

RUSSIA LEADING THE WORLD

The thoroughly radical and democratic nature of the Revolution in Russia is demonstrated in the following cuttings gleaned from the Press. We put them on record with much gratification.

MINISTERS' OATH OF OFFICE

"In the capacity of a member of the Provisional Government created by the will of the people, and at the instance of the Duma, I promise and swear before the Almighty God and my conscience to serve faithfully and justly the people of the Russian State, sacredly guarding its liberty, rights, honour, and dignity, inviolably observing in all my acts and orders civil liberty and civil equality, and in all measures entrusted to me suppressing any attempts, direct or indirect, towards the restoration of the old regime. I swear to apply all my intelligence and strength completely to fulfil all the obligations assumed by the Provisional Government. Before the eyes of the people, I swear to take all measures for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly in the shortest possible time on the basis of universal, direct, equal, and secret suffrage, to transfer to the hands of the Assembly all authority provisionally exercised by me in conjunction with the other members of the Government and to bow before the people's will, as expressed by that Assembly, concerning the form of government and fundamental laws of the Russian State. May God help me in the fulfilment of this oath."—SCOTSMAN, 29th March.

AN APPEAL TO ALL COUNTRIES

The Council of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates has issued a manifesto to the people of all countries, and more particularly to the German "brothers of the proletariat," whom it calls upon to "cast off the semi-despotic yoke, as the Russian people have thrown off the autocracy of Czardom." Russia, the manifesto declares, will steadfastly defend her own liberty from all reactionary onslaughts within and without. While democratic Russia will never menace the freedom of civilisation, the Revolution will not yield to the bayonets of a conqueror. The time has come to begin a decisive struggle against the conquest aspirations of the Governments of all countries. The time has come for the peoples to take into their hands the decision of the question of war and peace. Conscious of its revolutionary strength, Russian democracy proclaims that it will combat in every way the ruling classes' policy of conquest, and it calls on the peoples of Europe to take common decisive action in the interests of peace.

The manifesto concludes:—"Workers of all countries, in extending to you a fraternal hand over mountains of brothers' corpses, across rivers of innocent blood and tears and through the smoking ruins of towns and villages and the destroyed treasures of civilisation, we summon you to a renewal for the strengthening of international unity. Therein lies a gage of our victory and of our complete freedom."—SCOTSMAN, 30th March.

We regret not to have the whole manifesto without elisions or paraphrases.

THE IMPERIAL LANDS

Such a word as "annexation" would be unpopular in Russia now, but by a stroke of the pen the new Provisional Government has transferred to the Russian people a territory larger than Germany, and probably richer than Germany, in natural resources. A decree issued on Friday declared the domains hitherto belonging to the Imperial Family, the property of the State. These lands include the immense Altai and Nerchinsk regions in Siberia, which since the eighteenth century have been the personal property of the Czars, and while enriching the dynasty did not increase as they should have done the resources of the nation. Altai and Nerchinsk are rich in metals, but until recently little

attention has been paid to their exploitation. Enterprise has been stimulated by the exigencies of war time, and of late years there has been an increase in the output of gold, iron, zinc, lead, and other metals. In the Altai region lies the wealthy coal district of Kuznetsk, which bids fair to rival and even surpass in productiveness the Donets Basin in the south of Russia. The Altai region includes, moreover, thousands of acres of fertile black soil.

The addition of all this territory to the resources of the State is particularly timely in view of the colossal expenditure incurred through the war. The opening up of domain lands will simplify the agrarian problem, and facilitate that great and urgent work of economic mobilisation which the new regime of liberty now makes practicable.

The Government has drafted and is about to promulgate another measure which, besides closing a period of harsh and bitter injustice, will give a powerful stimulus to economic progress in Russia. This measure is the abolition of all restrictions, whether political or educational, economic or legal, imposed on national or religious grounds.—GLASGOW HERALD, 7th April.

THE LIBERATION OF FINLAND

Helsingfors, April 13.—M. Kerensky, Russian Minister of Justice, was present at to-day's meeting of the Finnish Diet. In the course of a speech greeting the free Finnish people in the name of the Provisional Government, he emphasised that Russia would do everything to secure Finland's remaining free for ever, and expressed his conviction that the Finnish people on their side would, in the present difficult moment when a new democratic Russia was being formed, come to Russia's aid in a sincere union and join her on the common path towards equality and fraternity.

The Talman (Speaker) of the Finnish Diet, in reply, asked the Minister to inform the Russian people of the Diet's gratitude for their fraternal greeting, and laid stress on the fact that henceforth complete agreement on the basis of reciprocal confidence would prevail between the two peoples.—SCOTSMAN, 16th April.

THE CHURCH AND THE STATE

The Russian papers contain interesting descriptions of the first visits paid by the members of the Provisional Government to their respective Ministries. The portraits of the Czar had to be removed from the walls in each case before the Ministers made their appearance. They then addressed the staffs, congratulating them upon the deliverance of the State from the baneful influence of the autocracy, and calling upon them cheerfully to co-operate in the reconstruction of the State on the basis of freedom.

Particularly dramatic was the visit paid to the Holy Synod by the procurator, V. N. Lvoff, a member of the Duma, well known for his zeal in Church reform. On the first day of his assumption of office he had ordered the removal of Metropolitan Pitirim, the notorious favourite of Rasputin, and a few other bishops (including Barnabas of Tobolsk, an illiterate peasant made bishop by the same Rasputin) from their respective dioceses and seats in the synod, whereupon a number of other members of the latter body issued a solemn remonstrance against this interference with the internal affairs of the Church. When M. Lvoff came to the Synod he, therefore, first explained that the Church must be free from State interference, but that on its part the State must be free from interference by the Church. He then ordered the removal from the room of the golden chair of the Czar, which had always stood side by side with that of the presiding Metropolitan, unoccupied, as a symbol of the Czar's authority over the Church.

"No more Cesaro-Papacy in Russia," said M. Lvoff as he seized the chair by the back and helped to carry it out into the next room. It was an historic action by which the legacy of Peter the Great has been repudiated, and the

whole Romanoff policy in using the Church as an instrument of power has been thrown over. "A free Church in a free State" was the significance of the incident.—DAILY NEWS AND LEADER, 16th April.

THE ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS

Petrograd, April 14.—The General Congress of the Council of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates from all parts of Russia this evening concluded the debate on the question of its attitude regarding the Provisional Government. The following resolution was put to the vote:—

(1) The Provisional Government, which constituted itself during the Revolution, in agreement with the Council of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates of Petrograd, published a proclamation announcing its programme. This Congress records that this programme contained in principle the political demands of Russian democracy, and recognises that so far the Provisional Government has faithfully carried out its promises.

(2) This Congress appeals to the whole of the revolutionary democracy of Russia to rally to the support of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, which is the centre of organised democratic forces that are capable, in unity with other progressive forces, of counteracting any counter-revolutionary attempt and of consolidating the conquests of the Revolution.

(3) This Congress recognises the necessity of a permanent political control—the necessity of exercising influence over the Provisional Government—which would keep it up to the most energetic struggle against anti-revolutionary forces, and the necessity of exercising the influence which will ensure its democratising the whole of Russian life and paving the way for a common peace, without annexations or indemnities, but on the basis of free national development of all peoples.

(4) This Congress appeals to democracy, while declining the responsibilities for any of its acts, to support the Provisional Government as long as it continues to consolidate and develop the conquests of the Revolution, and as long as the basis of its foreign policy does not rest on aspirations for territorial expansion.

(5) This Congress calls upon the revolutionary democracy of Russia, rallying round the Council of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, to be ready vigorously to suppress any attempt by the Government to elude the control of democracy and to renounce the carrying out of its pledges.

The resolution was unanimously carried, amid general cheering.—SCOTSMAN, 17th April.

THE MESSAGE FROM THE RUSSIAN DEMOCRACY

The Minister of Justice, M. Kerensky speaking at a ministerial reception of representatives of the French Socialist party and the British Labour Party, said:—

We have decided to put an end for ever in our country to all attempts at Imperialism and usurpation, for we do not wish the enslavement of anyone. We believe in the idea of liberty, equality, and fraternity for all peoples. M. Kerensky, continuing, said:—The enthusiasm which animates the Russian democracy springs from the knowledge that the dream of a brotherhood of all nations on earth is approaching its realisation. The democracies of the world will then understand that hostility can no longer exist between them. Russian democrats will maintain to the end the position created by the declarations of the Provisional Government and the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates. We will not permit by a return of the old aims a war of usurpation. We beg you to convey to your Governments and the workmen of France and Great Britain that these are the true sentiments of the Russian people. We expect you to exercise over the other classes of the population of your countries the same decisive influence as we do on our middle classes, who have now renounced their Imperialist aspirations.

M. Kerensky's speech was loudly cheered.—GLASGOW HERALD, 17th April.

RUSSIAN PEASANTS AND THE LAND.

At the moment there is sympathy between the "Workers" (mostly townsmen) and the "soldiers" (mostly peasants) on the central Committees because of the townsmen's sympathies with them in their need for land.

The Provisional Committee has now been prevailed upon to issue an order for the dividing among the respective Ministries concerned of the whole of the Crown lands and properties of the Imperial Family. The Russian Year Book speaks of these as covering a million square miles, or 640 million acres—which would mean an area larger than Germany! But this is generally regarded as an exaggeration. A statistical handbook published in Petrograd in 1906, quoted in COMMON SENSE, gives the area as 18½ million acres. In any case the land is immensely rich in mineral wealth—so that national mine-owning and working should be soon at work in Russia—and the bulk of it, situated in the "black soil," is exceedingly fertile.

The division of the Crown farming lands among the peasants should lead to some definite decision as to the future methods of land holding in Russia.—LABOUR LEADER, April 19th.

RUSSIA WILL CONQUER.

Dr. Sarolea, of Edinburgh University, at a meeting in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh, April 12: Primarily the revolution meant the liberation of 180,000,000 people and 50 nationalities, the end not only of an autocracy, but the end of a theocracy which killed the soul, as the autocracy depressed the body; the end of a hideous despotism; and the liberation of 6,000,000 Jews, who hitherto were massacred whenever it pleased the Government to divert the passions of an illiterate and superstitious mob into other channels; it meant the establishment of a United States of the Russian Commonwealth, because what hitherto had been the wild dream of visionaries had now become in Russia absolutely the only practical, the inevitable solution, a Commonwealth on the model of the Commonwealth of America.

There were difficulties ahead, but the Russian people had a genius for democracy, and therefore he believed Russian democracy would conquer.

UNDER FIRE

The policemen evidently have been the bugbear of the country, abetting the capitalists in their designs, and the hunts for these keepers of the law were among the great doings. There are none alive to tell the tale now. One managed to get the priest to allow him to hide in the church exactly opposite our house, and from there he rained down a fury of shot from a Maxim gun on the soldiers and people. Eventually after a great battle he was caught, and one does not like to think what fate overtook him." She also mentions the destruction of the Astoria Hotel and the large house of Baron Frederics, one of the strong German party and a Minister of the Government.

In another letter she relates what she calls an "interesting experience" which she and a friend had. She says: "They happened to get into a huge crowd round a motor car and, found themselves looking up into the face of a kindly-faced old man who was hailed with great cheers as 'Our Buztroff.' Later we discovered he was a political prisoner just released from a sentence of life-long imprisonment, and very popular with the people. I believe a wonderfully clever man."—From letters of an Edinburgh girl, resident in Petrograd, to her parents.—EDINBURGH EVENING NEWS, April 13th.

PEASANTS AND THE LAND

The peasants of Saratoff have elected all the Social Revolutionary candidates for the district Zemstvo.

A congress of peasants of the Saratoff Government has adopted a resolution to the effect that the land should be at the disposal of all, conditionally on personal labour.

SCENE AT TEACHERS' CONGRESS

To-day saw the final sitting of the great Congress of Professors of the Rural Schools of the whole of Russia, which, yesterday, passed a resolution calling for the complete re-organisation of the school life of the country and of primary education.

All those who took part in the meeting of the Congress to-day streamed out in the street when it was over in a long column, and marched with red flags carried in front of them to the Champs de Mars, where they deposited a wreath in front of the tomb of the victims of the revolution. Reuter.—WESTMINSTER GAZETTE, April 23rd.—Wireless Press.

"CHRIST IS RISEN"

Peasants are also cutting down the forests of the land owners. In the Tambov Government peasants surrounded the houses of the landowners, who, under pressure, signed documents giving up their land. Bessarabian peasants sacked the country house estates of the rich Gagarin family.

Meanwhile in the south the drying east wind is blowing over the corn-lands, and sowing should be done at once. It is feared the difficulties will have a serious effect on the harvest, and as the temporary Government points out in an eloquent appeal, "Bread is Russia's only salvation." The peasants blame the high rents of land as the cause of the shortage of corn. All over the country peasant Councils are being held, remarkable for their simplicity and determination. Proper distribution of the land is insisted upon.

A characteristic resolution decides that all the land which the private landowners cannot sow must be given over at once for temporary use by the peasants, soldiers' wives to receive this land for nothing, and other peasants for a moderate rent to be fixed by local committees. In Odessa, at a big meeting of peasants, it was pointed out that enormous private estates were unsown. To these councils the peasants bring a boundless faith in the future and goodwill to all men except landowners. In Odessa one peasant even made a speech saying the Jews would henceforth be their friends and brothers. The speech was received with enormous applause, and the peasants, all standing, sang "Christ is risen."—ARTHUR RANSOME (Petrograd), Special Correspondent of the DAILY NEWS AND LEADER, April 25th.

WE MUST GO.

Why the State should Own the Land

BY THE COUNTESS OF WARWICK.

(DAILY CHRONICLE, April 12th)

The words I have written at the head of this paper express the conviction that has been forcing itself upon me for a long time past, and in the light of latter day developments appears to stand beyond the reach of doubt. We who must go are the aristocracy of England in our position of hereditary landowners.

As I write the country rings with suggestions for the betterment of the conditions under which land is cultivated, but as I see them the suggestions are in no instance drastic enough. The only cure for present evils seems to me to be State ownership, the abolition of all private property in the earth that was given to all of us in common. There are two classes of large landowners, the aristocracy and the plutocracy. Let us see how they are handling what they regard as their property, taking the aristocracy first. As a class they have been good landlords within limits; but the limits are very marked, because they have always been a narrow-minded body. The average

chatelaine who plays the part of Lady Bountiful is to me an abomination because her philanthropy is so closely associated with dogmatic religion, personal pride, and party politics.

THE OLD SQUIREARCHY.

Let me give a few instances. I have known estates where the tenants are expected to belong to the Church of England and Nonconformity is barred or persecuted. It is associated with Radicalism, and therefore suspect. Some farmers and very many labourers and small village tradesmen have been ruined or exiled from the place of their birth because their opinions are contrary to those of the landlord. A suspicion of voting for the wrong candidate—i.e., for the man who is neither Conservative nor Unionist, is fatal, and leads at least to boycott. Men and women on such estates must rule their lives to order, think as they are told to think, do as they are told. If our aristocracy possessed the sweetness, the light and the overwhelming wisdom necessary to justify their rôle as supreme dictators all would be well, but I cannot reckon in their ranks more than a half dozen whose claims would bear even a momentary consideration.

My memory travels back to the extraordinary outburst of indignation among the county magnates that followed Mr. Jesse Collings's suggestion that every man should possess three acres and a cow. The wrath of the landowners was only equalled by their amazement. An earthquake would have shocked them less.

How little the aristocracy understand the democracy was first revealed to me at Chatsworth many years ago when the late Duke of Devonshire was alive, and Joseph Chamberlain, one of the great men of our times, had parted with Mr. Gladstone on the Home Rule question. There was a big house party at the Duke's Derbyshire home to meet Royalty, and to the intense surprise and alarm of all the assembled guests save Royalty, which had of course been consulted, the Duke said he had invited Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, and that he would arrive in the evening.

The amazement among the ladies was unbounded. "What can he be like?" said one, who shall be nameless, to me. "I hear such dreadful things about him; he has made shocking speeches." I endeavoured to console her. "I don't suppose he knows how to eat," remarked another anxiously. "I am told these people never learn the difference between a knife and a fork. It will be terrible embarrassment for all of us, and for him too. I think it is a terrible mistake to ask him down."

I remember how the guests assembled as though to see a strange animal released from a menagerie, and the curious feelings that ran through them, as some said afterwards, when the great statesman, cold, imperturbable, complete master of himself and of his hereditary enemies, took his place among the Duke's guests and struck the empty babblers dumb. He had split the barque of Liberalism from stem to stern, he had given a new life to moribund Conservatism, but the chief concern of some of those he met for the first time was to see if he ate his peas with a knife and mistook the functions of spoon and fork.

It may be urged that this is ancient history: I say that the strange attitude of mind that prompted the view of Joseph Chamberlain is typical. Only two or three years ago I learned that when a certain peer visits one of his shooting estates the village inn is not allowed to receive visitors, nor are any of the tenants of the estate permitted to harbour as much as a relation. Some plebeian might come "betwix the wind and his nobility." Can these things endure in the twentieth century? Let common sense answer the question.

THE LANDED PLUTOCRAT.

I turn to the plutocrats, the men who have bought land and titles in the open market—and, believe me, the one is nearly as readily purchased as the other. They have not the old feudal tradition of the aristocracy. All their lives