

The First Days
of
Revolution in Petrograd

Address by M. A. OUDIN
Before The Fortnightly Club

The First Days
of
Revolution in Petrograd

Address by M. A. OUDIN
Before The Fortnightly Club

Schenectady, November 20, 1917

University of Texas
Austin, Texas

The First Days of Revolution in Petrograd

::

When in Japan last February on the way to Russia, I met a newspaper man and asked him about conditions in the latter country. He replied that he had been out of Russia for two months and could not say; but that I might possibly run into a revolution. The prediction came true. Since that time the political changes there have been vastly greater than my newspaper acquaintance had in mind when he made the above reply to my inquiry. Several times two months have elapsed since I left Russia and I make no pretense of stating what the present political conditions are, much less of predicting what they will be, although recent events have prepared our minds for almost any eventuality.

It is not my object to describe the course of that most stupendous event, one of the landmarks in the world's history, the Russian Revolution, but it will be my endeavor to bring to your minds a picture of Petrograd during the first stirring days of the coup which overthrew a dynasty and gave to an astonished and inexperienced people the unexpected problem of how to govern an Empire.

As every one knows who has read any of the books or articles about Russia, which have appeared since last March, no one cause can be assigned for the Revolution happening when it did. The revolutionary seed of Russia was sown when the young officers in the Army of Alexander 1st, returning from their victorious career in Western Europe, brought back with them the liberal ideas, as well as the refinements, of the France of the second decade of the XIX century. The history of Russia has been spoken of as the history of an Empire for which millions have died in its upbuilding, and to attempt the

destruction of which thousands have suffered misery, exile, and death. For a hundred years an unequal struggle has been carried on by a few courageous souls against an autocratic and despotic system which has not had its parallel in history. For many decades the Government of Russia had been an anachronism in Europe. To use a mathematical expression, the difference of potential between Russia and Europe has been enormously great and in time the resisting material was bound to crack, break down and let in a flood of light—of ideas, old to the rest of Europe but new to the vast majority of the down-trodden millions of darkest Russia. The Russian revolution, the overthrow of Tsarism, was as inevitable, inexorable, and certain as the almost imperceptible progress of a glacier.

The series of political events of 1905 which resulted in the frightened Tsar giving his people an emasculated Duma has been called a revolution. A large number of the people were then in arms against the established order; yet the sacrifice of several thousand victims in killed and wounded on Bloody Sunday appeared to have been made in vain. That revolutionary movement was followed by an era of frightfulness and reaction unequalled in the history of the long struggle. Many thousand hangings and shootings represented the work of the Imperial executioners.

The revolutionary propaganda in every class and walk of life never hesitated in its course, and despite the redoubled cruelty and harshness of the government the cause gained ground and the demands for a government of some resemblance to a representative form became more insistent. These manifestations and these activities made no impression upon the reactionary leaders who appeared irresistible and all powerful. There seemed to be no hope for an early and favorable settlement of this situation and there probably would have been none had not events happened which plunged all Europe into the great war.

It was the war which advanced the revolution from some date in the distant future. The revolution became a matter of only a short time from the day when the armies in the field, often without sufficient ammunition, and in some instances with bare hands marching against machine guns and artillery, knew that they had been betrayed by the traitors at home. A Russian colonel told me that on the Riga front, where he was stationed, no attack could be made by the Russians that had not previously been made known to the enemy and in consequence successfully resisted. He said that his division had determined that after the war they would march on to Petrograd and settle with the Tsar and his crowd. Apparently this resentment and this determination were widespread in the Russian army. What a testimony to the wonderful spirit

of the men and the officers that under these painful, demoralizing and intolerable conditions they retained their morale and discipline as long as they did. Recall the wonderful drive of Brusiloff in the early summer of 1916 and we must marvel at the splendid fighting spirit of the Russians.

Just as the great war advanced the revolution a decade, or a generation, so one man's malign influence precipitated the revolution ahead of its normal time. That man was, it is hardly necessary to say—Rasputin.

To understand Rasputin and his connection with the Russian Court and Government, one must know Russia. This incomprehensible thing is perfectly plain to all the Russians I have talked to, but I confess I still do not fully understand how an ignorant, illiterate, crafty, and licentious individual could in this period of the world have become the greatest power, and for evil not for good, in the world's greatest Empire.

Russia is said to be half Asiatic and medieval in its soul, and the Court more outwardly European and modern than actually so. The mysticism of the Orient and its superstitions found a fertile soil in that secluded circle. It was apart from and absolutely ignorant of the great outside world, its problems, its happiness, its miseries, and the kind of people that commonly lived in it. A reputed saintly man that could effect marvels of cure in sickness in such an atmosphere as that of the Russian Court might be the more considered because of his dirt, and his ignorance might be deemed corroborative proof that he was inspired.

Rasputin either through his control of the health of the Tsarevitch (done with the connivance of the Chief Lady in Waiting), or through other means influenced the Tsarina, a nervous, hysterical woman, and through her the Tsar. He made and unmade the Ministries. He was the most feared man in Russia. He became the leader of the reactionaries, of the traitors, of that incredible group known as the "Dark Forces."

Such a situation could not be kept from the people. The stigma of the Court was felt to be that of Russia. The peasants lost their respect, their veneration for the "Little Father." The liberals dared to speak in the Duma against the evil influences at work upon the Court and the Government. The aristocrats and the nobility became alive to the growing danger to the Empire and the Grand Dukes decided to act for their own preservation.

First the Grand Duke Nikolai Mihailovitch expostulated with the Tsar in the name of all the Romanoffs. His good advice met with no response and the death of the evil genius of Russia was decreed. This came about in the last days of December as all the world knows.

The death of Rasputin increased rather than diminished the scandalous stories of the Court and the last vestige of respect entertained for the Emperor by the peasants had disappeared by January 1917. The peasants now were soldiers and armed as were also the workmen and all classes that had suffered from the brutality of Tsarism. They thus became the arbiters of the fate of Russia although that was not then realized. They were ready to rise against the Tsar and the System; against the pro-Germans at the Court; against the authorities that were responsible for their lost armies for the death or destruction of 3,000,000 of their comrades. They were prepared to do this because of Rasputin. Without Rasputin the peasant army would not then have revolted. Without the army the revolution could not have succeeded.

It has been said that the immediate outbreak of the Revolution was provoked by the police. That may be so although such an effort was coincident with the spontaneous outburst of the peoples' pent-up resentment and anger. In any event the infamous Minister of the Interior Protopoff, who craftily claimed to be inspired by the spirit of Rasputin, thoughtfully placed in points of vantage, such as belfries, garrets, and roofs, more than 1500 machine guns, in anticipation of an attempt and the expectation of putting it down with the slaughter of not less than 50,000 citizens.

While passing through Japan en route to Petrograd we were informed that food was extraordinarily high in cost and nearly all kinds most difficult to obtain. We were given twenty-five pounds of sugar to carry 8000 miles to Petrograd for friends. Fire wood was so scarce, we were told, that sticks of kindling were not unacceptable gifts.

The demoralization we expected to find was in evidence from the moment of landing in Vladivostok. Not less than 500,000 tons of goods of all kinds, badly needed for the prosecution of the war, lay piled up on wharfs, streets, vacant lots, and the country side. There was then a westward movement of 20 small goods cars per day. At that rate it would have taken 1250 days, or three years and five months to free the port from its blockade. That was the first tragedy of the war situation in Russia that impressed itself on us—the almost complete breakdown of the transportation system.

Petrograd was cold, grey, and dismal those days in February and early March. Life in the Capital of a European country at war is subdued. In Petrograd the shortage of food was the chief interest among the people. Official Petrograd—and it seemed from the uniforms on the street as if the city were 80 per cent official—was however proceeding about its affairs pretty much as it always had. The aristocracy were giving quiet parties and balls occasionally. The Ballet, the opera, or concerts were a feature of the life of the capital as in

ordinary times. The most marked and unusual feature were the long queues before bakeries, milk shops, food shops of all kinds, and of household supplies. The bread lines were blocks long at times and the last ones in the waiting line were often disappointed by the closing of the shop before their turn. Workmen frequently went to their benches without food and people who had no maids to procure bread or milk by this waiting process fared badly. Prices soared to unheard of figures. During the revolutionary days guests in the hotels were at times at their wits ends to obtain any kind of a meal. It was not at all uncommon for the restaurants to observe enforced sugarless and breadless days.

The impossibility of working without food caused the workmen to strike. The cry of hunger began to be heard in the streets. It became a dull roar as the crowds gathered and marched up and down the Nevesky Prospect and other large avenues. The appeal of the empty stomach was met with bullets. For two days the police hesitated to shoot. They by order of the government attempts were made to clear the streets by revolvers and machine guns. The Cossacks usually brutal in their treatment of the populace acted with forbearance and were cheered by the crowds. On Saturday and Sunday, March 10th and 11th, several hundred people were killed by the police. The killing made absolutely no impression on the citizens. Men, women, and children, driven into the side streets by the volley of bullets, would immediately appear again and mass in the wide roadways and sidewalks, as do the crowds returning from a great game of football. A sharp volley of machine gun fire and the streets would appear instantly deserted, as if by magic, save for the fallen or crawling figures on the snow. And then again the crowd and again the massacre would be repeated.

For a week the Duma had been in session. Led by a mighty man of iron, of monumental courage, the great figure of the Revolution, Rodzianko, it took action on that memorable Sunday, which had the uprising failed would have cost the leader and his associates their lives. The following telegram was sent the Tsar:

"Situation serious. Anarchy reigns in the capital. Government is paralyzed. Transport food and fuel supplies are utterly disorganized. General discontent growing. Disorderly firing is going on in the streets. Various companies of soldiers are shooting at each other. It is absolutely necessary to invest some one who enjoys the confidence of the people with powers to form a new Government. No time must be lost. I pray God that at this hour the responsibility may not fall on the wearer of the Crown."

The reply to this appeal was an Imperial decree dissolving the Duma. But Rodzianko defied the Tsar and refused to dissolve the Duma.

At once there centered in Rodzianko and the Tauride Palace where the Duma held its sessions all the vital and sane forces

of free Russia which should date its beginning from that Sunday. Rodzianko was to continue the great part thus seized by him until the organized radicals and the forces of disintegration already present compelled his retirement.

For what happened in the following few days when the forces of the old System were overthrown brief reference may be made to my notes.

Monday, March 12th. On leaving the apartment before 9 we found unusually large crowds in the streets, especially on the Litenie Prospect and along the Neva. Heard a few shots on the other side of the river. Great crowds were crossing the Troitsky bridge and the river on the ice from the Island. There were no cars running. At the K. E. office there was a good deal of excitement, and we heard that some of the regiments had killed their officers because they had been ordered to shoot on the people. Decided to go home early as there seemed to be an ominous unrest. There was more shooting than in the morning along the river. About four o'clock as we approached the Litenie heard continuous shooting. Several ambulances dashed by. A large crowd stood by the arsenal corner. Warned in French by a by-stander not to proceed, after he tried on us Russian and German. Were told a battle was on between two regiments. Great volumes of smoke were proceeding from the Court of Justice Building. We had no recourse but to return to office of National City Bank. On the way we saw the first red flag which gave us a thrill. It was decorating an enormous motor truck loaded with villainous looking soldiers and students and women nurses. Thinking it might attract the attention of the police, or the loyal troops, we tried to keep clear of it, but it trailed us quite a way, and finally passed us to our great relief. Went to the American Consul's residence, next door to the Bank, and dined there. He told us of heavy shooting on the Nevsky and that the troops generally had revolted. Witnessed a unique illustration of the orderly revolt of the troops. Diagonally across the way were the barracks of the Preobrajensky regiment. For nearly half an hour they continued to march out in fours with all the officers. Order perfect and apparently discipline too. It was evident the city was in the hands of the soldiers who were with the people and that the civil authorities had disappeared (only as was seen to make themselves felt later by the invisible means of machine gun bullets). About ten o'clock ventured to return home. Courts of Justice were then a furnace of flame and incandescence. Streets were full of dashing trucks carrying soldiers. Shooting very heavy, but appeared to come from joy-riding soldiers firing in the air. On reaching home we learned that our housekeeper had crossed the Litenie about 5 o'clock with her dog in her arms to the amusement and laughter of soldiers behind the flimsy barricade of soap boxes and curbs at the arsenal corner. It is evident that the revolution is an historical fact. But will it succeed? Can the forces of the old Government prevail against what seems to be the will of over 90 per cent of the people?

Tuesday, March 13th. We crossed the city to the Moika about 9. Saw for the first time a drunken man in Russia. A soldier brandishing an ugly Cossack sword and barraging a small crowd. All the motor cars in the city had been commandeered last night and early today. Saw many of them rushing madly through the streets packed jam full of soldiers, all armed and invariably a soldier lying at full length on each forward mud guard, rifle in hand. Found the office of the E. K. practically deserted by the four or five hundred employees. Director M, the only executive on hand, expressed some surprise and apprehension at our being abroad. We learned that the men in the motors were not joy riders but man hunters. The relentless pursuit and killing of the police was on. The police were hidden throughout the city in garrets, churches, and on roofs. From the windows of the A. I. C. we saw the Russian naval jack replaced by the red flag of the Revolution on the moat of the Fortress of Peter and Paul, and great processions of civilians

moving across the Troitsky bridge. The red flag was flying over many buildings and in evidence everywhere. The city was completely in the hands of the revolutionists. The large photo of the Tsar in the office was turned to the wall. On our way home we heard the first machine gun but could not locate the direction of the sound. Near our apartment we were halted by a nearby gun which commanded a side street that we had to cross. It sounded like a dozen boiler riveters. A few pedestrians ahead of us ducked and ran. We reached the other side safely in the same undignified manner. For a timid man the day so far had been strongly stimulating. Our usually quiet neighborhood got up quite an excitement. Outside of the house the soldiers had caught one of the secret police. His thick clothing and fur coat protected him from the swords of the soldiers, but as he fell back outside the line of our vision it was evident that he was finished by a bayonet. From our windows we saw two officers held up by soldiers and their swords taken away. Across the way the soldiers raided by the windows an unsuspected station of the gendarmerie. Presently two ambulances drove up evidently needed as a result of the fighting in the dark apartment. Similar activities and encounters must have been going on all over the city today. On our way home we noticed that the district police station had been gutted and the papers taken out and burned in the snow. No doubt our passports, which had been delivered there two days ago, were fuel for that bonfire—for we never beheld them again). About 9 p.m. o'clock our apartment was entered by a file of soldiers in charge of a student. We were most politely asked if we had any firearms and on being informed that we had none the soldiers left with apologies for having disturbed us. The young student possessed a large automatic revolver which he held most carelessly. The weather was calm and we could hear the rattle of rifles and machine guns in other neighborhoods as well as our own well into the night.

Wednesday, March 14th. We did not get to the office today. The Moika makes a great curve near the office. As we approached that part of the street continuous fire broke out ahead of us. We kept on as there were a few pedestrians going in the same direction, also some soldiers. Passing the square of the winter palace we noticed a huge red flag over that great building. When within less than a hundred yards of the office a machine gun in a window just over our heads started its infernal racket. As there seemed to be answering shots from the huge pile of buildings across the canal, in which were housed the Ministry of Finance and the Foreign Office, we dodged into a courtyard to escape the cross firing. After awhile we retraced our steps and went to the A. I. C. office. The picture of the Tsar had been taken down. Today the continuous shooting got on our nerves somewhat. We all wore red ribbons on our overcoat lapels. The Cossacks have disappeared but the number of soldiers in Petrograd we learn has been greatly augmented by the troops who were sent against the city joining the cause of the people. Towards night the shooting died out. The police to the number of over 20,000 have been captured or have surrendered according to the report.

During the following days the streets were full of hilarious happy-looking people. The stimulus of the excitement and the brilliant sunshine drove away apprehension, if indeed we had any, as to our own safety and caused us to join in the general rejoicing. We would have given a good deal to be able to speak in their own tongue to these citizens of New Russia.

The revolution had met with astonishingly light resistance. In Petrograd the old régime was snuffed out as if it were nothing more substantial than a pale flame. It was like a trick of magic. For three days we wondered when the loyal troops would march in upon us or stand off and bombard the city. Gradually news came from the outside that regiment

after regiment had declared for the new provisional government and that district after district and city after city had overthrown the old order.

On Friday the news of the abdication of the Tsar spread through the city, although I believe it was not published until the next day in the official paper of the Executive Committee of the Duma. This sheet for some weeks was distributed by automobile and thrown out for free circulation among the people. For nearly a fortnight the old journals suspended publication. It was impossible to adjust our minds to the full significance of the events happening around us. The successful revolt of a nation and the overthrow of the government were most obvious facts, but it did not then occur to many that the Romanoff Dynasty was at an end and no rule but that of the people could ever again be endured in Russia. In fact Milyukoff, the first Foreign Minister, in a speech to the people on the necessity of the Tsar's abdication, proposed the formation of a regency in favor of his young son. In face of the growing forces arising out of the new situation and the storm of anger among the radicals aroused by this suggestion Milyukoff was compelled to say that it was his own personal suggestion. To many of us who saw the nature of the elements coming to the forefront a regency seemed the best solution of the problem.

The abdication of the Tsar was characteristic and dramatic. From Vesey's little mimeographed sheet, then daily issued in English (and the chief source of news in Petrograd to Americans), I take the following account:

"A member of the Executive Committee of the National Duma and one of the Ministers of the Temporary Government went to Pskoff. Their conversation with the Emperor took place in the presence of the Commander of the Northern Front, General N. V. Ruzsky, the former Minister of the Imperial Court, Count Fredericks, and Count Naryshkine.

"The representative of the Temporary Government, addressing the Tsar, communicated details of all that had taken place in Petrograd in the last few days and advised the Tsar not to send troops from the front to Petrograd, as all the troops arriving in Petrograd joined the uprising, besides which the Temporary Government had already given orders that all troops arriving in Petrograd be turned back.

"What shall I do?" quietly asked the Tsar.

"Abdicate the throne," replied the representative of the Temporary Government. After a short conversation, the Tsar said:

"It would be very hard for me to part with my son. I shall, therefore, abdicate in favor of my brother Michael. I shall sign the abdication for myself and for my son."

"The Tsar was at once handed the already prepared act of abdication, and he signed it."

The first days in Petrograd after the revolution revealed a populace exalted and exulting. Not a stroke of work was done for days save by those who stood manfully by those duties which might be called necessitous, such as supplying the city with light and water. The streets were jammed with people

having all the appearance of a holiday crowd. The *isvostchiks* and their sleds suddenly made their appearance and charged their fares treble prices which were cheerfully paid. Shops began to open. From the first day the flower shops had not closed. It was a not unusual sight to find long bread lines and no other business being transacted but that of the florists. There was exceedingly little looting. The old police had been replaced by students. Amateurs as they were fortunately they had little to do. The extraordinary self-control exhibited during the days of tumult continued for several weeks. The revolution in Petrograd was never marred by serious excesses. Walking in the streets, barring the possibility of meeting a stray bullet, was comparatively safe. Three of us daily walked across the city and back, a distance of 3 to 4 miles, and although our appearance plainly denoted us as foreigners we were never stopped nor even spoken to. The fact that we wore conspicuously the red badge of courage on our coats may have had something to do with the immunity.

On the first day of the revolution and ever since a flood of oratory has been poured forth such as has never been equalled. Mr. Root is reported to have said, in Petrograd, that one of the tragedies of the Russian revolution was the turning loose on the world of 180,000,000 orators. Every man became inspired and every man with an idea, new or old, and mostly old, and every group, every society, every organization was enabled to gratify its innate and insatiable longing to air its special form of panacea for the problems of Russia and the world.

Then, too, began the interminable processions and demonstrations that seem to be still a feature of Petrograd life. There were processions of the workmen of various trades, of organized socialists, of soldiers of various units, of cooks and maids, of school boys, of armoured cars and machine gun contingents, of returned exiles, of sailors with the blood of their officers on their hands, of those demanding that the war go on, of those demanding that the war stop, and all carrying banners blood red with some legend blazoned upon them. There was little to enliven these processions of dull-garbed and bedraggled people. Even the ever present bands appeared as mournful adjuncts when they attempted to play the Marseillaise, for few Russians up to March 12, 1917, had ever heard this forbidden air. Unaccustomed to the tune it was played and sung like a dirge. Even the laconic sentiments on the stiff born barriers added to the depression.

The story was told of a big meeting of Extreme Reds in one of the squares. The orator called for the overthrow of the provisional government for ousting the bourgeois and for the immediate cessation of the the war. Suddenly somebody from crowd out, "The Cossacks are coming." The orator who just

a minute before had called for decisive action, immediately disappeared in the crowd which, panic-stricken, dispersed in all directions. Such was the persistence of an idea. Of course it turned out that it was a joke.

Most of the demands of the various associations and groups which marched up to the Duma were granted, such for instance as an 8-hour day for the working-men and universal suffrage. I saw a procession of suffragists, over 20,000 strong. But the maids and cooks did not fare so well. They were sent about their business with fair words. However, they decided themselves on an 8-hour day. But their conception of such a day was unique. One of an American woman's maids said to her, "We are going to work on an 8-hour day, from 8 in the morning to 8 at night."

I have made no mention of the government which was organized at once on the outbreak of the revolt. Workmen in Russia by virtue of being such are socialists, and these last are and have been strongly organized in Russia as in every Continental country. On the day the troops went over to the people, the workmen's committees, joined by representatives of the various regiments, at once proceeded to the Duma, ostensibly to support that body, but in reality to insure for the socialists the fruits of the victory which they claimed as their own. Two thousand five hundred strong they were and formed themselves into the famous Council of Workmen and Soldiers. Immediately there arose an antagonism between the remnant of the Duma and the Council. A provisional Government was organized by the Duma with the consent of the Council, which later assumed to control and dictate its policy. Indeed the chief power in Russia has been seemingly in the Council of Workmen and Soldiers. It has been the curse of Revolutionary Russia.

No Ministry dared defy its orders and no Ministry originated any policies without its concurrence. On the other hand the Council has issued orders and decrees, some of which have had an effect baleful beyond calculation. Such for instance was the famous decree No. 1, sent to the soldiers at the front and garrisons. Soldiers were ordered no longer to salute their officers. All regimental officers were to be elected by the men. All strategy, all matters affecting the campaign and the men were to be submitted to committees of the soldiers and commissioners appointed by Petrograd. Thousands of efficient officers were dismissed by their soldiers and all initiative of commanders paralyzed.

The Revolution was most startling in the celerity with which it was accomplished. It was like a coup d'etat. The old order went down like a house of cards. But the demoralization of the Army was even more sudden, absolute, and catastrophic. Overnight 14,000,000 men in arms from a disci-

plined organization became an irresponsible mob. The optimism of the first days soon gave way in my mind to an overwhelming depression. It was apparent as early as April that the country was working most inefficiently in the prosecution of the war, that the political conditions were most unstable due to the discordant elements maneuvering for the eventual control of affairs, that the extraordinary demands of the peasants and the workmen already partly granted were not likely to grow less but greater, and that the country was driving ahead under full steam into one of the most interesting experiments in Government in the history of the world. Indications pointed to a prodigious experiment in applied socialism. While the Americans as a rule were confident, the French and English officials in Petrograd were stiff with fright at the outlook.

The first effect of the demoralization was the disaster to the Russian arms on the Stockhod River in late March, where more than a division was annihilated, 20,000 men being killed or captured, because the reserves declined to obey orders to advance to the assistance of their comrades. During the revolution we had seen officers deprived of their swords. We had first-hand accounts of brave ones refusing to hand over their swords and being shot. Later we heard of the horrible atrocities committed at the naval bases of Kronstadt and Helsingfors, where 180 officers had been murdered and in some cases tortured.

It was not unnatural, however, that demoralized by false utopian teachings and German intrigue, and wearied by frightful suffering the Russian soldier should regard the revolution as the greatest fact in the history of Russia and the war as only an incident.

From the very beginning of the Revolution the soldiers deserted by the hundreds of thousands. We saw them on our way to Vladivostok taking French leave of their posts, to visit their families and their homes. Nearly all were good natured, except in the presence of officers. Then many were insufferable and insolent. Travelling under these conditions was extremely uncomfortable. There were stories of people jammed into compartments and corridors of trains, unable to move in or out, on account of the great crowd of soldiers for 24 hours at a stretch.

The early days of the Provisional Government were marked by proclamations that breathed the most fervent patriotism and advanced ideas of the liberty of mankind. Listen to these declarations of principles promulgated by the Executive Committee of the Duma, with the concurrence of the Council of Workmen and Soldiers, before the first Ministry was formed.

1. An immediate amnesty for all political and religious offenses, including terrorists' acts, military revolts, and agrarian crimes.

2. Freedom of speech, of the press, of association and labor organization, and the freedom to strike, with an extension of these liberties to officials and troops, in so far as military and technical conditions permit.

3. The abolition of social, religious, and national restrictions.

4. Immediate preparations for the summoning of a Constituent Assembly, which, with universal suffrage as a basis, shall establish the Governmental régime and the Constitution of the country.

5. The substitution for the police of a national militia, with elective heads and subject to the self-government bodies.

6. Communal elections to be carried out on the basis of universal suffrage.

The activity of the Jews was most noticeable from the first days. It was their opportunity of many generations and they accepted it. Only by special favor and often by bribery of officials was the Jew permitted to live in certain districts. Wherever he was permitted to reside there he became the successful professional man, banker, doctor, and lawyer, and the small merchant. All positions and rights, civil and military, all emoluments, all opportunities are now open to him and he will probably dominate and distinguish himself outside the pale as he has heretofore in his restricted area of activity. By this token the only obstacle to a commercial treaty between the United States and Russia has been removed.

The newspaper reader has been greatly puzzled during the past few months by the seemingly conflicting accounts of the ups and downs of the Provisional Government, and by the extent of German intrigue undoubtedly powerfully affecting the Russian situation. First there was an extraordinarily strong Ministry, in which the socialists were represented by only one member of the Cabinet, Kerensky. Then we heard of the resignation of Milyukoff and Goutchkoff and others and the formation of a purely socialist government. That was doomed to failure because as the war had to go on, the acquiescence in this policy, contrary to the fundamental theory of the party, weakened it throughout all Russia. Then in July came the first serious attempt of the Bolsheviki to seize the government. Then came the Korniloff episode which had it been successful might have saved Russia from its present unhappy situation before the world and hastened the conclusion of the war. A preliminary parliament followed and a coalition government, with the partial eclipse of the Council of Workmen and Soldiers. The latest news is that this Council is now entirely dominated by the Bolsheviki element, and that this element is in power. If such be the case the worse has yet to be written about the Russian Revolution.

Kerensky whose supremacy is threatened if not eliminated is a lawyer by profession. He had drawn attention to himself in the last Duma by his fiery orations but was not considered to be of the first rank, as were Rodzianko and Milyukoff. Barely 35 years old he was the only socialist in the first revolutionary Cabinet. He was always ready to make a speech. To read his addresses to the proletariat in those early days gave one

the impression that he considered himself the only guardian in the government of the interests of the people whose newly acquired freedom was in peril. He appeared vain-glorious and egoistic. Yet he has played a great part in the drama which has rapidly unfolded itself ever since March of this year.

Applying the standards current prior to the war, Russia as a world power has collapsed. I do not refer to the present deplorable state of her armies or to the temporary disintegration of the country into local and tribal communities. I mean that the desire to grow at the expense of other countries, the ambition to extend her power and to dominate weaker nations, all wish for political and economic aggrandisement, have completely disappeared. Russia today is anti-imperialistic and anti-expansionist. She does not want the Dardanelles. Poland may, if she chooses, go her own way. The Finns may have an autonomous government. The thrust against the heart of India has been removed. The claims for special position in Northern Manchuria are no longer put forward, and the dual alliance with Japan as the other partner for the push against China has gone to pieces.

If the aims of the war as announced are mainly to establish the blessings of peace, liberty, and democracy, is not Russia consistent in her performance and her professions? The United States is in accord with Russia with respect to world politics. The other Allied nations sooner or later must unqualifiedly act upon the principle of the right of the weaker and smaller nations to live their own lives unmolested, which Russia holds to be almost as sacred as the fact of her own freedom and, unfortunately, both as of more importance than the war between her and the Central Powers.

The Russian Revolution by prolonging the war has been the most costly political experiment in the history of the world. The number of killed during the first days of the Revolution probably did not exceed 2,000, but the deaths of hundreds of thousands of soldiers of all the fighting nations will be laid at the door of the misguided leaders and people of Russia, as must be the imperilling of the liberty of all the countries fighting on the side of the Allies.

The harm that the Russian Revolution has thus done the world is irretrievable. The good lies in the hope it holds out to democracy throughout the world and in the liberation of the Russian people from an incredible tyranny. Yet the tyranny of a dynastic despotism has been replaced by the tyranny of an organized radicalism, neither representative of the people.

If we bring a sympathetic understanding to bear upon the struggles of a people who, without previous experience, are endeavoring to solve great problems of Government and who have suffered more from the war than any other nation, we

must withhold our impatience. But when the results of the Revolution to date are balanced, we cannot withhold our disappointment, the keener because of the knowledge that the Revolution was inexorably certain to happen after the war, when the eventual benefit to Russia would not have been offset by the wider injury to the cause of mankind.