first page saying:

> "As the situation is explained to The New York Times correspondent, the revolution simply means that German sympathizers within the Russian Government have been overthrown . . . ."

Compare these authoritative pronouncements with the "pessimistic" item printed at the foot of the fifth column of the fourth page quoting Leo (sic) Trotzky from his New York office as saying that the people wished to stop fighting. Trotzky happened to be right, Mr. Bonar Law and the people who interpreted the Revolution in London to the Times correspondent happened to be dead wrong. But which interpretation was emphasized, and given the authority of the editors? The official and the optimistic, of course, against the obscure and the unpleasant. The unsatisfactory view was not suppressed, but it was ignored or played down. This is characteristic of the news of the period we are considering. The values placed upon news items were wrong, wrong by the ultimate test of battle.

It is easy to see how this came about. There was an initial desire, shared by the editors and readers of the Times, to have Russia fight, to secure the military assistance of Russia without opening up contentious questions of war aims, to smother pacifist agitation. Conflicting estimates of Russian strength and weakness came to the Times office. One series was optimistic. The other pessimistic. The optimistic series had the right of way.

Then, too, the sources of the optimistic reports were such as to commend themselves more readily to the credulity of men who have high respect for prestige. Out of 82 optimistic items approximately 49 emanated directly from official sources including the Provisional Government, the American State Department, Ambassador Francis, the Root mission, etc. The remaining 33 are from sources including 4 Reuter, 1 Harold Williams, 2 Herbert Bailey, 1 Special New York Times, 1 London Times, 5 London Daily Chronicle, 13 unidentified, the rest scattering.

When there were at least 49 official assurances and thirty odd more from sources of recognized authority in a period of 107 days it is not surprising that the net tone of the news about Russia was optimistic. It is even less surprising when the character of the 66 pessimistic items is examined. If we add together the distinctly unpopular and therefore incredible sources, that is the German, the Bolshevik, the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, and the items tagged and peppered with epithets, the total is 36.

Thus out of 82 optimistic items, 49 are from friendly official sources, and the rest from respectable ones; out of 66 pessimistic items 36 are distinctly disreputable, and of the thirty remaining practically none contains more than a fragmentary hint of the real difficulty in Russia as later revealed by the collapse of the July offensive, the first Bolshevik rebellion, and the ultimate fall of the Provisional Government.

It remains to be noted however that the optimistic items carried their own antidote to the sophisticated reader. The very fact that it was necessary to proclaim the solidarity and strength of Russia every other day was a suspicious fact. Reiteration emphasized doubt, and trained readers were enabled to reach conclusions quite opposite from those insisted upon in the general intent of the news. But what chance had they of persuading the casual reader that Russian affairs required his earnest attention. Was the casual reader, absorbed in our own war activities, not told about every other day that he could afford to be complacent?

II. The Prelude to Bolshevism

Misleading Optimism

The military weakness of Russia was clear to all observers on the spot after what Kerensky calls the "Tarnopol disgrace" of July 19. The condition of the army was explained by the Russian official communiqué (British Admiralty per Wireless Press, Petrograd, July 22); the condition behind the lines was indicated by the abortive Bolshevik rebellion of July 16-18. The most obvious facts no longer justified the complacency which had dominated the news. "Something" had to be done by somebody.

There were, roughly speaking, three parties contending for power; the Left led by the Bolsheviks, the center led by Kerensky, and the Right led by someone in the rôle of a Dictator-Savior. The Bolshevik uprising of July was suppressed by Kerensky's government. For the next two months the contenders, on the surface at least, are the Right and the Center parties. The Kornilov rebellion in September was the first of the many efforts of the Right to establish a Dictator-Savior. The rebellion was easily put down by Kerensky. The government had thus survived first an attack from the Left, and then an attack from the Right. But within a few days of the suppression of Kornilov there is unmistakable evidence of the rise of the third power —that of the Bolsheviki. On September 19, six days after the General's capitulation, the Petrograd Soviet passed from Menshevik and Social Revolutionary control into Bolshevik hands, and the next day (September 20) the Moscow Soviet for the first time refused a vote of confidence in the government of Kerensky. In five weeks that government had fallen.

Every shred of justification for complacent optimism had ceased by July 19. The correspondents in Russia abandoned it. Mr. Harold Williams, in the Times of July 28, speaks of "this hour of national disgrace . . . how can Russia be saved . . . the shameful collapse of (the) armies." But though the Times of July 23 had printed a three column head saying:

MUTINY ON RUSSIAN FRONT SPREADS
WHOLE LINE GIVING WAY

Nevertheless the Times of July 28 carried the following dispatch from Washington: "The State Department has advices by cable that the defeat of the Russian Army on the Galician front has had a wholesome effect in Petrograd."

Meantime the headlines showed a continued optimism, as the following samples show:

July 30 ARMY NOW RECOVERING

July 31 RUSSIAN ARMIES NOW STRIKING BACK

Aug. 1 RUSSIANS THROW GERMANS BACK

Aug. 2 RUSSIANS ATTACK ON GALICIAN FRONT

Aug. 4 MINIMIZES CABINET CRISIS

Aug. 5 ROOT HAS FAITH RUSSIA WILL STAND

Aug. 7 TO FIGHT ON, SAYS FRANCIS
NO EVIDENCE THAT RUSSIA INTENDS TO QUIT

Aug. 8 SEES RUSSIA SOON AS STRONG AS EVER

Aug. 9 WE CAN DEPEND ON RUSSIA WITH AID FROM US, ROOT SAYS

Aug. 9 RUSSIANS AGAIN ATTACK IN GALICIA

Aug. 9 KORNILOV FIRM FOR WAR

Aug. 14 RUSSO - RUMANIANS TAKE 1,100 TEUTONS

Aug. 15 PRESS TEUTONS BACK ON RUMANIAN FRONT

Aug. 15 TELLS KING GEORGE RUSSIA WILL FIGHT ON

Aug. 18 RUSSO - RUMANIANS REPEL ALL ATTACKS

Aug. 20 RUSSIANS REPULSE ATTACKS EVERYWHERE

Thus from the military rout in July to the verge of the Kornilov conspiracy, on the average once every other day, a certain show of optimism is made. It is derived from official reports of minor engagements, from advices to the State Department, and from the Russian Government. The persistent will to believe is illustrated by the Times of July 24. The captions read as follows:

RUSSIANS TAKE 1,000 PRISONERS

BREAK GERMAN LINE IN VILNA REGION DESPITE DEFECTION OF SOME REGIMENTS

BUT COLLAPSE IN GALICIA

WHOLE FRONT DOWN TO THE CARPATHIANS IN RETREAT—TARNOPOL GONE

Is it not just to say that the newspaper is a misleading optimist which regards the capture of 1,000 prisoners as of greater significance than the collapse of the whole front down to the Carpathians? It was not always possible, of course, to extract hope out of a desperate situation, but on fourteen days out of twenty-two the caption writer succeeds. On the following dates he announces reverses: July 20, 21, 23, 26, 27, 28, 31, Aug. 3, 17, 23, 24. No doubt there were minor successes, but the net disaster was indisputable. Therefore the interlarding of the news of big defeats with little resistances and verbal optimism must be described as confusing in its total effect. The presentation of news values is eccentric, and distorts the main picture.

The Quest of a Dictator-Savior

But parallel with all this runs a great theme of the Russian news: the theme of the Dictator-Savior and the strong man. This quest appears many times throughout the three years of the revolution dealt with in this study. It culminates as all the world knows, in Kolchak, Denikin, and Yudenitch, but it emerges long before. The first choice of the correspondents, curiously enough, is Kerensky himself. The faith in Kerensky is short-lived, but strenuous while it lasts:

July 24 KERENSKY MADE DICTATOR OF RUSSIA

PEASANTS YEARN FOR NEW MONARCHY

> "Kerensky, who possesses all Peter the Great's energy and twice his wisdom, is the national hero .... It [a new Czardom] would give the imaginative peasants some one in whom to place that loyalty which they could never accord with the same enthusiasm to a blackcoated President." (Herbert Bailey, Special to the New York Times, Petrograd, July 21.)

That Kerensky did not altogether disdain the rôle of strong man is indicated by his interview to the Associated Press (issue of July 25) which the Times heads:

KERENSKY'S RULE TO BE MERCILESS

WILL BEAT RUSSIA INTO UNITY WITH BLOOD AND IRON, IF NECESSARY, HE SAYS

Mr. Harold Williams has at this time begun to cast about for a savior. Being better informed than Mr. Bailey, he has never taken very seriously the dictatorship of Kerensky. In the Times of July 26, he notes that the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates attached a string to Kerensky's unlimited power by demanding an accounting not less than twice a week. And two days later he is aware of "the brave commander on the southwestern front, General Kornilov." Other correspondents present other guesses as to where the saving force is to be found. Thus in the issue of August 31, the London Times correspondent (Moscow, August 28), makes what appears to be the first sketch of the geographical area on which the counter-revolutions of Kolchak and Denikin were later organized. Over a year before the event he discovers that

> "The Knights of St. George, representing 80,000,-

> ooo acres, (sic) have combined in military leagues . . . . There is a *solid* (italics ours) block far exceeding in size and population the combined strength of the Central Empires. From Lake Baikal to the Dniester, from the Don to the Persian border, loyal sons of Russia are ready to rise against the forces of disintegration and defeat."

The Times heads this dispatch:

GREAT NEW POWER RISING IN RUSSIA

No less interesting and prophetic is the appearance of the first argument for external military intervention in Russia. While Messrs. Bailey and Williams and the London Times correspondent are looking for loyal Russians, the French authorities are thinking of the Japanese army. The Times of August 23, in a box on the first page, prints an unidentified dispatch from Paris, August 22, which says:

> "The Figaro today asks if the moment has not arrived for Japan to take further steps in the war . . . .
>
> The Petit Journal, *in an editorial along the same . . lines* . . . . adds that never will the Japanese troops be more needed on the Russian front than they are today." [Italics ours.]

The reader will note the common inspiration of these French newspapers and the synchronism of the publication with the bad news of the German offensive against Riga. With such estimates of the Russian problem in their minds, and with such prepossessions, it is not surprising that the newsmen were completely taken in by the Kornilov fiasco.

The Kornilov Rebellion

The historical evidence about the affair is still a matter of hot dispute, and there is much mystery about the role of the various personalities who figured prominently in the intrigue. This aspect of the affair the correspondents did not report at length, and could not have been expected to report. But the facts which concerned the American reader were simple. Did Kornilov represent the power of Russia? Were those who gathered about him the effective substance of the nation? Was he, in brief, the real thing, or a flash in the pan?

He was a distinguished officer of the General Staff, a Cossack, who had been appointed commander-in-chief by Kerensky himself after the defeat of July. According to his own proclamation,* issued September 9, his purpose in rebelling against the Provisional Government of Kerensky and starting to march on Petrograd, was "the preservation of a Great Russia." He swore "to carry over the people, by means of a victory over the enemy, to the Constituent Assembly at which it will decide its own fate and choose the order of the new state life." He was, in other words, to be a temporary military dictator acting as a savior of his country. Kerensky in a proclamation*, also issued September 9, denounced him as a counter-revolutionist, representing "a desire of some circles of Russian society to take advantage of the grave condition of the state for the purpose of establishing in the country a state of authority in contradiction to the conquests of the revolution." The rebellion was proclaimed on September 9. By September 12 the Associated Press correspondent in Petrograd described the coup as a failure. Kornilov was suppressed practically without bloodshed.

Nevertheless the special correspondents showed their credulity about the possibilities of a military dictator. As early as July 31, the reporter of the London Morning Post cables (New York Times of August 3) that "from intimations I have received I gather that the fighting Generals have placed before Kerensky what amounts to an ultimatum from the officers of Russia's armies." Note that the soldiers of Russia's armies do not appear. On August 29 the Times carried, under headlines announcing "Hailed as Russia's Savior," a Moscow dispatch reporting that "at present the name of General Kornilov is on every tongue." Mr. Harold Williams, to be sure, noted in a cable published the next day that the executives of the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates refused to stand or to greet Kornilov at the Moscow Congress.

But the bulk of the dispatches during the two weeks following were highly optimistic. The counter-revolutionists were described as riding on to glory. "Great New Power Rising in Russia," said a headline in the Times, August 31. "Kornilov commands confidence in military circles," cabled Mr. Charles H. Grasty on September 11, "not only on his record as an officer, *but because he is a Cossack.* This is the tribe around which *intelligent opinion* in Western Europe has been clustering hopefully *for several months past.*" [Italics ours.]

News of the actual revolt was cabled that same day from London. "There is yet no indication of General Kornilov's intentions," said a special dispatch to the Times, "but it is known that the Cossacks, the backbone of the Russian Army, are his strong adherents."

Yet two days later the Kornilov revolt was a confessed fiasco. "Kornilov Gives Up, Revolt Ends," said a headline in the Times, September 14. Where, one wonders, were the Cossacks who three days before were "known" in London to be Kornilov's "strong adherents" and "the backbone of the Russian Army"? A fortnight later Mr. Harold Williams, in a special to the Times from Petro-

* Printed in "The Prelude to Bolshevism," by A. F. Kerensky; Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1919.

grad, dated September 26, blurted out the following:

> *"The Kornilov affair has* intensified mutual distrust and *completed the work of destruction.* The Government is shadowy and unreal, and what personality it had has disappeared before the menace of the democratic conference. Whatever power there is, is again concentrated in the hands of the Soviets, and, as always happens when the Soviets secure a monopoly of power, the influence of the Bolsheviks has increased enormously." [Italics ours.]

So runs the obituary by a friend of the first Dictator-Savior.

In view of the fact that the Soviets seized the government six weeks after this dispatch was filed, Mr. Williams had reported news of the first importance. Does the news for the next six weeks, the last weeks before the triumph of Bolshevism, follow the lead given so clearly by Mr. Williams?

The End of Kerensky

The news out of Russia for the first ten days of October does not minimize the increasing difficulties of the existing régime. But the news comment out of Washington on October 10 (unidentified dispatch from Washington, October 9), is this:

> "Russian diplomats here appear to be convinced now that the Bolsheviks have been finally overthrown and that Premier Kerensky is once more firmly established in the supreme power.
>
> "It was said at the embassy today that the Bolsheviks were greatly discouraged by their first attempt to obtain control of the Government, on July 8, when disturbances caused by them were suppressed by the provisional authorities, and again during the Kornilov movement, when the Bolsheviks seized upon that occasion to overthrow the coalition administration. The action of the democratic conference in upholding the principle of a coalition Cabinet was asserted to reveal the total defeat of the extreme radicals."

Nevertheless the correspondents in Russia are agreed as to the crisis, thus:

Oct. 13 RUSSIAN CABINET IN HARD POSITION

Oct. 15 DISORDERS GROWING AMONG THE PEASANTS

Oct. 16 RUSSIAN FLEET IS DEMORALIZED

Oct. 25 "The evening newspapers which publish the program for the meeting of the Central Council of Soldiers' and Workmen's Delegates on Nov. 2 are filled with rumors of a Bolsheviki demonstration and an attempt to seize the Government. . . ."

Oct. 28 RUSSIAN ROADS PARALIZED
HANDLED LESS TRAFFIC IN SUMMER THAN THEY DID LAST WINTER

Nov. 2 This was the day on which the Times printed briefly Kerensky's historic interview to the Associated Press: (Petrograd, November 1.) (The longer text was printed November 3.)

RUSSIA WORN OUT, ALLIES MUST TAKE UP BURDEN, KERENSKY SAYS

But the State Department in Washington knew better: It issued a statement that:

> "There has been absolutely nothing in the dispatches received by the Department of State from Russia, nor in information derived from any other source whatever, to justify the impression created by the Washington Post to-day . . . . that Russia is out of the conflict."

Nov. 3 (Special to New York Times, Washington, November 2.)

> "Russia is not out of the war. She is to make no separate peace. The Russian Embassy and the State Department made this clear today."

Nov. 4 From London, Kerensky's interview was deprecated. (London, November 3.)

> "The Petrograd correspondent of The Daily Telegraph, who is now in London, writes: 'Premier Kerensky's statement seems to have been taken a little too seriously in some quarters.'"
>
> The Graphic (London) is quoted: *"We should hate to regard the statements as authentic. They have the ring of pro-German propaganda."* [Italics ours.]

Nov. 6 On this day, the Times printed obscurely on the fourth column of the fourth page the following news of world-wide importance:

BOLSHEVIK PERIL ACUTE
RUSSIAN RADICAL PACIFISTS
EXPECT TO COME INTO POWER

> (London, Nov. 5). "At a meeting in Petrograd on Saturday, as reported in an Exchange Telegraph dispatch from that city, representatives of the whole Petrograd garrison passed under the guidance and influence of the Bolsheviks. . . ."

The issues of November 7 and 8 carry the news of the Bolshevik Revolution, culminating on November 9, with the six-column headline on the first page:

REVOLUTIONISTS SEIZE PETROGRAD; KERENSKY FLEES
PLEDGE IS GIVEN TO SEEK "AN IMMEDIATE PEACE"

The reader who had ignored the State Department and the Russian Embassy for the six weeks preceding, and had read the news dispatches from Russia, had no reason to be surprised. The reader who had trusted official pronouncements was misled.

The Provisional Government having been overthrown by the Soviets, he was concerned in the weeks that followed, first, as to whether the Bolsheviks would last, second, as to what they would do about the war.

III. The Withdrawal of Russia

Would the Soviets Last?

Naturally there was doubt as to the stability of this strange new regime. Russian experts in America were at once interviewed:

Nov. 9. Herman Bernstein:

> "It can't win .... for Lenin and Trotzky are both extremely unpopular. They had a better chance last July .... the popular execration directed against Lenin .... was such as to convince me that he will never be able to dominate the Russian people."

Mr. Alexander Sakhnovsky, Agent of the Zemstvos:

> "A man like Prince Lvov would be considerably more useful, and I believe, from the reports I receive, that sentiment in Russia is setting in that direction. As for the Grand Duke Michael, he has always been very popular ...."

A special dispatch to the Times (Washington, November 8) declared:

> "No doubt was expressed in diplomatic circles that the Allied Powers would recognize any Government formed to oppose the Bolsheviki .... Moscow was regarded as the probable choice for the provisional capital, because all the elements there have been in sympathy with the Government as against the extremist Socialists. Moscow also is held to be a more purely Russian city ...."

The question of the stability of the Bolshevik regime is of course a fundamental question of the Russian news. Correct information on that point is the premise of correct information on many other great themes; the relation of Bolshevism to Germany, the value and the possibility of military intervention, the prospects of the White Generals, the reality of the Red Peril, and the problem of peace. For if the regime was temporary, then its diplomacy as against Germany and the Allies was not particularly significant, the possibility of successful intervention was greater, the prospects of the White Generals were brighter, the menace was smaller, and the problem of peace might be postponed. If on the other hand, the Soviet power was firmly rooted in the Russian people, then *it was Russia,* and its diplomacy mattered enormously, intervention was impracticable, the prospects of the generals poor, the menace worth serious consideration, and peace a pressing matter.

The Soviet Government was still in existence in March, 1920, when this study closes. It had lasted 29 months up to that time and had brought all of Central Russia from the Arctic Ocean to the Caucasus, as well as Siberia, at least to Lake Baikal, under its jurisdiction. Whether it was a good regime or an intolerable one is not the question, nor in fact has it ever been the important question in America's relation to Russia. What mattered fundamentally in all those months of grave decision was whether it was an enduring regime. The historic fact is that the regime did endure for the whole time we are now discussing. It may fall any day; it may last for a generation. That is of no consequence. News reports in 1917, 1918, 1919, and early 1920 that the Soviets are about to collapse, or have collapsed, or will collapse within a few weeks is false news, and it will not be true news if the Soviet regime should collapse late in 1920 or thereafter.

That the Soviet government could last only for the moment was one of the most insistent of all themes in the news of Russia. Within a few days after the November coup it had made its first appearance. On November 13 (1917) the Times published a special dispatch from Washington, asserting

> "All doubt that the Maximalists in Petrograd will be deposed has disappeared in Government and diplomatic quarters here."

It seemed only to be a question of who would follow next:

> "Officials are now debating whether Premier Kerensky, General Kornilov, or some other leader will take charge of the Government to rise out of the ashes of Maximalist authority. The complete overthrow of the Bolsheviki is predicted."

Many times, in the months which followed, that overthrow was predicted. No other note appeared more faithfully and with emphasis so certain. In the two years from November, 1917, to November, 1919, no less than ninety-one times was it stated that the Soviets were nearing their rope's end, or actually had reached it.

In arriving at this computation no count is made of the ordinary reports that Russia was in chaos—though such reports of course implied a weakening in the prestige and authority of the government attempting to wield power. What is counted, in arriving at the figure ninety-one, are reports more explicitly reporting an early break-up. For instance, thirty different times the power of the Soviets was definitely described as being on the wane. Twenty times there was news of a serious counter-revolutionary menace. Five times was the explicit statement made that the regime was certain to collapse. And fourteen times that collapse was said to be in progress. Four times Lenin and Trotzky were planning flight. Three times they had already fled. Five times the Soviets were "tottering." Three times their fall was "imminent." Once

desertions in the Red army had reached proportions alarming to the government. Twice Lenin planned retirement; once he had been killed; and three times he was thrown in prison.

Insistently appearing in the news, the steady repetition in these reports left its inevitable impression on the reader. How trustworthy were the sources from which this material was drawn?

The smaller part of it came via the shortest route available: that is, as the observation of men or of some group of men who, whatever their personal bias—even though it be the bias that might accompany a salary coming from some rival Russian faction—were at least cited by name as authority for the news. That method accounts for twenty of the dispatches tallied in the present list. On certain other occasions there was an official or pseudo-official source implied. Thus we have "advices to the State Department," "officials of the State Department," and "government and diplomatic sources in Washington"—each quoted in one instance. Six more dispatches were drawn from statements or publications credited to the Soviet government itself. That brings the total up to twenty-nine, all accounted for with sources possessing some measure of authority. Sixty-two are left. And for those sixty-two there is less that can be said.

The source of information, where cited, is vague at best: "sources familiar with the Russian situation in its many phases" (London); a Stockholm dispatch to Paris; the opinion of some man or group of men unnamed; "reports reaching London from Petrograd"; "reports reaching London from Peking and Copenhagen"; dispatches from Copenhagen to the Exchange Telegraph Company, London; correspondents of German newspapers, of Swedish papers and of Danish papers; unidentified dispatches from Reval, from Geneva, from Stockholm and from Helsingfors etc. Individually the sending of a news dispatch based upon second-, third- or fourth-hand authority was a natural enough procedure. A correspondent in Copenhagen, perhaps, saw in some Danish journal a report coming from Stockholm that someone else believed counter-revolution menaced the Soviet authority. That was "news," he judged, worth cabling to America. Collectively, however, the reports have no such incidental character. From the first days of Soviet power they have painted a picture which the event itself has proved to be misleading. They have prophecied what did not happen. But they have left, in the minds of those who read them, an effect of real importance.

Later themes find expression. At times the Red Peril momentarily overshadows the conception of Soviet power as an institution verging on collapse. But over a space of many months, recurring like the major theme in a Wagnerian opera, comes this note of Soviet impermanency. What its net effect has been is plain. It has nourished the policy of laissez-faire. Creating the impression that a few days more and there would be no Soviet power left to worry over, it helped postpone from month to month an insistence that in the face of definite fact the Allied statesmen must revaluate their policy of indecision, intervention and blockade.

During the Parleys at Brest-Litovsk

The midwinter of 1917-18 is worth more detailed examination, because it has a character of its own.

News items suggesting that the regime was temporary appeared as follows. This tabulation is more inclusive than that above for reasons of fairness which will be evident. It is more inclusive in that items merely suggesting weakness are admitted, whereas they are excluded above.

November 9^4, 10^2, 11^2, 12^4, 13^4, 16, 17, 19^2.
December 2, 10, 11^2, 12, 17, 19, 21, 24, 27.
January 9, 10.
February 2^2, 7, 8, 9, 18^2, 19, 20, 21^2, 23, 25, 28.

Totals:

Items in November 20
" " December 10
" " January 2
" " February 14

What strikes the eye immediately is the scarcity of the items in January. The first of the two items appeared January 9. It is a special to the New York Times from Harold Williams (Petrograd, January 6) headed:

RUSSIA SEEN ON VERGE OF UTTER COLLAPSE
PETROGRAD FACES FAMINE AND PARALYSIS, WHILE ANARCHY REIGNS IN PROVINCES

The second item on January 10 is a dispatch from the Petrograd correspondent of the London Times, headed:

CRIME IS RAMPANT IN PETROGRAD
BURGLARY, ROBBERY AND MURDER COMMON—FOOD SUPPLY IS GIVING OUT

Within a few days this picture of Russia was disputed. Cables from Stockholm, London and Petrograd reported that the Soviets had put their hands on fresh stores of food from the Ukraine, that they had successfully crushed a counter-revolution, and that in the opinion of Sir George Buchanan (British Ambassador) Lenin was firm in the saddle, not to be overthrown for the present. The Soviets

seemed to be gaining ground. In fact, on January 29 headlines in the Times reported

ROMANOFFS AS BOLSHEVIKI

PROF. ROSS HEARS EX-CZAR'S DAUGHTERS ARE CONVERTED TO CAUSE.

And this was the word that followed:

> "The Bolshevist movement is sincere, Professor Ross said, springing from the heart of Russia itself and having as its object the liberation of the people, the establishment of world peace, and the institution of a system of pure industrial socialism."

Thus the two dispatches indicating serious weakness, are neutralized by news that the Soviets are fairly strong. November and December preceding report great weakness; so do the months following. What is there that is peculiar about the month of January, 1918?

Trotzky was debating with the Germans at Brest-Litovsk and defying them; Lloyd George made his speech proposing a conciliatory peace; President Wilson announced the Fourteen Points, with a most sympathetic reference to Russia. Is there any connection between these events and the rather favorable view taken in the news of Russia's stability? Let us examine the manner in which the peace negotiations between Germany and Russia were handled.

During November, statements by Lenin and Trotzky appear disavowing the idea of a separate peace, (November 24, 26). On the other hand Mr. Harold Williams states categorically within three weeks of the revolution (Times of November 24, special dispatch from Petrograd, November 22, delayed) that the Russian masses were forcing the hands of the Bolsheviks by demanding the execution of promises. In the issue of December 5 Mr. Williams says (Special to the Times from Petrograd, December 3) that:

> "The Bolshevist movement is by no means simple. It is a curious jumble of conflicting elements ranging from the purest idealism to German intrigue and reactionary monarchism. These elements are temporarily agreed in a peace policy, *and derive their authority from the strong pacifist tendencies of the soldiers and Socialists and the pacifist mood of the workmen.* . . . In any case, the fact must be faced that, one way or the other, Russia, despite the will of the best elements of the population, will have to retire from the war. . . . We cannot contemptuously abandon this whole, great people because of a temporary fit of madness, the causes of which lie deep in the history of years of oppression." (Italics ours.)

Mr. Williams in subsequent dispatches emphasized the basic demoralization of Russia's will to fight. But as the parleys at Brest-Litovsk open, hope revives with Trotzky in the center of the stage. Some of the captions run as follows:

Dec. 23 RUSSIA WON'T BOW BEFORE THE KAISER, TROTZKY INSISTS

Dec. 26 TROTZKY PROTESTS AGAINST GERMANS SHIFTING TROOPS

Dec. 27 REPORT LENIN GIVES GERMANS PEACE ULTIMATUM

Dec. 30 TERMS OF PEACE ROUSE THE FURY OF PAN GERMANS

Jan. 3 RUSSIAN STAND PLEASES LONDON

Jan. 4 ALLIES NOW MAY RECOGNIZE LENIN

Jan. 5 TROTZKY OPENED EYES OF GERMANS

Jan. 7 BOLSHEVIKI'S STAND SHOCKS THE TEUTONS

Jan. 7 BOLSHEVIKI MAY HELP ALLIES BEST

Jan. 11 BOLSHEVISM SEEN AS NEW RELIGION

Jan. 17 GREAT BRITAIN DECIDES TO TREAT WITH LENIN

The optimistic and friendly quality of these reports was no doubt a reflection of official opinion in England, and of Trotzky's own opinions. The spell of Trotzky's defiance at Brest-Litovsk pervades the news. Even Mr. Harold Williams is temporarily under it, though he had written earlier with hard realism that Russia would not and could not fight. Mr. Arthur Ransome was even more thoroughly spell-bound. Trotzky was in good odor most of January, 1918. So good, in fact, that on January 20 the Times reported:

WHAT TROTZKY DID WHEN IN NEW YORK

INVESTIGATION FOR DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FAILS TO SHOW HE RECEIVED GERMAN MONEY

> ". . . . Attorney General Merton F. Lewis instituted an investigation as to Trotzky's activities during that part of 1917 when he was in New York. The investigation was made at the request of the Department of Justice in Washington. Deputy Attorney General Alfred R. Becker was in charge, and the report of the investigation which is now completed is to the effect that no evidence was obtained to support any charge that Trotzky ever received any German money while in New York."

Two days later, however, Mr. Harold Williams in a special dispatch from Petrograd interrupted the optimistic series by reporting that the Bolsheviks were a symbol of volcanic forces, that they were not pacifists, and that they had stopped the war with Germany only to kindle civil war.

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 economic 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 pronunciamento, 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 Bolshevist 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

gates to Russia, though bad ones, but there was no army of any size that could be diverted to that front before the armistice. All the other gates to Russia were blocked.

These elementary considerations do not figure very much in the news. The practical difficulty is met, when it is met at all, by news of anti-Bolshevists in Russia ready to roll up around and behind a small allied army. These anti-Bolshevists and their intentions were crucial, for unless they existed and wanted intervention and were ready to fight, the meager allied forces available would be lost in a wilderness. What does the news say about the prospects of Russian support for allied intervention?

The True Voice of Russia

There were of course rebellions reported on the periphery of Central Russia. But the first serious news which had some stategic relation to the Japanese army appeared, we believe, April 21, 1918, announcing from Washington the receipt of cables to the effect that the Provisional Duma of Autonomous Siberia requested Allied assistance in a program of self-government and resistance to German penetration. On May 5, Mr. A. J. Sack, Director of the Russian Information Bureau, issued an appeal to the American people for supplies and troops.

> "In the first place," said Mr. Sack, "you must distinguish between the Bolsheviki and the Russian people. . . . An expedition advancing through Siberia, organizing the sound Russian elements into a great force . . . . could certainly count on the support of the Caucasian and Cossack peoples . . . ." Asked whether there would be armed opposition he replied: "There would undoubtedly be opposition at first, but it is highly improbable that Germany would be able to spare any large number of men. . . . If Germany were in the allied place . . . . she would have 3,000,000 Russians fighting on the east front within a year."

This was the picture of Russia conveyed by the official press bureau of the so-called Russian Embassy in Washington. In the month of June the advocates of intervention were busy making the picture seem a true one. Lady Murial Paget, "a group of influential Russians," Mme. Botchkarova, M. Konovalov, other interventionists, all come to Washington "to tell about Russia." The distinguished French philosopher, M. Henri Bergson, arrived on a mission to the White House about this time, unrecorded so far as the Times Index shows, or our own search of the files. There were appeals for intervention from the Far Eastern Russian Committee, from Russians in Harbin, from Kerensky and from Russians of the Murmansk coast. On June 17 the Times reported "Russian military men in this country" as eagerly awaiting action by Congress.

On August 22, the Allied governments issued a statement at Archangel (Times, August 26):

> "The Allies, then, were called to Russia by the only legitimate and representative authority, for the purpose of military action in common aiming at the expulsion of the Germans and the complete suppression by force of arms of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, traitorously signed by the Bolsheviki."

On September 6, intervention then being a fact, Mr. Arthur Copping says (Special to the Times, Archangel, August 16):

> "The true voice of Russia, the voice of non-Bolshevist Russia, besought the help of the Allies, and the Allies could not continue deaf to that insistent appeal. . . ."

One of the difficulties is that the appeal from Russia did not begin until nearly two months after the appeal from Foch on February 26, 1918. Moreover the idea of intervention had been bruited among the Allies as early as August, 1917, and perhaps earlier.

The Push for Intervention

Intervention was, as we have seen, based on two themes: German domination of Russia, and the readiness of anti-Bolshevik Russia to fight. Both themes were an appeal to reason, if the information they embodied was correct, correct, mind you, not incidentally, but in the true perspective of events. The German theme disappeared almost instantaneously with the armistice. The reality of the anti-Bolshevik uprising was tested by military campaigns under Kolchak, Denikin, and Yudenitch. The news of these campaigns is discussed in sections VI to XI.

Beside the appeal to reason there was a vast amount of news directly advocating or directly forecasting the much desired intervention. The interested reader will find more than one hundred and forty news items bearing directly upon intervention in the months between February and July.

All this leaves out of account the vast amount of opinion and feature material frankly aimed to persuade the reader. It was even reported, in the guise of news, that intervention would have a quieting effect on Russian politics. Thus a dispatch from Tokio, dated August 3:

> "It is predicted in well-informed circles here that the present concerted action by the Allies in Siberia will act as a sedative on the situation. . . ."

That the news columns in this period were used to persuade the readers of the wisdom of a certain policy, held by the Times itself, will hardly be disputed. Take a front page dispatch like the follow-

ing on May 20. (Special from Washington, May 19.) The captions read as follows:

WASHINGTON SEES CHANCE TO BRING RUSSIA BACK IN WAR
BUT VIEW IS TAKEN THAT IT MUST BE SEIZED WITHOUT LOSS OF TIME
DELAY TO FOE'S ADVANTAGE
AND MILITARY AID TO BOLSHEVIST GOVERNMENT WOULD PLAY GERMANY'S GAME
COMBINED ACTION URGED
NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS MIGHT BE FOSTERED BY JOINT CIVIL COMMISSION WITH MILITARY PROTECTION

This in our judgment is a clear and flagrant example of the invasion of the news by editorial opinion. We are not overstating the matter when we say that a great deal of the news about Russia in the period under consideration was marked by such propagandist methods. We grant the patriotism of the motives; we simply point out the fact, and question the conception of journalism which it illustrates.

The tendency noted in the earlier sections, the tendency to evaluate the news on the basis of hope, degenerates after the shock of Russia's withdrawal and the increasing impetus of war psychology into passionate argument masquerading as news. This degeneration is noticeable from February, 1918, right up to the final collapse of the White Generals, and beyond.

V. The Front Changes

Why had Allied troops been sent into Russia? In the months preceding intervention the dominant reason defined by statesmen, press associations and special correspondents was the necessity of reconstituting some sort of an eastern front to face the Germans. As the foregoing section disclosed, in the five and a half months that elapsed between the withdrawal of Russia from the war and the formal acceptance of the policy of intervention by the American government, the Red Peril played an insignificant part in the hot discussion over intervention in Russia's internal affairs. Germany had the front of the stage. Upon the notion of a Peril that would sweep out of Russia and attack western civilization there was practically no emphasis.

This continued to be the situation in the first days following the landing of Allied and American troops on Russian soil. There were, to be sure, a few warnings that Lenin either had declared war upon one or more members of the Entente, or soon intended making such a declaration.* But in August, September and October—in the days immediately preceding the end of the war—it was still the anti-German note that predominated. On September 4, for instance, when Allied intervention had become an accomplished fact, the Times published an unidentified dispatch from London, declaring

> "It is reported here on what seems to be good authority that the Germans have decided to take military action in Russia against the Allies and have delivered an ultimatum to the Bolshevist government demanding free passage for their troops. Official confirmation of this is awaited."

Again, a week later, a special to the Times from Washington asserted

> "What is regarded as closely approximating an offensive and defensive alliance between Germany and the Bolshevist Government in Russia is involved in the treaty just negotiated between them, the first official information concerning which reached the State Department today in a dispatch from American Ambassador Francis at Archangel."

It was about this time (September 15 to 21, inclusive) that the Sisson documents were published—proving, in the eyes of the Times, that the Bolshevists had ruled Russia "as German valets." That was still the loud note in the news from Russia during these days when the war in Europe was drawing near its close. On October 20—twenty-two days before the armistice—the Times published this news in a special dispatch from Carl Ackerman, then at American Field Headquarters in Siberia:

> "In Khabarovsk the Russians believe that the Bolshevist life is measured by the ability of Germany's military to hold out. With the splendid advance in the west, every foot gained is also a gain in Russia, because Germany is being weakened here, too. Once her prestige is destroyed, the power of the Bolsheviki will crumble."

That was a bad guess. But it was reinforced by propaganda coming from the ever-ready "Russian Information Bureau." On the very eve of the armistice this Bureau issued a statement (published in the Times on November 5) misinforming the American public that

> "The Bolsheviki, who rule in part of Central Russia by means of mass terror, are able to stay in power only through German support. As soon as

* See, for example, the Times of August 7, 8, 9, 10 and 23, 1918.

this support is withdrawn the population will overthrow them."

Six days later the armistice was signed. German support *was* withdrawn. The Soviets stayed where they were. . . . But for nearly two years the "Russian Information Bureau" has gone on making prophecies.

Something to Fight For

It seems to us important, at this point, once more to take stock of the situation that existed on the day of the armistice. Interventionist statesmen and correspondents had prepared the way for intervention on the ground that war with Germany demanded it. On the day of the armistice the war with Germany was ended. Not another German soldier would march into Russian territory; Foch had his complete surrender. There were, to be sure, still Czechoslovak troops in Siberia. And to those troops the State Department note of August 4 had promised "such protection and help as is possible . . . against the armed Austrian and German prisoners who are attacking them." But regardless of the numbers of those prisoners—now, with Austria and Germany defeated, the Allies could have shut down upon communication between any such armed bands and their home governments. And there were, moreover, Allied and American troops in Russia—at Archangel, for instance, and at different points in Siberia—who were not associated with the withdrawal of the Czechs, but rather dispatched to Russia in accord with the plan of reconstituting a new front against Germany. There was, in addition, the question whether further munitions and supplies should be shipped to certain Russian factions to be used against certain other Russian factions. Did the interventionists at once point out that with the armistice there remained no possible reason for reconstructing an eastern front against Germany? Or did there suddenly appear in the post-armistice news a new emphasis—an emphasis no longer upon Germany—and yet one serving equally well to justify the retention of Allied troops on Russian soil and the furnishing of aid to one Russian faction as against another?

Three days after the armistice (November 14) there appeared in the Times these headlines:

BOLSHEVISM IS SPREADING IN EUROPE; ALL NEUTRAL COUNTRIES NOW FEEL THE INFECTION

Under these headlines there appeared a dispatch from London (unidentified) declaring "The most serious question of the hour, in the opinion of some newspapers here, is how far Europe is infected with Bolshevism." Sweden was alarmed. "Newspapers in Spain, Holland, and even Norway also express apprehension over the spread of the Red Flag movement. The troubles in Switzerland also cause uneasiness. A general strike began there today."

One war was done. A new one was beginning to take its place. The Red Peril, hitherto an insignificant item in the news as compared with the peril of a Russia dominated by Germany, now took precedence in the dispatches. Reports descriptive of Russia's aggressive intentions upon the rest of the world came more frequently over the wires. A week after this first dispatch, on November 21, the Times published a special cable from Mr. Julian Grande, in Berne:

> "The general strike here, which lasted three days, must not be considered as a mere local disturbance, but as of international interest, because it shows the extent of the mischief which the Russian Bolsheviki have already succeeded in doing. It is now known that the Bolshevist agents in Switzerland intended to organize a sanguinary revolution, hoping to extend it to the neighboring countries, Italy and France." Etc.

That same day the Times published a dispatch from Washington, stating that while "no definite word" had been received, "recent reports from London have been taken by some observers to indicate that Great Britain may propose the sending of additional troops into Russia to place the country on a stable footing and eliminate the Bolsheviki."

A new note, you observe, was appearing. It was not "to establish an eastern front" that this dispatch suggested Great Britain might send troops into Russia: it was "to place the country on a stable footing and eliminate the Bolsheviki." The note was a popular one. Three days later (November 24) another Washington dispatch was published in the Times, reporting that in the opinion of Prince Lvov, Premier of the first Provisional Government, military and economic intervention was "imperative to save Russia against the revolutionary element now in control of its affairs." On December 13 the Times reported that "Cornelius J. Callahan, manager of the Russian-American Company for International Trade, a subsidiary of Gaston, William and Wigmore, who left Moscow six weeks ago, said yesterday at the company's offices, 39 Broadway, that, in his opinion, it would be necessary for the United States to send a 'formidable' army into Russia to restore order." And three days later there appeared an Associated Press dispatch from Constantinople, giving the opinion of Paul Milukov that "the only possible cure for the present trouble in Russia is that an Allied force be landed immediately in the south." The following day the Times asked editorially: "Having entered Russia for a purpose, why not carry out that purpose?" Reconstitute an eastern front? No. "Start a real movement to drive the Bolsheviki out." "The presence of a foreign army is usually an irritation; the irritation is there now; we can

remove it if we reinforce our armies and do something that will make it safe to withdraw them later . . . Unless we drive the Bolsheviki out of Petrograd and Moscow the population of the bulk of Great Russia will have a winter of starvation."

Red Peril

A month after the armistice thus found editorial writer, correspondent and statesman all well on the way toward supplying for intervention a reason as compelling as that motive which the armistice had done away with. "Red Peril Pictured As Alarming" said a headline in the Times on December 18; and four days later an Associated Press dispatch from Berlin brought a report that Radek, on the occasion of his recent visit to that city, had "boasted that 'the money sent to Berlin to finance the revolution was as nothing compared to the funds transmitted to New York for the purpose of spreading Bolshevism in the United States.'" "A military expedition starting at Odessa," said the Times, that same day, "could even now overthrow our armed enemies at Moscow and save famine-stricken Petrograd, and then meet the little force we have put in Murmansk."

Such passages as these, from the pens of editorial writers, correspondents and Authorities on Russia, show how facile was the transition following the armistice. A few days more, and it may fairly be said that the new motive was dominant. Thus, on December 24, the Times published a special dispatch reporting that "Rumors have been current in Washington that General Pershing, acting under an understanding with President Wilson, has been preparing to send forces from France to Russia." On the same day Mr. Charles Selden cabled from Paris that to deal with "the Bolshevism that menaces the world" Prince Lvov and his colleagues had asked for 150,000 Allied troops. (Times, December 26, 1918.) Two days later came a second cable from Mr. Selden, reporting that while there would be no Allied intervention in Russia on a large scale—because "no European Government at the present moment cares to risk arousing the opposition of its people to sending large bodies of troops to Russia for a Winter campaign"—nevertheless "a strong allied expedition is about to reinforce the expedition already in Southern Russia, and they will take the place of the German troops evacuating the Ukraine." Another two days, and headlines on the first page of the Times announced—

MENACE TO WORLD BY REDS IS SEEN
DIPLOMATS AND OTHERS IN PARIS EXPRESS MUCH ANXIETY OVER THE SITUATION

The dispatch which these headlines introduced was one from Mr. Walter Duranty in Paris, dated December 28. "A French business man, just returned from Moscow after three months' imprisonment by the Bolsheviki" had told Mr. Duranty "You people are living in a Fool's Paradise." A Danish diplomat, also unnamed, had reported that "to believe that Bolshevism meant nothing but disorganization . . . was to make a mistake for which the world might pay dearly in the near future." Moreover—

> A high official at the Russian Embassy, whom I saw this morning, confirmed the main points of the ominous condition of affairs in Russia.
>
> "It is certainly true," he said, "that the Bolsheviki are better organized than most persons here imagine. They have forced officers and officials of the former régime to work for them under pain of death. According to the latest information we have received, they do appear to be spreading westward, and may create a grave state of affairs for Western Europe by joining hands with the extremist party in Germany, which seems to be getting control, at least, for a time.

That day, editorially, the Times cast its die. "The fault which the Allies are committing in the front of their new enemy, the Bolsheviki," it said, "is the same they have so long committed in front of their old enemy, the German autocracy. They allowed the enemy all the advantages of the offensive, and merely resisted at whatever point the enemy chose in turn to attack . . . . Similarly the Bolshevist assault on civilization has all the advantages of the offensive . . . . As for the fear that advance into Russia would or might contaminate the soldiers of the advancing force by bringing them into contact with Bolshevist argument, that merely means only a postponement of the evil day, for the Bolsheviki are on the offensive and will bring that argument home to the West without delay. When they do they will be stronger and more powerful than they are now. The Allies can fight Bolshevism now, before its teeth have grown, and run the risk of having the cruder minds among their soldiers debauched by the argument that ignorance should rule knowledge; or they can wait until Bolshevism has spread that argument through the cruder minds not only of their armies but of their whole populations, and then fight it with their morale thus impaired. It ought to be a choice easy to make."

The front had changed. "Their new enemy, the Bolsheviki"—"the Bolsheviki are on the offensive"—"Allies can fight Bolshevism now," or "they can wait"—"it ought to be a choice easy to make." Thus by the end of 1918, seven weeks after the armistice, was the transition effected. Gone was the old enemy—Germany. In Germany's place, demanding more cannon and platoons, stood the "new enemy"—Soviet Russia.

VI. Kolchak

Kolchak was the spearhead of Russian intervention. He was not yet in power when the Allied councils determined to reconstitute the eastern front. But when the emphasis shifted, with the end of the war against Germany, he came in time to play protagonist in the new drama. Within a few weeks after the signing of the armistice, he stood at the head of the "All-Russian Government of Omsk."

There had preceded Kolchak, in Siberia, a government headed by Peter Vologodsky. It was a government (more than one correspondent in Siberia reported) which commanded some measure of popular support. An Associated Press dispatch from Vladivostok (September 22, 1918) asserted that "democratic organizations in Omsk and Tomsk are supporting the cabinet"; Mr. Carl W. Ackerman cabled to the Times on November 14, "It is a good beginning, with popular support and good intentions and principles"; and the Times itself said editorially (November 24), "The Omsk government was the nearest approach to a democratic government representing Russia which has been created since the Bolshevist revolution a year ago; it was the one which the Allies could most easily recognize."

It was this government which a coup d'etat turned out of power on the 18th of November. An Associated Press dispatch from Vladivostok tells the story:

> "Through a coup on the part of the council of Ministers of the new All-Russian government at Omsk, Admiral Alexander Kolchak has become virtual dictator and commander of the All-Russian army and fleet. Two ministers, M. Avksentieff and M. Zenzenoff who opposed Admiral Kolchak's dictatorship, have been arrested. A portion of the directorate of the erstwhile Ufa government, which formed the administrative body of the new government, and to which the Ministry was responsible, supports Admiral Kolchak. Telegrams received here from Omsk state that the move was 'due to extraordinary circumstances and danger menacing the state.' . . . ."

Was there an implication here that Kolchak himself had been a conspirator in the coup d'etat which had arrested Ministers who "opposed" his rise to the dictatorship? If so, the public was speedily informed that no such implication was intended. From Washington (November 22) came the following dispatch—based on information supplied by the "Russian Embassy" (the italics are ours): "Cable dispatches received at the Russian Embassy, today, from Siberia, throw *a new light* on the changes that took place recently in the All-Russian government of Omsk, and brought to the front, Admiral Kolchak as dictator *with the approval of the government.* A group of three military officers, on the night of November 18, according to these dispatches, arrested without authority two members of the directory, Avksentieff and Zenzenoff, and two prominent citizens of Omsk, Argunoff and Rogovsky. The coup, *the object of which is not entirely clear,* was attempted without any knowledge or participation of the government. It was promptly and emphatically disapproved by the government. *In order to prevent further irresponsible activities* and to maintain the principle of firm governmental power, the Council of Ministers urged energetic measures and issued a decree authorizing Admiral Kolchak to take over the power of the State. *By his order, the offenders were turned over at once for trial.*"

This paragraph presents the case of Kolchak's apologists: that Kolchak was no party to the coup d'etat. That he was its innocent beneficiary. That he was, in fact, brought into power for the express purpose of preventing just such coups in future, and for punishing those who had carried off the present one. Did Kolchak, the innocent beneficiary of a coup d'etat, bring to punishment the officers arrested for overturning the Vologodsky cabinet? We have been unable to find in the Times this final chapter of the story:

> "Omsk. An order was issued to declare to all parts of the army that Col. Volkoff, Ataman Krasilnikoff and Army Chief Kitanayeff, who had been tried by the Field Court Martial, were found—not guilty."

Thus runs a report in the monarchist People's Gazette of November 27.*

The Man on Horseback

A few frank reports of the effect of the Kolchak coup d'etat came to the Times from Mr. Ackerman. He cabled (November 26) that "the situation is daily growing increasingly serious as a result of the Omsk coup d'etat." And again, (November 25) that "the Omsk coup d'etat has had a bad effect upon the Czech troops, according to General Syrovy. 'The change of government,' he said, 'has killed our soldiers. They say that for four years they have been fighting for democracy, and that now that a dictatorship ruled in Omsk, they are no longer fighting for democracy.' "

But despite such reports, the coup d'etat found

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* See The New Republic of July 9, 1919.

an early welcome in other quarters. The same issue of the Times which published first news of the coup carried also the dispatch which follows:

COUP PLEASES WASHINGTON
STRONG HEAD OF SIBERIAN GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL

"Washington, Nov. 21.—News of the coup at Omsk by which Admiral Kolchak virtually became dictator of the All-Russian forces, is regarded at the State Department as another sign pointing to stabilization of the movement relied upon to regenerate Russia. The great weakness of the situation in Siberia, it has been believed for some time, is the lack of a powerful head of the government who cannot be swayed by popular demonstration and who will work toward the reconstruction of the government with a firm hand. . . ."

A firm hand and an ability to resist "popular demonstration" had their charm. The same Times editorial (November 24) which had paid tribute to the old government admitted this much about the new: "Kolchak's stroke changes its outward appearance, but may not have changed the essence . . . . Personally, Kolchak seems to be a strong man, and an honest man. In the group around him, is certainly to be found the nearest approach to 'Russia' at the present moment . . . . We should give all possible support to any stable and approximately representative government that can be found . . ."

That government, it became more and more clear, was Kolchak's. By January 17, the Times was ready to say: "From this distance it appears that his [Kolchak's] appointment to a sort of constitutional dictatorship was the best thing that could have been done under the circumstances"; and by the time Kolchak's armies were ready to move, he might—so far as emphasis on the coup d'etat was concerned—have been elected to the post of dictator by a popular ballot. "It was a democratic change," said the Times on April 21, "there was no arbitrary coup d'etat."

Recognition

Kolchak had not been in power more than a few months before the question of diplomatic recognition for his government made the first of its many appearances in the news. On April 18, an unidentified dispatch from Washington asserted: "Unofficial advices from London have reached Washington today, that the leading Entente powers, as well as the United States government, would simultaneously recognize the Kolchak government at Omsk, in Siberia, immediately after the Germans have signed the peace treaty . . . ."

It is important to note the stream of similar dispatches that followed. These rumors were the reverse side of that other picture drawn so often: the picture of impending collapse in Petrograd and Moscow. Foreign correspondent and Washington bureau kept repeating that Kolchak would "soon be recognized"; foreign correspondent and Washington bureau kept repeating that Soviet Russia would "soon collapse." Prophecy was intertwined with news—and was utterly false in both cases. Kolchak was never recognized; the Soviet government, a full year later, had not fallen. But constant repetition had its effect on public opinion.

So important is the subjective effect upon the reader of this sort of iteration that it is worth while following this story of Kolchak recognition. It began, as we have said, in the Spring of 1919. We have in the following paragraphs listed a few of its varied reappearances. The instances seem to us fairly chosen. In none of them does the correspondent say that Kolchak *should* be recognized, or that he *might* be; he reports that there is evidence Kolchak *will* be recognized; and in some cases, (as items in the list show) he asserts that recognition is nothing less than an accomplished fact.

*April 22.** (Special dispatch, Washington)—"The decision of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy . . . . to accord recognition to the Omsk cabinet as the de facto government of the country was reached, it is learned today, under the leadership of the United States," etc.

May 26. (Special cable, London)—"A well authorized report reaches the New York Times correspondent that recognition of the Kolchak government by Great Britain is imminent. . . ."

(The headline read: "Britain to Recognize Kolchak Government.")

May 27. (Special cable, London)—"The Council of Four has unanimously decided in favor of the recognition in principle of the Kolchak government, advices from Paris say. This disposes of rumors current here relative to President Wilson's opposition. . . ."

(The headline read: "Allies Recognize Kolchak Cabinet.")

June 12. (Havas, Paris)—"The Council of Four has the complete text of the reply of Admiral Kolchak. . . . Recognition of the Omsk government, it is believed, will not be much longer delayed."

(Headline: "Recognize Kolchak Soon.")

August 26. (Special dispatch, Washington)—"Roland S. Morris, the American Ambassador to Japan, who was sent to Omsk to confer with officials of the Kolchak government and make report on the situation in Siberia, has recommended that the American government grant immediate recognition to the Kolchak government . . . . recognition is expected to be granted inside of a month. . . ."

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* The date, in each instance, is the date of publication in the Times.

Kolchak in Power

Recognition is ordinarily granted a de facto government only when it seems to have secured a firm hold over the people which it governs. During the months Kolchak was in power there appeared in the Times evidence to show that despite the coup d'etat which had upset a democratic government, Kolchak was winning the loyalty of the Siberian people. Some of these reports had their origin in "the Russian Committee in Paris" (over which an ex-Minister of the Tsar presided); others, in "the Russian Embassy" in Washington. Many such reports, however, were based upon events of some significance and merited transmission as news.

No doubt there were Zemstvos and trade unions and other democratic bodies that gave their support to Kolchak; we know (by this time) that there were also certain others, both in Siberia and in European Russia, that gave equal loyalty to the Soviets. A declaration of support by a democratic assembly, either in favor of Kolchak or in favor of Lenin, is a news event of somewhat similar importance. Is it the true function of a newspaper and a press association to report or to ignore such events without discrimination? In the Times you will find sixteen reports* of declarations by Zemstvos, trade unions and other bodies, in favor of the Kolchak government. There is no similarly complete record of that gradual accretion of power which the Soviets must have had, to stay on top in Moscow.

Emphasis is an important factor in journalism. It is sometimes achieved simply by silence. Section III of this review gives a resumé of the various reports of revolt in Soviet Russia, of strikes and of revolutions. It is fair to say that whenever the Soviets were suspected of being in trouble, and of course they were in trouble, the entire civilized world knew of it the following morning.

Was Kolchak never in trouble? He was, to be sure, harrassed by bandit leaders like Semenoff, and Kalmykoff.† But the Times had an explanation‡ for his failure to rid himself of such gentry: "In spite of the demands of his war with the Bolsheviki, he [Kolchak] made preparations once, if not twice, to send a military expedition against these two Cossack adventurers, with the object of restoring all Siberia to allegiance to the Omsk government. Americans returned from Siberia say that this vindication of authority was halted by the military representatives of a foreign government, who find the Cossack leaders useful for their own purposes, and who threatened to use force against Kolchak if he persisted."

Kolchak, in other words, could not be expected to take on Japan when he went gunning for two modest bandits. And with the reasonableness of this logic we agree—though it might be pointed out that the constant open rebellion of Semenoff and Kalmykoff made a little absurd the designations "All-Russian Government" and "Supreme Ruler."

But aside from the bandit chieftains, what of Kolchak's control over his own section of Siberia? What preparation had a reader of the Times for the revolutionary explosion that was coming? Had he been warned that it was from Vesuvius that Kolchak ruled?

It is remarkable how little can be found in the columns of the Times to suggest the revolution that was to sweep Kolchak out of power—until the revolution itself had broken. Reports received in August, that Ambassador Morris had found Kolchak's position critical, were followed by reports of a more favorable turn. Even as late as December 2, the conclusion of a Times editorial was not one that foreshadowed collapse. Kolchak was seeking to remedy mistakes; "his government should be much more solidly established hereafter."

Twenty-two days later, there was no government left to establish. On December 23, a revolutionary government was proclaimed in Kolchak's second capital (Irkutsk). The following day, came Kolchak's abdication:

> "In order to unite all armed forces fighting to make secure our political organization, I name General Semenoff, Commander in Chief, with headquarters in the Irkutsk and trans-Baikal Russian military districts. All military commanders will be subordinate to him."

The Supreme Ruler had resigned in favor of the Cossack Adventurer himself. Ironically, from Washington, on December 31, came a special dispatch to the Times (italics ours):

> ". . . . Information *now* received indicates that the appointment of Semenoff was in reality very little more than a recognition by Admiral Kolchak of *an already established fact* . . . ."

To the reporting of Admiral Kolchak's activities in the field it has seemed worth while to devote a separate section of this study. That section follows. For Kolchak's activities as a statesman, the Czechs may speak. They knew and served him best:

> "By guarding and maintaining order, our army has been forced against its convictions to support a state of absolute despotism and unlawfulness which has had its beginnings here under defense of the Czech arms.
>
> "The military authorities of the Government of Omsk are permitting criminal actions that will stag-

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* Jan. 9, 1919; Jan. 18; Jan. 27; April 6; May 21; May 22; June 1; June 7; June 11; June 13; July 22; July 25; July 31; Aug. 3; Sept. 27; Nov. 23.

† See Times of May 31, 1919; August 1; August 7; etc.

‡ Editorial, October 4, 1919.

ger the entire world. The burning of villages, the murder of masses of peaceful inhabitants and the shooting of hundreds of persons of democratic convictions and also those only suspected of political disloyalty occurs daily. The responsibility for this before the peoples of the world will fall on us, inasmuch as we, possessing sufficient strength, do not prevent this lawlessness.

"Thus our passiveness appears as a direct consequence of the principles of neutrality and non-interference in Russian internal affairs, and we are becoming apparent participants in these crimes as a result of our observing absolute neutrality." (Times, November 18, 1919.)

VII. The Kolchak Offensive

An American can picture the position of Kolchak's armies, before the start of the 1919 offensive, if he imagines that Moscow is Des Moines, and that the Kolchak forces are drawn up on a line reaching roughly from Lake Ontario, on the north, to Roanoke, Va., on the south. It must further be imagined, of course, that the railway lines reaching westward from the Appalachians are greatly inferior in trackage and rolling stock to anything that might be called a trunk line in this country. Moreover, while the Appalachian Mountains may be considered as non-existent, for Kolchak, it is necessary to add a number of new and important rivers to our map—rivers flowing north and south, and thereby forming bunkers in the way of an advance upon Des Moines, should hostile forces dynamite the bridges. Finally, the important industrial cities between Des Moines and the Appalachians have no equivalent in Russia between Perm and Moscow. There are, for our calculations, no Pittsburghs, Buffalos, Clevelands and Detroits—along the line of advance—in which old equipment might be repaired and new material secured.

What resources had Kolchak, for an advance upon Moscow, in the face of difficulties so substantial?

Three months before the start of his offensive, he was credited with an army numbering "100,000 men, 200,000 more recruited, and awaiting equipment." (Statement by Boris Bakhmeteff, published in the Times December 31, 1918.) How many of the second 200,000 had been equipped when Kolchak gave the word to start, it is impossible to say. It is also impossible to find in the Times a confident estimate of the number of Soviet troops opposing him. Some advantage Kolchak had, however, in the fact that the tide was running in his direction when he started. Late in December, Siberian and Czechoslovakian troops had captured the city of Perm, (which corresponds to a point near Hamilton, Ont., on our transposed map) with reported captures of 31,000 prisoners, 120 field guns, 1,000 machine guns, and the annihilation of ten Bolshevist regiments. (Associated Press dispatch from Vladivostok, published in the Times January 3, 1919.)

The Offensive Starts

Now the extraordinary thing about the news of Kolchak's westward push is the extravagance of the claims that were made for him, on the basis of what can fairly be called indefinite information. First news of what might be called the opening of the Spring offensive, was published in the Times on March 25. (Unidentified dispatch, Paris.) Kolchak was then advancing on a line some 250 miles in length. "At certain points" he had driven the Bolsheviki back "more than thirty miles"; a small city (Okransk) had been captured.

Two days later, the Times published a second dispatch. (London via Montreal.) The definite information it contained was meagre. "A large number" of prisoners had been captured; three Bolshevist regiments had been "annihilated"; the city of Osa had been taken. Probably few Americans, however, realized that the capture of Osa had about the same significance and represented about the same progress as the advance of our imaginary army from Hamilton, Ont., to a point on the north shore of Lake Erie; and accordingly few may have thought the headline of the Times and the first sentence of the dispatch unduly optimistic:

KOLCHAK PURSUES BROKEN RED ARMY

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"London, March 26 (via Montreal)—The troops of the Kolchak government who pierced the Bolshevist front on a thirty-mile sector on March 11, continue their progress and the position of the Bolsheviki is precarious. . . . ."

Their position, apparently, was equally precarious in Moscow and Petrograd. On April 3, a special cable to the Times from London (quoting the Morning Post's correspondent in Warsaw), announced that "Lenin and Trotzky have come to a definite break." "The situation in Moscow and Petrograd has become so serious that there is promise of a popular uprising against the entire Bolshevist regime . . . ."

Meantime, during the first three weeks of April, the news of Kolchak's campaign was not substantial. Soviet troops were "retiring rapidly" on the extreme southern end of the line; a regiment had deserted in the north; nine hundred Bolsheviki

European Russia, superimposed upon a map of the United States to show relative distances. Moscow coincides with Des Moines, Iowa.

had been slain in Sarapul (a city which would correspond, on our transposed map, to Lorain, Ohio); and the city of Sterlitamak (about as far west, comparatively, as Grafton, W. Va.) had been taken. On the basis of such achievement, however, the Times published (April 20)—under the headline: "Reds Collapsing in the East"—the opinion volunteered by the "Russian Embassy" in Washington, that "a collapse of the Bolshevist forces in Eastern Russia was imminent." The Soviet army, declared the "Embassy," was becoming "more and more demoralized."

Kolchak Triumphant

Two days later, on the first page of the Times there appeared the headlines:

RED RULE TOTTERS AS KOLCHAK WINS

Now Kolchak, though readers of the Times might not have realized it, was still some five hundred and ninety miles away from Moscow when the Soviets thus tottered. At Chateau-Thierry the Germans were fifty miles from Paris. What was the basis of such cheer? "Heavy losses" had been inflicted on the enemy; demoralization of the Bolshevist troops was "reported to be growing"; three divisions had refused to fight; there were more rumors of revolts by the peasants.

We are, at this point, hastening along toward the very zenith of Kolchak's success. Note what happens in the meantime: an Associated Press dispatch from Paris (dated April 28) reports him in a village forty miles east of Samara (which, on an Americanized version of the map, might put him somewhere near Covington, Ky.); another dispatch from Paris (dated eleven days later) reported the evacuation of Samara itself; another six days, and Kolchak was in the city. This, in a few words, is the story of the drive on Moscow. Practically no definite claims had been made of prisoners taken, losses inflicted, or war material captured. Kolchak's troops had simply followed an army (size unknown) apparently retreating at least in good enough order to save the bulk of its supplies. So far as the occupation of Des Moines was concerned, Kolchak still had Indiana, Illinois, and half of Iowa to fight across. Yet on May 15, the French Wireless Service, plus the headline-writer of the Times, informed the public:

KOLCHAK PLANS MOVE ON MOSCOW
BUT SIBERIAN DICTATOR SAYS HE WILL FIRST SEEK TO DESTROY THE RED ARMY

* * * * * * * *

"Paris, May 13 (French Wireless Service)—Plans are being made by the All-Russian government at Omsk to begin an advance on Moscow, Admiral Kolchak, the head of the government, declared in an interview with the correspondent of the Petit Parisien. . . ."

From the hills of Kentucky Kolchak saw, but only with his mind's eye, the steeples of Des Moines—saw them, now no more than four hundred and ninety miles before him.

Disillusion

Samara was the apex. Three weeks later (June 6), the Times reported Kolchak's capture of Uralsk. But Uralsk was behind the line of advance, farther to the south. And the following day, there appeared this cryptic sentence in a London report of Winston Churchill's address to the House of Commons:

> "Mr. Churchill said that the check to Admiral Kolchak's advance was now more pronounced, and that no attempt should be made to encourage extravagant hopes in that quarter."

What did Mr. Churchill mean? He may have puzzled readers of the Times. But in this instance he proved himself a prophet. Five days later, the Times published a report that Soviet troops were in Ufa; July 3, they had recaptured Perm. Kolchak was back where he had started. An unidentified dispatch (Paris, July 5) brought a ray of hope: "Reports from Omsk" told of "an improvement in the situation." Soviet troops were "showing fatigue"; Kolchak was "receiving reinforcements." But it was of little use. On July 17, the Times reported the capture by the Soviet army of the city of Ekaterinburg. Kolchak in that defeat lost one of his most important bases. Ekaterinburg was the center of the Ural mining district, and the site of important factories. Was it the end of the offensive?

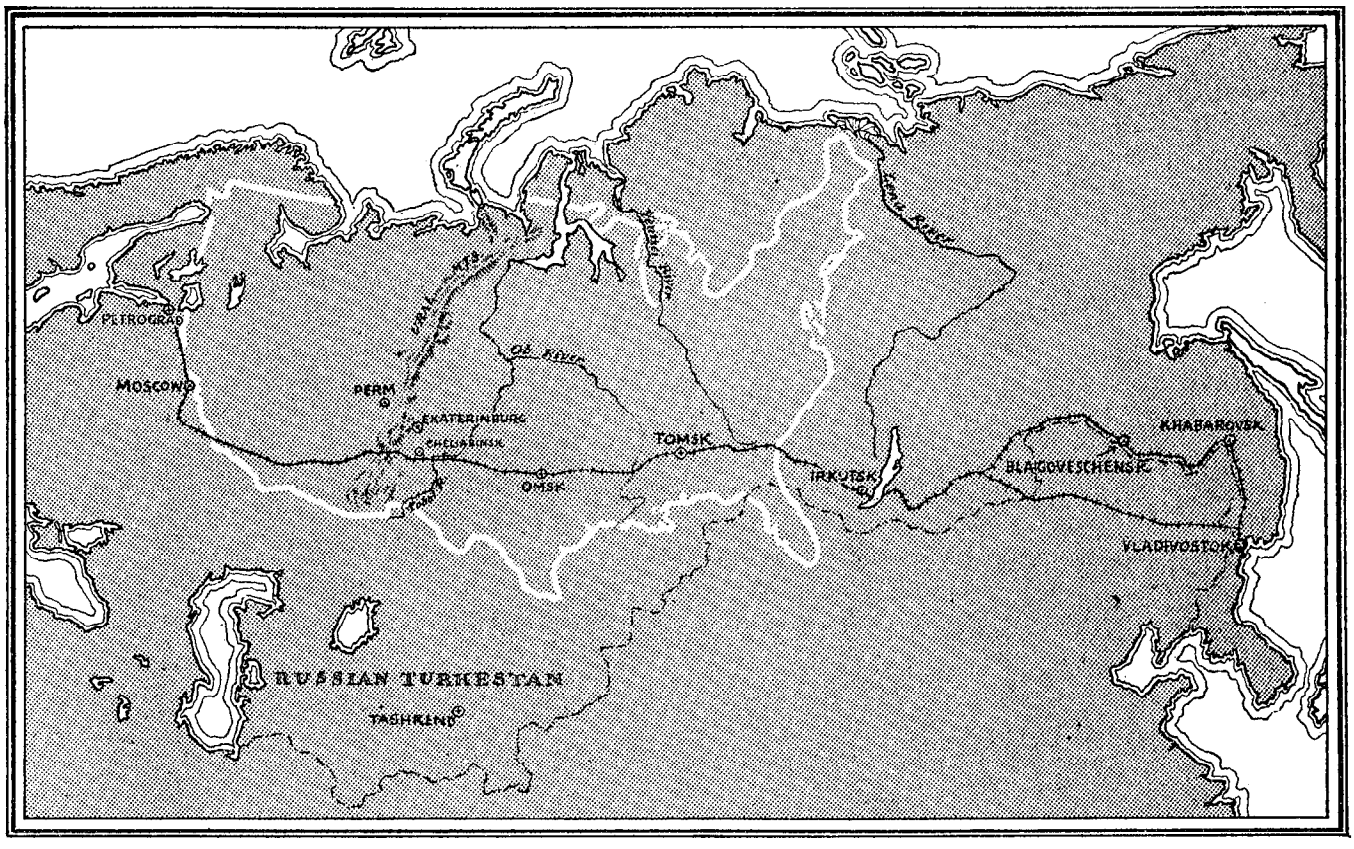
No. Not, at least, for the "Russian Embassy." A special to the Times from Washington, dated July 31, brought the reassuring opinion of Boris Bakhmeteff, now returned from Paris. One should go slowly in evaluating a "temporary reverse." "Ups and downs, fluctuations of military chance are but natural." "For a healthy cause, a setback is but a step toward improvement."

And then, the following morning, came a bolt from the blue:

> "Paris, Aug. 1 (Associated Press)—The All-Russian government is preparing to move from Omsk to Irkutsk, Siberia, and the morale of the Kolchak army is becoming so bad that there is little hope of it regaining the territory lost to the Bolsheviki, according to dispatches received in Paris. . . ."

Cheliabinsk was lost. Another important base. There was no base left for Kolchak, now, in European Russia. Brusquely, on August 12, the Times told its readers what they might expect:

> *"Special to The New York Times.* Washington, Aug. 11—The position of the anti-Bolshevist army



European and Asiatic Russia, superimposed upon an outline of the United States. Moscow comes where San Francisco would be. Kolchak's retreat from Perm to Irkutsk was accordingly a retreat corresponding to one from Santa Fe, N. M., to a point off the Bahama Islands.

commanded by Admiral Kolchak is so critical that official Washington is now openly apprehensive of the collapse of the entire movement headed by Kolchak. . . . The time has come, a high official of the government stated tonight, to prepare the people of the anti-Bolshevist world for a possible disaster to the Kolchak regime in Western Siberia. . . ."

The following morning, three months after the headlines had said 'Kolchak Plans Move on Moscow," the Times tolled the bell for the fallen Admiral. "Kolchak Beaten" was the caption on its editorial.

Re-Enchantment

As later events demonstrated, the judgment in that editorial was entirely sound. Kolchak's day was done. But consider, for a moment, the consequences of "Kolchak Beaten":

Kolchak was "the All-Russian Government." He had been groomed for leadership. Suppose that he had failed? Suppose it was clear that he had lost his chance to get to Moscow? There might, in that case, have been two queries working their way insidiously into American opinion. First: Where was that popular backing which Kolchak's propagandists had claimed for him? Second: If the Soviet Government were to continue to hold power, was it not necessary to stop regarding it as a government we need have no policy about?

The news suddenly struck a cheerier note. Two days after the commemorative editorial, there appeared in the Times these headlines:

LONDON NOT ANXIOUS ABOUT KOLCHAK

AMERICAN FEARS THAT ADMIRAL'S FORCE IS NEAR COLLAPSE CAUSE SURPRISE

DOUBT HE IS IN PERIL

* * * * * * * *

"Special Cable to the New York Times. London, Aug. 14.—American fears that Admiral Kolchak's force is on the eve of collapse have been heard with surprise in well informed circles here . . . ."

The dispatch went on to say that the well-informed circles had heard nothing alarming from General Knox (in the field with Kolchak), and that alarmist reports seemed to "be inspired by deliberate misrepresentations in Bolshevist wireless reports."—Propaganda, in other words.

The Times correspondent in Washington wired simultaneously in the same optimistic tone used by his brother correspondent in London: "Despite the unfavorable news that has come from Omsk recently, there are many army officers"—no clue to their identity—"who do not consider the situation in Siberia so bad as it has been painted in the last few days. These officers point out that equipment should now be reaching Kolchak, and with the Siberian winter," etc . . . . Moreover, "the State Department received advices from Scandinavian

press sources today"—original source of Scandinavian information not stated—"that conditions in Bolshevist Russia are very unsettled, while there is underway a great exodus from Moscow, the Bolshevist 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 stategy" 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 Bolsheviki 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 Bolsheviki 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 Bolsheviki are retreating along the whole line." According to a London dispatch:

> "The message also reports that a Bolshevist 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 Bolsheviki 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 Nikolevsk, 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 Common, 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 southwestern 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'etat." 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 Wiliams 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 Bolsheviki 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. Willams 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.

The Picture Fades

Suppose one were to consult the dispatches devoted not to celebration of Denikin in the heydey of his success, but to explanation of his failure after the event?

From Riga, on December 7, 1919—when Denikin was no longer a real factor in the military situation—Mr. Walter Duranty cabled that it was "precisely toward the re-establishment of the old régime that the Allies' support has been directed. No matter what the White leaders may profess in the way of liberal intentions, the facts speak more loudly still." What were these facts that spoke more loudly still?

From other dispatches to the Times—dispatches which arrived when the battle was over, and judgment of Denikin's régime no longer a critical issue—some of these facts may be assembled.

The cable sent by Mr. Williams on July 2, 1919, with its report of "a National Assembly," etc. (see above), must have seemed to many Americans to indicate an effort on Denikin's part to establish a genuinely democratic and responsible government. Yet it was not until seven months later, (February 2, 1920) that Mr. Williams reported certain political developments by which Denikin "ceases to be dictator, and has taken the plunge into democracy."*

Again, take Mr. Williams's report (November 20, 1919) that "the number of volunteers for the army far exceeds the capacity of the army to receive them"—and compare it with the after-the-fact explanation made by Mr. E. L. James in a special cable from Paris, on January 31, 1920:

> "It is impossible to recruit in Russia an anti-Soviet army, large enough to achieve success, according to M. Cinguareanu, representing Bessarabia at the peace conference. . . . M. Cinguareanu told me that there were many reasons why a big anti-Soviet army could not be raised in Russia, but all others were subordinate to one reason, that not enough men could be found who wished to fight the Bolsheviki."

Or compare the early Summer report sent by Mr. Williams that Denikin was winning popular support with such a cable as the following:

> "Berne, Oct. 11.—The Ukrainian rising against General Denikin in southwestern Russia, is continuing, especially in the neighborhood of Kiev, according to reports received here by the Ukrainian mission. . . . Among the troops who are fighting against General Denikin are many former soldiers and mounted peasants who are said to have become enraged against the Cossack leader because of alleged atrocities. . . ."

Mr. Williams had reported that Denikin had made "allowance for all reasonable demands" on the part of the Ukrainians. Nevertheless, it was revolt in the Ukraine—widespread and almost constant revolt—that played a major part in Denikin's ultimate defeat. He pushed his troops toward Moscow. But he marched on a bed of quicksand.

It would be easy, however, to overstress the importance of the political side of the Denikin adventure. Kolchak, not Denikin, was the protagonist of democracy in Russian intervention. Denikin counted by virtue of his army. That army, for many months, stood between the American public and a realistic appraisal of the situation in Russia. How effectively, a summary of the Denikin offensive will perhaps reveal.

* The truth of the matter is, that Denikin's government grew more and more democratic as his army fell farther and farther away from Moscow. In fact, by February 17, 1920, Mr. Williams reported the creation of a cabinet responsible to the elective Assembly. Note that he terms this "a complete change in form of government."

IX. The Denikin Offensive

There would be little value in tracing day by day the news reports of the campaign in southern Russia. The campaign does not fall into the more or less clearly marked phases that characterize the Kolchak offensive in the East. Furthermore, its advances and retreats are more local in character. There is not always a general movement of the line. Reports of successes in the Caucasus appear simultaneously with reports of reverses farther west.

Nor is it the purpose of this study to write the detailed annals of that campaign. Its purpose is rather to review the various news dispatches that reached the American reader, and to indicate their character.

Cities in South Russia, of course, meant very little to the American public. The fall of Vladikavkaz, of Paulograd, of Kamishin, had no significance for the ordinary reader. But the capture of troops and guns and war material was another matter. One thousand prisoners on Tuesday, two thousand on Friday, a steady iteration of this sort of news inevitably produces an effect upon the mind of any reader.

A second factor of importance, from the standpoint of the present discussion, is the extent to which the American reader was either rightly guided or misled, by the conclusions which correspondents drew from actual achievements in the field. It is with an eye upon these two factors, particularly, that this review of General Denikin's campaign is written.

The Spring of 1919

During the months of April, May and June, 1919, Denikin's troops were operating on a line running from the Caspian Sea to the Sea of Azov. Perhaps it will make events more graphic if the American analogy is again brought into service. Moscow, once more, is represented by Des Moines. On that basis, Denikin is operating on a line running roughly east and west across central Mississippi and southern Arkansas. He is trying, of course, to push north. Meantime, an anti-Bolshevist army is operating in the Caucasus (the Gulf, on our map); and there are anti-Bolshevist Ukrainian troops along the Pripet River (much farther north and west; we might say, western Kansas).

Without doubt, the Spring offensive in the South had one genuinely important result. Denikin managed to cut the contact between Moscow and the valuable Donetz coal basin. June was the month in which the Soviet armies began their counter-offensive against Kolchak in the East. Troops from the South may have been diverted, and, from the Soviet point of view, diverted wisely. But the loss of the Donetz region must certainly have been a serious one.

Aside from this success, however, there was no great shift in the situation in the South, during the months of Spring. Denikin managed to push his troops north as far as Paulograd (which might be compared to an advance as far as McAlester, Oklahoma, on the push towards Des Moines). Nevertheless, there were more or less open promises of great things soon to come. The Times on June 24 printed a special cable from Mr. Harold Williams, declaring the rout of Bolshevism on the Ekaterinodar front to be "marvellously complete." There was also news of trouble on the inside of Soviet Russia. A dispatch from the Washington Office of the Times reported, on April 22, news reaching the State Department that "the Lenin-Trotzky régime is beginning to crack." A special dispatch from Geneva, published on the same day, asserted that the government was "menaced by an entirely new revolutionary movement." And on May 24, the Times gave its readers a report more promising still:

> "London, May 23.—The entire Bolshevist structure in Russia appears to be crumbling.
>
> "The evacuation of Moscow, the head centre of Bolshevism, has begun, according to reports brought from Petrograd to Copenhagen by travelers, and forwarded by the Exchange Telegraph Company. . . ."

It was in captures, however, that Denikin's army had made a rich showing during the Spring campaign. "It had already, by June 1 . . . . captured 50,000 prisoners, 30 guns, 700 machine guns, and 200 locomotives." (Times, June 27, special cable from London.) Later in the month, 5,500 more prisoners, 10 more guns, and three armored trains were added. That brought the total for prisoners to 55,500, for the guns (including machine guns) to 740. These figures let us carry over.

Midsummer

Denikin's army, by the first of July, had become the chief hope of the interventionists. The Kolchak offensive in the East had collapsed. Kolchak was back at the line from which he started. But Denikin was the new hope of Russia.

During the months of July and August the anti-Bolshevist forces in the South took from the Bolsheviki a half dozen cities of some importance. Odessa was their chief prize—although, throughout the campaign in the South—the fact that an Allied fleet patrolled the Black Sea made Odessa a point of less real value to the Soviets than it might otherwise have been. Denikin's line by the end of August, ran east approximately from Poltava to Kamishin, via Kharkov and Pavlovsk. That is, on an American version of the map, with Des Moines representing Moscow—it ran, roughly, across the northern end of Oklahoma, Arkansas and Tennessee. Kharkov was nearest to Moscow of the larger cities Denikin had captured. And Moscow was still 375 miles away.

Nevertheless, the reports narrating this advance (to a point 375 miles removed from its objective) were often put in such a way that a complete collapse of the Bolshevik defensive was made to seem likely. Thus Mr. Williams asserted, in a cable published on the 13th of July:

> "There is really nothing now to prevent a rapid break through to Moscow, provided communications could be secured and civil administration be guaranteed. . . ."

Headlines told much the same story:

July 3.
DENIKIN SWEEPING
ALL BEFORE HIM

July 10.
TROTZKY'S FORCES
FLEEING IN PANIC

July 16.
COULDN'T FIND FRONT
OF DENIKIN'S ARMIES

ADVANCED SO FAST DR. WILLIAMS
AND BRITISH OFFICERS WERE
UNABLE TO CATCH UP

July 24.
ONWARD TO MOSCOW
IS DENIKIN'S ORDER

Denikin, to be sure, was moving forward. Did

headlines such as these seem to put him very near that ultimate success which (as events demonstrated) he was due never to attain? There was again, in August, the familiar run of prophecy and rumor of domestic crises facing the Soviets. On August 5, the Times published an Associated Press dispatch from Paris, quoting the opinion of a former Kerensky Minister that "perhaps the bottom would drop from the resistance of the Bolsheviki." A week later, a headline in the Times announced: "Strikes All Over Russia"—with a report that Lenin intended quitting his post. Notice how this report came to the American reader from its original source, whatever and wherever that source may have been. The Times got it from some unidentified news service. This service got it from its representative in Copenhagen. That representative got it from "dispatches from Helsingfors." And those dispatches, finally, were based on "Russian reports." Where these "reports" in turn had their source, there was nothing in the dispatch to indicate.

Before leaving the midsummer phase of the campaign in the South, it is worth noting that during the months of July and August there were announced in Denikin's behalf captures amounting to 74,000 prisoners, 60 guns, 150 machine guns, 130 locomotives, 1200 cars, "large quantities of supplies and war material," and "about half of the military supplies and equipment of the Bolshevist troops."* If these figures are amalgamated with the captures announced during the Spring, the reported victories of Denikin had, by the end of August, netted him:

> 129,500 prisoners, 950 guns, 330 locomotives, 1200 cars, "large quantities of supplies and war material"; and "about half of the military supplies and equipment of the Bolshevist troops."

Late in August a dispatch from London (August 21) reported that "the latest information" indicated the strength of the Soviet armies on the southern front to be 146,000. Denikin's captures, then, by the end of August, had amounted to almost as many prisoners as there were troops left in the army opposing him.

Denikin's Farthest North

It was the month and a half beginning early in September that saw Denikin at his best. His troops during that period occupied a number of strategic railway centers, one of which was the important city of Kiev. And in mid-October he marched into Orel. Orel was Farthest North. Two hundred miles from Moscow, it might be represented in the advance upon Des Moines which we have imagined, by a point near Topeka, Kansas. Beyond Orel, Denikin managed to throw a part of his army. But there the tide turned back.

The present period was marked, as the earlier ones had been, by repeated stories of trouble behind the lines of the Soviet army. Taken by themselves, these stories were enough to keep alive the myth that Soviet power might soon be broken; coupled with some of the prophecy and suggestion contained in the report of the offensive, there may have seemed to be no doubt about it. On September 28, for instance, headlines in the Times announced:

> DENIKIN SMASHES
> BOLSHEVIST ARMY

Staff correspondents of the Times in Washington, and in Europe, reported that chances seemed good for an early and a complete success. Readers of the Times were informed, on October 21, of the confidence of such an outcome "in diplomatic circles" in Washington. "Diplomatic circles" often imparts official color to a dispatch without the assumption of responsibility. On the present occasion "diplomatic circles" were reported to feel that "a few more successes" for the White armies and "the Bolshevist leaders would make a fresh attempt to negotiate peace." "It is the impression here, however, that none of the anti-Bolshevist leaders will consider anything but unconditional surrender, and the punishment of the Soviet chieftains."

But though its news columns exhaled an air of early victory, the Times, it must be said, was more cautious editorially. Had the Kolchak fiasco been a warning? "Lenin is still strong," said the Times on September 25, "but he is far weaker than he seemed to be a few weeks ago." Weak indeed, if the correspondents of the Times might be relied upon. Mr. Walter Duranty, cabling on October 8, reported "the growing opinion" in Paris, "that the days of the present Bolshevist régime are numbered" and that the government of Lenin "will be overthrown from within." News of the sort of thing Mr. Duranty may have had in mind appeared in the Times a few days later (October 12):

> NEW OUTBREAK
> IN PETROGRAD
>
> ANTI-SOVIET FORCES SAID TO HAVE CAPTURED IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS
>
> * * * * * * * *
>
> "Copenhagen, Oct. 11.—According to a dispatch from Helsingfors, Russian newspapers report that serious fighting has broken out in Petrograd between adherents and opponents of the Soviet regime.
>
> "The 'Counter Revolutionaries' have taken posses-

* This material is drawn from the following sources: communiqué from Omsk, published July 18; unidentified dispatch, London, August 1; Associated Press, London, August 12, quoting War Office report; and unidentified dispatch, London, August 28, quoting report from General Kamontolv.

sion of several important buildings and Government institutions, it is said. . . ."

Revolution in Petrograd, reports from Paris that the days of the Soviet government were numbered, Denikin moving upon Moscow,—a reader might not have guessed that six months later the Soviets would still remain in power. Moreover, there were more impressive reports of prisoners captured and war material taken by Denikin. How copious those captures were, the following table shows. (Duplications have been omitted, as in all earlier tabulations.)

Source.	*Prisoners.*	*War Material.*
Associated Press, London, Sept. 13, quoting British War Office	9,000	11 guns, 100 machine guns.
Special cable, Harold Williams, Taganrog, (published Sept. 18)	13,000	.....
Special cable, Harold Williams, Rostov-on-Don (published Sept. 28)	13,600	.....
Unidentified dispatch, London, Oct. 7, quoting a Denikin communiqué	15,000	"a large amount of booty."
Unidentified dispatch, London, Oct. 13, quoting a Denikin communiqué	5,000	.....
Associated Press, London, Oct. 16, quoting a Denikin communiqué	5,000	27 guns and "many machine guns."
Unidentified dispatch, London, Nov. 5, quoting a Denikin communiqué	55,000	.....
Total	115,600	

It had been estimated, let us remember, on the basis of "the latest information," that on August 21, the Soviet forces on the southern front amounted to 146,000 troops. Since that date, Denikin's announced captures had amounted to 115,600. There was left, then, the small force of 30,400 men to defend Moscow (assuming there had been no one killed or wounded; in that case there would have been fewer still). Other troops were rushed in as reinforcements? Presumably. But let us remember, too, that during the time with which we are now dealing, the Bolsheviki were also operating against Kolchak in the East—a thousand miles away from Moscow. Just how inexhaustible were the troops and the supplies of this tottering and distracted government? Total the figures given in these tables, and you will find that between April 1st and late October Denikin's forces captured 1,008 guns (of various sorts) and no fewer than 245,100 Bolsheviki. And yet, there came a turning of the tide.

Denikin in Retreat

The turning, we have said, came in late October. There were, to be sure, later offensives on Denikin's part, some of them recovering considerable territory. But from this time forward, most of Denikin's announced successes were on one flank or another. He pressed no nearer Moscow. Revolts behind his own line, in Ukrainia, were costly. By the end of November, Soviet troops were 120 miles south of Orel. Three weeks more, and they had recovered Kiev and Kharkov. At that point, a dispatch from London (December 18) summarized the opinion of the British War Office:

> "During the last week, the Bolsheviki have compelled Denikin to withdraw another fifty miles along a vast front . . . . the present indications are there is no reason why the Reds should not continue to advance."

By the end of the month Soviet troops had recovered Ekaterinoslav; three weeks more, and they were in Odessa—with a line flung eastward to the Sal River, six hundred miles southeast of Moscow. The campaign in South Russia was ended. On March 4 came this dispatch from London: "The complete elimination of the forces of General Denikin in South Russia has been brought about, according to expert interpretation of the War Office advices of the past week's operations. . . ."

And yet, throughout this vast retreat, what sort of news arrived from the staff correspondent of the Times with Denikin's forces in South Russia? Was it plain statement of events? Or was there once more that false note of optimism, keeping alive the old belief that there was no need of revaluating our policy of intervention? Let us examine a few of Mr. Harold Williams's dispatches, printed in the Times not in the first days of the retreat, but after a summary of British War Office opinion had reported that Denikin was falling back "along a vast front" and that there appeared to be no military reason "why the Reds should not continue to advance."

From Denikin's headquarters in South Russia, on December 16, Mr. Williams sent this message to counteract any "wrong impression":

> "The spectacular fall of Kharkov may easily give a wrong impression of the situation here. It is necessary, therefore, to say that in Denikin's armies there is no impression or expectation of defeat. The losses during the retreat have been small, and great has been the army's disappointment at leaving the area recently conquered. There are not the faintest symptoms of débâcle, and the determination to win is as strong as ever. . . ."

Mr. Williams, all along, had the disadvantage of poor cable communications. There was, accordingly, little snap left in his prophecies by the time they

actually got published. The present message appeared in the Times on December 27—and by that time Soviet armies were eighty miles southwest of the city whose loss Mr. Williams had minimized.

Again, from Novorossysk, on January 12, Mr. Williams cabled that Denikin's army had "been greatly strengthened by the infusion of fresh troops"; but two days after this report had found its way to New York and appeared in print (January 21), a Moscow wireless announced that Soviet troops were within six miles of the Black Sea at Perekop. On February 2, Mr. Williams, cabled (again from Novorossysk) that "the position at the front is steadily improving." In fact, "the morale of the Bolshevist troops seems suddenly to have collapsed." But that optimistic message did not get into print until February 18. And in the Times of that same date appeared a Moscow wireless announcing that Denikin's army had subsequently been driven back to the Sea of Azov.

With this sort of alternately exploded and reviving optimism, the campaign in southern Russia died gradually away. Denikin's offensive, like Kolchak's, showed how little popular support the interventionists could muster. Denikin, like Kolchak, drew supplies and equipment from the Allies. Probably he was even better cared for. But he could not march to Moscow, he could not even hold the line from which he started, because behind him there was no body of genuine enthusiasm. For Denikin's offensive, as for Kolchak's, great claims were made in the campaign's early stages. And when the later stages came, when Denikin's troops were driven hundreds of miles by the beaten armies of a tottering government, at least one voice was raised to cry "This can't be true!" That voice belonged to the correspondent of the Times.

X. The West Front

From Kolchak and Denikin we turn to the West front, omitting from this study the question of intervention in the North. That chapter is not included because this is primarily a study of Russian news, not Russian history, and the news from Archangel—throughout the period of Allied occupation—was limited principally to brief reports of military engagements. We believe that there were developments in Archangel, particularly in the dictatorship of Russian civil government exercised by Allied soldiers, which failed to receive adequate description in the Times. We have chosen, however, throughout this study to limit our case primarily to the news as printed. Partly for that reason, and partly because the Archangel adventure was never on the main track to some new "All-Russian Government," we pass over an experiment both disingenuous and disastrous.

On the West front intervention never attained the scope it had in the East and South: There were neither Czechoslovaks nor Don and Kuban Cossacks upon whom it could be based. The offensives were the work of Finns and Letts and other border peoples, assisted by certain numbers of anti-Bolshevist Russians. To such forces the French and British governments lent aid. The French supplied military advisers; the British dispatched warships to the Gulf of Finland; and both governments furnished materials of war.

But while intervention in the West was upon a scale more limited than that upon the other fronts, it played nevertheless an important part in the familiar process of convincing the western world that Soviet power was cracking, and that foreign armies would be welcomed by the Russian people. There were two offensives in the West: one in the Spring of 1919, which the Finns and Esthonians started; the other in the Fall, chiefly the affair of the "Northwestern Army" under Yudenitch. Why the Finns and Esthonians should have been so concerned about law and order in Russia as to want to invade the country, remains a question still unanswered.

The Spring Offensive

Petrograd, of course, was the objective of both campaigns in the West. To its assailants, the city offered none of the tremendous distances involved in an advance upon Moscow. It lay just across the border from Finland, not much more than a hundred miles from the eastern line of Esthonia. At home, in their own capitals, the Esthonians and the Finns were nearer Petrograd than either Kolchak or Denikin ever got to Moscow.

The first offensive in the West began late in April, 1919. On May 2, the Times published an unidentified dispatch from Helsingfors announcing that Petrograd was "being evacuated by the Bolsheviki." This dispatch was based on "reports from reliable sources." Two days later, there appeared on the first page of the Times the headline:

PETROGRAD REPORTED WON

The source of this news was another unidentified dispatch, this time from Paris: "Petrograd has probably been taken by the Finns, according to information believed to be trustworthy, which has reached Paris."

But though "reports from reliable sources" and "information believed to be trustworthy," were thus encouraging, Petrograd was not doomed to fall this early in the Spring. It simply disappeared from the news for a few days—and then a fresh start was made. On May 13, headlines announced:

TWO RUSSIAN COLUMNS
MOVING ON PETROGRAD

Three thousand troops were to march on Petrograd from the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland, three thousand more from the Olonetz district on the North. This information was supplied by a dispatch from London, quoting a Socialist newspaper published in Helsingfors. Would the advancing columns reach the city?

The following morning there were headlines reading:

TREDWELL REPORTS
RED RULE SHAKY

Mr. Tredwell's reports (according to a special dispatch from Washington) had strengthened the belief "of officials here" that the "days of the Lenin-Trotzky régime are numbered." Two more days, and a dispatch from Helsingfors (based on "reports received here") announced that again the government had advised people living in Petrograd to leave without delay.

What happened, next, the following headlines show:

May 25.
PETROGRAD AFIRE
AS FALL IMPENDS

May 28.
FOREIGN REDS
OUST BOLSHEVIKI

CHINESE, LETTS, AND FINNS CONTROL PETROGRAD AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF FIGHTING

June 4.
REPORT PETROGRAD TAKEN
BY ANTI-REDS

ESTHONIAN AND FINNISH FORCES HAVE ENTERED RUSSIAN CAPITAL, COPENHAGEN HEARS

These headlines marked the high tide of the first offensive. What happened afterwards is not quite clear. There was a report, several weeks later, (Reval to Helsingfors to London to New York, published June 17) that the naval base of Kronstadt was about to be captured by anti-Soviet armies. But a little later (July 7) the Esthonian Bureau announced quite unexpectedly that the attacking army had "suffered a reverse." It was "now in full retreat." The first offensive was ended.

But not without results. Twice Petrograd had been evacuated. Three times it had fallen. And since the collapse of the attacking army received nothing like the headlines and the news position that went to the "evacuations" and the "falls," a reader of the Times might be pardoned if he found himself, at the end of the offensive, believing the hold of the Soviets on Petrograd a tenuous one at best.

The Second Victory

During the Summer months there was little news of the attack upon Petrograd; but early in the Fall the second offensive started with Yudenitch in command. It moved quickly. By October 12 it had reached Jamburg, seventy-five miles southwest of Petrograd. (There were so few casualties for Yudenitch at Jamburg—*twenty-seven* killed and one hundred fifty wounded—that it seemed to some observers possible that the Soviet troops intended to make their stand in the defenses of Petrograd itself.) One day later and Yudenitch was approaching Gatschina, thirty-five miles from Petrograd. Four days more, and an Associated Press dispatch from Stockholm announced the capture of the fortress of Kronstadt by a British fleet ("according to advices received here"). And then, on the following morning, and continuing for four successive days, began perhaps as remarkable a series of headlines as ever the Times has published:

October 18.
ANTI-RED FORCES
NOW IN PETROGRAD
STOCKHOLM HEARS

October 19.
ANTI-BOLSHEVIKI
GRIP PETROGRAD;
END OF REDS SEEN

October 20.
PETROGRAD'S FALL
AGAIN REPORTED;
MOSCOW LINE CUT

October 21
ANTI-RED FORCES
NEAR PETROGRAD

NEWS OF FALL OF CITY BEFORE YUDENITCH'S ARMY HOURLY EXPECTED IN LONDON

On to Moscow? Well, not immediately. According to a special dispatch from Washington, also published on the 21st: "Word was received today to the effect that Gen. Yudenitch, if he captures Petrograd, will not immediately move against Moscow, but will stay in Petrograd long enough to organize the population and create a more effective force for the southward movement." Mos-

cow could wait. "It is believed here that Denikin will have invested Moscow before Yudenitch is ready to march against the Soviet capital."

So unreliable did these dispatches prove to be that the Times itself, after its four days of headlines, lamented in an editorial the quality of its news. The four reports had been based respectively on a dispatch received in Stockholm; on "the latest official advices" received in London; on "a telegram received at the Russian Embassy in Paris"; and on a statement of the British War Office plus "a message from Helsingfors." Coming on successive days they marked the high point of success for Yudenitch. During the week that followed, sensational headlines disappeared. There was still encouraging news: "The fall of Petrograd is inevitable, according to reliable advices," said an unidentified dispatch from Reval, dated October 26. But the offensive, for all that, had reached its end. From London, an Associated Press dispatch, dated only one day later, reported: "The chances of General Yudenitch, commander of the Russian Northwestern Army, capturing Petrograd before Winter puts an end to operations, seem again to be fading." Overnight the situation had so changed that what had been considered "inevitable" in Reval on Saturday was, by Sunday, "fading" in London.

The fading, once started, proved a rapid process. "Extraordinary pressure" was brought to bear to induce Finland to join in the attack (Associated Press, Helsingfors, October 30); but while Finland hesitated, Yudenitch continued to fall back. By November 4, Soviet troops had recovered Gatschina; a week later, Mr. Walter Duranty cabled to the Times from Stockholm: "It is believed that Yudenitch is thoroughly beaten." The offensive had collapsed.

Yudenitch, like Kolchak and Denikin, had found no soldiers with loyalty sufficient for his enterprise. Whether his army actually melted away in its advance upon Petrograd (as a Kornilov army once melted) we were not told. But once it had met reverses, once it was checked, its disintegration proved again that there was no real support for the interventionists. A reverse that might have proved temporary became nothing less than defeat itself, because there was no real loyalty to the cause. Yudenitch's soldiers left him. His forces dwindled. By November 24, the Esthonian Chief of Staff reported that the Yudenitch Army "had virtually gone out of existence."

Yudenitch was an adventurer. There is no more grim appraisal of the cause he represented, the character of intervention in the West, than this brief item in the Times of February 29:

YUDENITCH QUITS ARMY

STARTS FOR PARIS WITH HIS FORTUNE OF 100,000,000 MARKS

"Copenhagen, Feb. 27.—It is officially announced that the Latvian Government has permitted General Nicholas Yudenitch, former Commander of the Northwestern Army, and some of his staff officers, to proceed to Paris, by way of Libau.

"The Berlingske Tidende's Reval correspondent says that General Yudenitch and his Generals left Esthonia in an automobile flying the British flag. The correspondent states that Yudenitch is taking his private fortune, estimated at 100,000,000 Esthonian marks. Of Yudenitch's army, it is said, there remain in Esthonia 12,000 men, who are suffering from spotted typhus. There are also in Esthonia 21,000 hunger-stricken fugitives."

XI. The Offensive Against Poland

The activity of Poland's army, unlike that of the other anti-Bolshevist armies, was theoretically limited to the defensive. It was never advertised for an advance upon Petrograd, as was the army of Yudenitch; nor for a march on Moscow, like the armies of Kolchak and Denikin. It was, so far as official statement went, an army fighting to preserve that new state created in the councils of Versailles.

Poland, however, was the keystone of the cordon sanitaire which Foch and Clemenceau endeavored to build around Soviet Russia. The ostensible reason for this cordon sanitaire was the danger of Russian armies carrying Bolshevism into western Europe. That danger the Polish statesmen frequently proclaimed. Soviet Russia, according to their evidence, was continually on the point of launching an offensive against Poland. America and the Allies were summoned to the rescue. Poland needed guns and ammunition.

Were the war materials that Poland sought in fact to be used exclusively for the protection of Poland's frontier? Or were they wanted for an offensive—an offensive which was to dig deeper into Russia, to cut a larger slice of territory for new Poland than the generous diplomats in Paris had awarded her?

We know, now, two things indisputably:

First: that by December 2, 1919, the Polish armies were more than 180 miles deep in Russian territory (General Bliss told this to a Congressional committee on January 15; it must have shocked Congressmen who had been reading about the Soviet offensive).

Second: that Poland, on February 24, 1920, put

in a claim for an eastern frontier as it existed *in 1772*—a claim which the Times' own Washington correspondent characterized as so ambitious that it might "threaten the future peace and stability of that part of Europe unless the program of the Polish imperialists is abandoned." (Times, March 7, 1920.)

Now, these facts are known to most people today. It was not until July of 1920, in fact, that the Soviets started a *counter*-offensive against the Polish army. That Polish army, meantime, had for more than a year and a half been deep in Russian soil. And the theory that a Polish army can be advancing into Russia and still be on the defensive is a theory many reasonable people have found difficult to accept. Since General Bliss made his statement and since the Polish diplomats put up their peace terms, there is probably a growing number of Americans who suspect that for a year and a half the repeated threats of a Bolshevist offensive simply served as a smokescreen for Polish aggression.

There is no criticsm to be made of a newspaper or a press service for reporting the opinions of Polish or any other statesmen, provided such opinions come clearly labelled.* Collecting such material is part of the business of news-gathering. But is it not another matter if the propaganda of statesmen appears in the form of news? We quote a few dispatches descriptive of the relations between Poland and Soviet Russia. In our opinion it is fair to say that in the guise of news they picture Russia, and not Poland, as the aggressor as early as January, 1919. What was the actual situation, at the time each dispatch was filed?

January 1, 1919.

On this date, the Times published an Associated Press dispatch from Warsaw, December 30. "Poland," is said, "is preparing for a military campaign along her entire Russian frontier . . . . *The Bolsheviki have forced the Poles to take up arms by their advance into Polish territory.*" (Italics ours.)

At what point were the Bolsheviki advancing into Polish territory? The same dispatch had this to say: "The Bolsheviki are advancing toward Vilna." Now where is Vilna? Is it in Poland? For the reader of this dispatch, that is certainly the inference to be drawn. But Vilna, as a matter of real fact, is east of the boundaries later drawn for Poland by the Conference of Versailles. Of course the man familiar with Eastern Europe or the man who reads with an ethnographic map in hand, could set himself right by locating Vilna. But how many readers are of that sort? In this dispatch it is explicitly stated that "the Bolsheviki have forced the Poles to take up arms by their advance into Polish territory"; and then, as evidence, is cited an advance upon Vilna, a city outside Polish borders. Was the correspondent of the Associated Press in Warsaw proceeding on the assumption that the Peace Conference would assign to Poland this city which he defined as "Polish territory"?

January 22, 1920.

The Spring offensive of 1919 had not materialized. Would there be a Spring offensive of 1920? A special to the Times from Washington, dated January 21, made this flat statement, and made it as news:

> "The strategy of the Bolshevist military campaign during the coming Spring contemplates a massed attack against Poland, as the first step in a projected Red invasion of Europe and a military diversion through Turkestan and Afghanistan toward India. Plans for both campaigns are well under way, according to the best military and diplomatic intelligence received in Washington," etc.

Eight days later, as a matter of fact, the Soviet government again "recognized the independence and sovereignty of the Polish republic" and again invited Polish statesmen to enter into peace discussions. That offer was insincere? Assume it was. Where were Polish troops when Russia was planning "a projected Red invasion of Europe"? They were (see General Bliss's testimony) 180 miles across their border into Russia.

February 16, 1920.

One further instance: A special cable to the Times from Copenhagen, dated February 15, again made a flat statement of fact:

> "Information collected from reliable agents in Russia leaves no doubt that the Bolsheviki are preparing an enormous offensive against Poland, for early in the Spring, that negotiations with England are only to gain time, and then, Poland, undermined by propaganda, cannot resist the Soviet Army of 2,000,000."

On this date not only were Polish troops still deep in Russian territory, but in the Times itself it was reported (special dispatch from Washington, March 6) that the Polish representative in Paris refused to "transmit to Poland the demand of the Allies for withdrawal of Polish troops to the ethnographic frontier fixed by the Allied Supreme Council."

Soviet Russia, the aggressor; Poland desperately in need of assistance that she might hold the frontiers assigned her by the Peace Conference—that, we believe, is the conclusion a reader might have drawn from many dispatches in the Times while

* A scrupulous editor might have felt it necessary in the case of these threats of a Soviet offensive against Poland, to have added a note for the benefit of his readers. He might have suggested, for instance: "It is hard to see how a Soviet mobilization against foreign troops 180 miles deep in Russian territory can be called an *offensive*."

Polish troops were still on Russian soil. There is one particularly illuminating incident. It is unimportant, but it throws a light on the handling of Polish-Russian news in the columns of the Times. On March 4th appeared this dispatch:

> London, March 3.—A Moscow wireless dispatch received here, says the proposed peace conditions with Poland have been denounced as extravagant. The dispatch adds that Nikolai Lenin, the Bolshevist Premier, in a speech at the Cossack Congress said:
>
> "If the Polish aggressor invades our country, we will give him a blow that will not be forgotten."

Lenin declared that Russia would fight in self-defense. And the headline in the Times read:

LENIN THREATENS POLAND

XII. When Intervention Failed

One section more will serve to bring this study to an end; for with the collapse of intervention, in the last months of 1919, relations between Russia and the Allied world entered a deadlock during which a single, easily discernible note has dominated the news of Russia, as that news finds expression in the columns of the Times.

Before turning to this final chapter, however, it is worth while to note one factor which in our opinion played a substantial part in keeping many Americans satisfied that there was no better policy to be adopted towards Russia, from February to November, 1919, than the policy of helping White Guards make their wars. This factor is the inadequate and therefore misleading fashion in which were reported the several efforts of the Allied Powers, during that period, to give their policy a new turn.

Of these efforts the Prinkipo proposal was the first. Why did that program fail? On March 1, 1919, the Times printed a dispatch from Paris, quoting M. Clemenceau's aide, M. André Tardieu:

> "There was no longer any question of going on with the Prinkipo conference, he informed the correspondents. He said that the Bolsheviki had failed to comply with the conditions laid down by the Entente as to a suspension of hostilities and that the Allies had in view new methods of restoring order in Russia and were examining available means to carry out this purpose."

Had the Soviets in fact refused "to comply with the conditions laid down by the Entente as to a suspension of hostilities"? Examine the Soviet reply to the Prinkipo proposal, as printed in the Times (February 7):

> "The Russian Soviet Government, in a wireless message to the Entente Governments sent out from Moscow by M. Tchitcherin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, announcing that it is willing to begin conversations with the Entente with the object of bringing about a cessation of military activities, declares it is willing to acknowledge financial obligations regarding the creditors of Russia of Entente nationality. Moreover it offers to guarantee the payment of interest on its debts by means of stipulated quantities of raw materials, and to place concessions in mines, forests, etc., at the disposal of citizens of the Entente, provided 'the social and economic order of the Soviet Government is not affected by internal disorders connected with these concessions.' The message adds: 'The extent to which the Soviet Government is prepared to meet the Entente will depend on its military position in relation to that of the Entente Governments, and it must be emphasized that its position improves every day'."

This constitutes the full reply of the Soviet government, as printed in the Times. And it lends itself to M. Tardieu's interpretation. For though it considers other subjects, in it there is not a word about willingness to suspend hostilities.

Compare, however, this abbreviated version of the reply with the full statement as now published in "Russian-American Relations."* In this complete statement the Soviet government declares itself "anxious to secure an agreement that would put an end to hostilities"; it is, in fact, ready to discuss "the question of annexation of Russian territories by the Entente Powers," or by "forces which . . . receive financial, technical, military, or any other support from them"—in other words, Kolchak and Denikin.

What is the meaning of this discrepancy between the complete and the abridged versions of the Soviet reply? Simply this: that whoever prepared the abridged version for publication—whether government censor or correspondent or editor—omitted from that version the offer of the Soviet government to conclude an armistice—and that subsequently it was on the ground of Soviet unwillingness to quit fighting that M. Tardieu, official representative of France, justified the abandonment of the whole plan. The Allies may indeed have been unwilling to trust the word of the Russian government—though to it they addressed a formal proposal. The fact remains that Americans who relied on the Times' version of the Soviet reply were

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* "Russian-American Relations, 1917-1920" (page 298). As an earlier footnote has pointed out, one of the three men who directed the preparation of this volume—William Allen White—was selected by President Wilson as American representative at the Prinkipo conference.

simply not supplied with a fact necessary to an intelligent understanding of why the Prinkipo plan was a failure. Read in the light of the complete statement certain other news items appearing about the same time assume more significance. In the three weeks before M. Tardieu gave the press his explanation, you find not all the fighting in Russia was being done by the Soviet forces: an Allied offensive had been started near Kadish, in the North (Times, February 9); Denikin had reached the Caspian Sea after a march in which he scattered "over 100,000 Bolsheviki" (Times, February 19); Polish forces were "steadily advancing along the railways"—advancing into Russia—and thus far they had "met with no determined resistance from the Bolsheviki" (Times, February 23). In these circumstances the complete reply of the Soviets to the Prinkipo offer would have been instructive. It was not available.

Dr. Nansen

The Nansen offer, following close upon the heels of the Prinkipo affair, serves as a second incident of the sort with which we are now dealing. On April 3* (1919) Dr. Fridtjof Nansen proposed to the Supreme Council his plan for "a purely humanitarian commission for the provisioning of Russia." On April 17* the Supreme Council, declaring it "shocking to humanity that millions of men, women and children lack the food and the necessities which make life endurable," marked out the conditions of its cooperation and asserted that upon those conditions "we should be prepared to give it our full support." Yet the plan failed. Nothing came of the sudden humanitarian interest. Why?

"Lenin Rejects Feeding Project," said headlines in the Times, on May 14—and this report followed:

> "Paris, May 13, (Associated Press)—A wireless message received here addressed to Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, head of the commission to feed Russia, from M. Tchitcherin, the Bolshevist Foreign Minister, and relayed by the Foreign Office at Berlin, announces that the Bolsheviki refuse to cease hostilities as a condition of the provisioning of Russia by neutrals.
>
> "Tchitcherin says he received Dr. Nansen's communication, dated April 17, on May 4. He thanks Nansen for his interest in the conditions in Russia, but declares that a continuation of hostilities is necessary for political reasons and that it would be poor policy to stop them. The Soviet Government, he adds, is willing to support a movement to feed Russia so long as it has no political character, 'but will not be duped'.
>
> "He then goes on to denounce Admiral Kolchak and General Denikin, and concludes by declaring that it will be impossible to give up fighting, as enemies are attacking on all sides."

How accurate a version of the Soviet reply did this summary offer? It makes an interesting comparison with the complete document.* In the first place, that document is more than 1,300 words in length—and even the best reporter or the most conscientious censor (whichever did the editing in this case) must supply a necessarily inadequate version when he compresses a document of that length into 144 words. If the complete reply was available to the Associated Press agent, this would seem to have been one of those occasions (particularly in view of the unimportant material which often comes over the wires) when he was warranted in sending a full text. It may be that a more adequate summary was indeed cabled by the Associated Press, and that the pruning was done somewhere on this side of the Atlantic. In any event, either censor, correspondent or editor missed a chance of supplying the American public with information necessary for an independent judgment of the situation.

But this is not all. The published summary is not only abbreviated, but it omits entirely the one point in the complete document which in our opinion is most relevant. According to the published summary, the Soviets declare "it will be impossible to give up fighting." What does the unabridged text say, at this point?

> "We are in a position to discuss cessation of hostilities only if we discuss the whole problem of our relations to our adversaries—that is, in the first place, to the Associated Governments. That means to discuss peace, and to open real negotiations bearing upon the true reasons for the war waged upon us, and upon those conditions that can bring us lasting peace. We were always ready to enter into peace negotiations, and we are ready to do it now as before."

Add this passage to the Soviet reply as published in the Times of May 14. It does not, to be sure, alter the fact that the Soviet government turned down the Nansen offer. The Soviets did reject that proposal, as the headlines said they did. But their declared reason for rejecting it—a reason indicated neither in headlines nor in the dispatch—was not because they chose to keep on fighting, but because they asserted only a general peace could put an end to war. This was an irrelevant observation? No. The Council of Four, in its reply to Dr. Nansen, had declared that any "relief to Russia which did not mean a return to a state of peace would be futile and would be impossible to consider." The Soviet government thereupon declared its willingness "to discuss peace and to open real negotiations." Its offer may have been disingenuous. The Council of Four, though it declared for peace, may

* See "Russian-American Relations, 1917-1920" (pages 329-331).

* Now published in "Russian-American Relations, 1917-1920" (page 332).

have been unwilling to face it, when it came. But this was not the phase of the question suggested to the American public by the abridged version of the Russian reply published in the Times. That abridged version declared the Soviet reply to be: "it will be impossible to give up fighting." The proposal for a general peace was entirely omitted. Six days later (May 20) the Times published this second dispatch—a tombstone marking the burial spot of Dr. Nansen's plan:

> "Paris, May 18.—There is a general impression that the reply of M. Tchitcherin, Bolshevist Foreign Minister of Russia, to Dr. Fridtjof Nansen's proposals to feed Russia, brings the whole project to a close. The reply is generally accepted here as, in effect, a refusal by the Bolsheviki to cease attempting to invade their neighbors' territory. . . ."

War's End

The failure of the Nansen plan and of the Prinkipo conference, with the subsequent and equally dismal failure of the three White Generals, brought the Allies through their second year of indecision and left them, at the end of 1919, no nearer peace in Eastern Europe than they had been before. The period which followed, the period with which this study closes, may be said to have had its beginning in November, 1919. By that time there was little hope left of success for the White armies. Kolchak was "falling back rapidly" in Siberia (Associated Press dispatch dated October 29); Yudenitch had had his second try at Petrograd, and missed it; Denikin had touched his farthest north, and now was facing south again. Winter promised little to the interventionists.

Out of the failure of the White Generals might have come, in those days of early winter, a break in the current of American opinion. Intervention was discredited. So was the myth of a Soviet Government perpetually tottering on the brink of destruction. If the Soviets were there to stay, even though their stay be temporary, was it not necessary to revaluate the policy of the Allies? Reports of atrocities—there had been scores of such reports, during 1919—had kindled in American opinion no feeling of respect or friendliness for the Soviet Government. But war had failed. War in Eastern Europe meant no peace for the rest of the world. Why not try *peace* with Russia? Not peace in its diplomatic sense, probably, with loans and treaties, and all that may accompany formal recognition. But peace in the sense of having nothing more to do with playing favorities, with dispatching arms to one faction at the expense of another. Peace, too, in the matter of the blockade, with medicines for a stricken country, and a resumption of trade relations provisional upon good behavior in respect to "international propaganda."

Some such policy, we believe, was a natural outgrowth of the factors in the Russian situation at the end of 1919—an outgrowth of the failure of intervention, of the natural reaction from war towards peace, and of the uneasiness that must have been growing in the minds of many normally generous Americans over a policy which condemned to starvation and to death by disease many Russian men and women innocent of all complicity in the Soviet adventure. What prevented these opinions from ripening into insistence upon a re-assessment of American policy toward Russia?

Doubtless a number of different factors played their part. One factor, we believe, falls within the range of this present study: the character of the news about Russia coming in a rush during the final period with which we are now dealing.

From the time the three White Generals had started their offensives until the winter months came round, the dominant note in the news—as the foregoing sections amply illustrated—had been one of all-pervading optimism. Kolchak and Denikin were on more than one occasion advancing upon Moscow—Yudenitch, upon Petrograd. And from within Soviet Russia, we remember, came many reports of crises and counter-revolutions heralded in headlines as foreshadowing the doom of Soviet power. In the months between March and November, 1919, there was little in the news about Red Peril. White was triumphant.

Once before, in such a moment as this, when Allied diplomacy had come squarely to the cross-roads, the Red Peril played a part in turning it from peace. That, as an earlier section of this study has told, was immediately after the armistice—when there was no longer motive for reconstituting an eastern front, and when reason pointed to a withdrawal of troops from alien soil. Then the Red Peril appeared—furnishing a new cause for intervention. Once again, at the present cross-roads, that Peril emerged from the oblivion to which the past six months had relegated it—and cast its shadow on the sky.

Early November (1919) marked its reappearance. On the 10th of that month the Times printed a special cable from London. "Attempts were made in several countries over the week-end," it read, "to put into operation an ambitious program of a 'Red' international effort at a world rising in support of Bolshevism." Four days later appeared another dispatch from London:

> LENIN THREATENS INDIA
>
> HINTS AT FUTURE OPERATIONS IN LETTER TO TURKESTAN REDS
>
> London, Nov. 13.—Nicolai Lenin, the Russian Bolshevist Premier, has sent a letter to Turkestan Communists in which he says that the restoration of communications between Soviet Russia and Turkestan

"opens the way for a struggle against universal imperialism headed by Great Britain."

The message is interpreted here as a hint at operations in the direction of British India.

Two weeks later (November 30) headlines in the Times announced:

CRISIS IN THE FIGHT
AGAINST BOLSHEVISM

A NEW MILITARY MENACE TO BE OVERCOME IN EASTERN EUROPE TO MAKE VICTORY SECURE

There followed a special dispatch from Washington. Events in Russia, it declared, had brought officials and diplomats "to a sudden reconsideration of the whole complicated situation involved in the worldwide menace of the Bolshevist movement." That familiar device—the "well-informed circle"—was busily spinning again:

"The best canvass of opinion in well-informed circles in Washington indicates that the Russian Bolshevist movement is now to be regarded primarily as a military menace rather than as a political one—a menace that should be dealt with militarily and crushed militarily, just as the threat of German militarism and imperialism against the world's safety, which loomed larger when the German drives began in the Spring of 1917, almost simultaneously with the entry of the United States into the world war, had to be met militarily."

What was to be the Allied program? Those intimately familiar with the situation had ready a solution:

"It has now become clear to men intimately familiar with the situation that the Bolshevist military menace must be smashed and that in President Wilson's phrase, it can be met only with 'force without stint'."

To a long train of similar dispatches picturing the Red Peril these two were the forerunners. Those which followed touched on many themes. Aside from the idea of general peril there was, for instance, the special peril menacing the Baltic States. Thus on December 17 (1919) the Times published a special dispatch from Washington, asserting that the Soviets were attempting "to dragoon the Esthonians into acceptance of impossible demands in the face of military pressure." A high official in the State Department had summarized for the correspondent his idea of the Russian tactics:

"These demands," said a high official of the State Department today, in an authorized statement having the indorsement of Secretary Lansing, "which would make Esthonia essentially a part of Bolshevist Russia, are being enforced by determined military attacks upon the Esthonian front. . . ."

Yet when peace was signed, seven weeks later, a headline in the Times itself announced: "Esthonia Got Much From Soviet Russia" (Times, February 6, 1920).*

Again, there was the special peril menacing countries less directly in the path of Soviet Russia than were the Baltic states. Headlines on the first page of the Times, December 30, 1919, reported "Reds Seek War with America"; and the Times of February 11, 1920, carried this dispatch:

* * * * * * * *

FEAR THAT BOLSHEVIKI WILL NOW INVADE JAPANESE TERRITORY

Honolulu, T. H., Feb. 9 (Associated Press)—Siberian Bolsheviki have captured Alexandrovsk, capital of the island of Sakhalin, and fear is felt that the radical forces may enter Japan proper, according to a special cable dispatch from the Tokio correspondent of Nippu Jiji, Honolulu Japanese language newspaper. . . .

Now and then there was peril which the American Government itself took a hand in advertising. Thus the Times on February 7, 1920, under headlines asserting "Reds Raising Army To Attack India," carried a dispatch beginning in the following fashion:

Special to the New York Times.

Washington, Feb. 6.—A brief but significant announcement was issued by the State Department today, based on its official advices, to the effect that the Bolsheviki were endeavoring to establish military bases in Turkestan for a campaign against India.

"The department's information," says the official announcement, "is to the effect that in Turkestan the Bolsheviki are recruiting natives and war prisoners into new units and are establishing military bases said to be preliminary to a campaign against India."

As authority for this statement the Department cited an intercepted wireless message from Moscow to Tashkend, on December 6, 1919, announcing that "a propaganda train for organization and instructive purposes will be dispatched to Turkestan." This intercepted wireless was all of the documentary proof brought forward. Nothing in the published report was said of any propaganda outside of Turkestan. Was the State Department (guilty of more than one slip in the past) forgetful of the fact

* Esthonia, according to accounts in the Times, February 3, 4, and 6, 1920, received full recognition of her independence; fifteen million rubles in gold; exoneration from her proportional share in the repayment of Imperial Russia's debt; and preferential rights to a concession for building and exploiting direct railway connections between Moscow and the Esthonian frontier. Times headlines announced February 15, however, that the Esthonian peace was only a "Lenin makeshift," and that Lenin had declared the terms would "be quite different when local Reds get control."

that Turkestan had been part of Russia when the Tsar sat on the throne? Was it no longer a part of Russia? The one solid thing in the State Department's memorandum was an intercepted wireless, and that wireless proved only that the Government of Russia was attempting the no doubt hazardous experiment of winning the Mohammedans of Russians Turkestan by propaganda instead of simply by the bayonet in the manner of the Tsar.

Red Peril Again

To gauge the effect of steady repetition, and to mark the sources from which material for that repetition was drawn, take the news of a single month. We have chosen January of the year 1920. For the present purpose that is an important month because it was then that final elimination of the last of the three White Generals had begun to prepare the way for new rumors that the Allies contemplated peace with Russia. The Red Peril, in that month, was a frequent visitor:

January 5*: Mr. Duranty cables from Riga that he has obtained copies of letters written to Moscow by a captured courier, and that they prove Moscow is working for "the establishment of universal dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet rule."

January 9: "Official quarters" describe the Bolshevist menace in the Middle East as ominous. (Special cable from London.)

January 10: "It is asserted" that the Soviets plan an offensive against the British in India. (Unidentified dispatch, London.)

January 11: "Allied officials and diplomats" envisage "a possible invasion of Europe." (Special dispatch from Washington.)

January 13: "Allied diplomatic circles" fear an invasion of Persia. (Another special from Washington.)

January 16: "British military authorities" expect an attack on Persia. (Special cable from London.)

January 16: "Expert military opinion" expects an attack on Poland. (Associated Press, from London.)

January 16: "Well-informed diplomats" expect both a military invasion of Europe and a Soviet advance into Eastern and Southern Asia. (Special dispatch from Washington.)

January 20: "It is understood" that the Supreme Council considered measures for protecting Azerbaijan and Georgia from attacks by the Soviets. (Unidentified dispatch, Paris.)

January 21: "Information . . . placed before the three Premiers" shows the Soviets are planning to open the way into Mesopotamia and Persia. (Mr. Edwin L. James, cabling from Paris.)

January 21: "A dispatch to the Central News from Paris" states that the Supreme Council will send 200,000 troops to oppose the Soviets in the Caucasus. (Associated Press, London.)

January 22: "The best military and diplomatic intelligence received in Washington" expects a massed attack against Poland. (Special dispatch from Washington.)

January 23: "Poland's diplomats" expect a million Soviet troops to be sent against them. (Mr. James, cabling from Paris.)

January 30: "The French Foreign Office has received from its agents in India a report saying that the Bolsheviki are making extensive preparations for an uprising in India against the British." (Mr. James again.)

Fourteen dispatches in the month of January, warning of Red Peril to India and Poland, Europe and Azerbaijan, Persia, Georgia and Mesopotamia. That, averaged, is a dispatch almost every alternate day throughout the month. The net effect was certainly towards checking growth of an opinion that Russia's failure to rally to the interventionists had demonstrated the need of a new policy—of considering the Soviets as an authority with which some sort of truce could and must be made. You cannot make truce with Peril.

There is, of course, the point of view which regards as wholly desirable this checking of the growth in public opinion towards support of a new policy. The reiterated warnings of Red Peril, according to this point of view, performed a useful public service. That, certainly, is a logical attitude—and it is no part of our task to dispute it. We are discussing not Russian policy but Russian news. It seems to us important, however, not only to note the fact that such dispatches appeared with regularity during a period when they were most useful, but also to mark the sources from which they were drawn: letters of a captured courier, "official quarters" (London), "allied officials and diplomats" (Washington), "allied diplomatic circles" (Washington), "British military authorities" (London), "expert military opinion" (London), "well-informed diplomats" (Washington), information "placed before the three Premiers" (Paris), "a dispatch to the Central News from Paris" (London), "the best military and diplomatic intelligence received in Washington," "Poland's diplomats," agents of the French Foreign Office in India. There are certain sources here—the last, for instance—which seem more definite and responsible than certain others. But to us it seems fair comment that taken as a whole, with their reliance upon unidentified "experts" and "diplomats" and upon "official quarters" where rumor invariably finds its favorite haven, particularly with the subordinate, these sources represent in fact a fairly irresponsible as-

* The date, in each instance, is the date of publication in the Times.

sortment. The impression that they had their inspiration in rumor rather than in fact, it must be added, is heightened by contrasting them with what has actually happened subsequent to their publication. Five months have passed since January. But it was Poland, and not Russia, that first started an offensive. Soviet troops have indeed been landed in a Persian port (Enzeli), but there they went in pursuit of a Russian fleet which had landed there before them—Denikin's—and a dispatch to the London Herald states they have subsequently been withdrawn.* There has been no uprising in India. Nor has there been an invasion of India. There has been no invasion of Mesopotamia. The most sensational, in fact, of all these January dispatches, was as sensationally contradicted on the very day following its publication. January 16, a first-page headline in the Times, eight columns wide, announced:

BRITAIN, FACING WAR WITH REDS, CALLS COUNCIL IN PARIS

And the following morning came the news:

NO WAR WITH RUSSIA, ALLIES TO TRADE WITH HER

The first report, then, was not reliable. So swift a contrast between rumor and fact would—even were there no other reasons for doubt—raise legitimate suspicion concerning the accuracy of other news pitched in a similar key.

It is on the note of the Red Peril that this study ends. It has appeared at every turn to obstruct the restoration of peace in Eastern Europe and Asia, and to frustrate the resumption of enonomic life. The Allied proposal in January to open trade relations was speedily labelled "nothing more than a tactical political move" on the part of the Allied Governments (special dispatch from Washington to the Times, January 22). In that way, too, have been tagged successive offers coming from Russia. "There has been no doubt at any time in Washington official circles," said a special dispatch to the Times, March 14, "that the Soviet 'peace' drive represented nothing more than a scrap-of-paper policy of the Soviet leaders, a mere tactical move, and that what they really sought was a breathing spell in which to concentrate their energies for a renewed drive toward world-wide revolution."

Each peace proposal, whichever side first launched it, a tactical move .... Meantime the Red Peril. That, with armed intervention no longer a possibility, was the propaganda in the news. And if the peace of the world had not hung in the balance it would have made an interesting stalemate.

* See the Times, June 19, 1920.

Deductions

Assuming that the preceding chapters constitute at least a prima facie case for saying that the run of the news on one matter of transcendent importance to Americans has been dubious, what deductions are there to be drawn by the constructive critic of the press? Primarily, we believe, that the professional standards of journalism are not high enough, and the discipline by which standards are maintained not strong enough, to carry the press triumphantly through a test so severe as that provided by the Russian Revolution.

First as to standards. The analysis shows how seriously misled was the Times by its reliance upon the official purveyors of information. It indicates that statements of fact emanating from governments and the circles around governments as well as from the leaders of political movements cannot be taken as judgments of fact by an independent press. They indicate opinion, they are controlled by special purpose, and they are not trustworthy news. If, for example, the Russian Minister of War says that the armies of Russia were never stronger, that cannot be accepted by a newspaper as news that the armies of Russia *are* stronger than ever. The only news in the statement is that the Minister *says* they are stronger. By any high journalistic standard, the Minister's statement if it deals with a matter of vital importance is a challenge to independent investigation.

The analysis shows that even more misleading than the official statement purporting to be a statement of fact, is the semi-official and semi-authoritative but anonymous statement. Such news is fathered by such phrases as:

"Officials of the State Department"
"government and diplomatic sources"
"reports reaching here"
"it is stated on high authority that"

Behind those phrases may be anybody, a minor bureaucrat, a dinner table conversation, hotel lobby gossip, a chance acquaintance, a paid agent. Dispatches of this type put the editor at home and the reader at the mercy of opinion that he cannot check, and it is time to demand that the correspondent take the trouble to identify his informants sufficiently to supply the reader with some means of estimating the character of the report. He need not name the individual source but he can 'place' him.

The analysis shows that certain correspondents are totally untrustworthy because their sympathies

are too deeply engaged. Mr. Harold Williams's reports from Denikin's army were obviously queer at the time and are ridiculous in the light of events. A reporter is not entitled to hold an assignment when his disinterestedness is open to question. One is not able to avoid the impression that in the selection of correspondents the virture of conformity is at least balanced against the virtues of objectivity, insight and credibility.

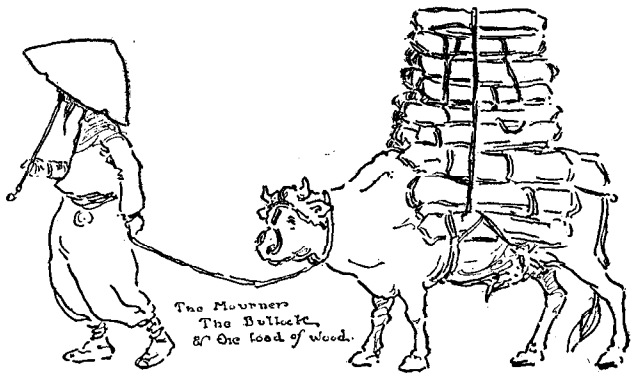
The analysis indicates also that even so rich and commanding a newspaper as the Times does not take seriously enough the equipment of the correspondent. For extraordinarily difficult posts in extraordinary times, something more than routine correspondents are required. Reporting is one of the most difficult professions, requiring much expert knowledge and serious education. The old contention that properly trained men lack the "news sense" will not stand against the fact that improperly trained men have seriously misled a whole nation. It is habit rather than preference which makes readers accept news from correspondents whose usefulness is about that of an astrologer or an alchemist. Important as it is for the press to read lessons in efficiency to workingmen, employees and politicians, it is no less important for the press to study those lessons itself. Measured by its responsibility and pretensions the efficiency of the newspapers is not what determined men could make it.

The analysis shows further that at critical periods the time honored tradition of protecting news against editorials breaks down. The Russian policy of the editors of the Times profoundly and crassly influenced their news columns. The office handling of the news, both as to emphasis and captions, was unmistakeably controlled by other than a professional standard. So obvious is this fact, so blatant is the intrusion of an editorial bias, that it will require serious reform before the code which has been violated can be restored.

Where is the power to be found which can define the standards of journalism and enforce them? Primarily within the profession itself. We do not believe that the press can be regulated by law. Our fundamental reliance must be on the corporate tradition and discipline of the newspaper guild. It is for them to agree on a code of honor, as the Bar Associations and Medical Societies have agreed, and for them to watch vigilantly for infractions of that code. As citizens they cannot escape this duty, and as members of a profession they are forced to it by the growing distrust which everywhere greets them. They know that to-day they are feared but not intimately respected, and the sins of some are visited upon all.

But while the technical code of journalistic standards, the tradition and the discipline belong to the guild, newspapers must be prepared for an increasing supervision from the readers of the press. Those readers will not simply "write letters to the editor" effective as such letters are. They will speak through organizations which will become centers of resistance. The report on the steel strike made by the Interchurch World Movement is an example of such resistance to the newspaper reports of that strike. The report on the activities of the Attorney-General by twelve lawyers for the Popular Government League is an example of resistance to the red hysteria of 1919-20. They illustrate the point that a powerful engine of criticism is appearing in the community which will no longer naively accept the current news on contentious questions. With that fact the profession of journalism will have to make a reckoning.

One of many illustrations accompanying Willard Straight's biography, from his own sketch-book.



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And a few years later Straight is negotiating with the Chinese Government as the American banker's representative for a $100,000,000 loan. In

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