

THE RED FEVER

A Way To Deal With Our Bolshevists: Segregate Them!
By the Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill, Secretary of State for War
(From the Illustrated Sunday Herald, January 25, 1920)

During the last few weeks the Republic of the United States has been following the example of the Swiss Republic in collecting and expelling from their territories all persons of foreign origin who are known to hold Bolshevist opinions. Both these extremely democratic countries have hitherto for many years offered a free asylum to the anarchists and communists of Europe, and have allowed them to preach subversive doctrines and to organize and pursue a propaganda destructive of the civilization by which they were protected and nursed.

One of the truest tests of a broadly-based, freely-constituted State has hitherto been a very wide toleration both in speech and writing. We especially have always plumed ourselves on standing high among the nations in this respect, and no one can impugn the democratic and Radical conceptions of the Americans or the Swiss.

But now there is a change. It has been a very sudden change. The decision was swift, and it was put into execution in both cases in a rough and rigorous fashion. It has been held impossible any longer to allow persons of foreign origin—mostly coming from Russia—to continue to plot and plan within the bosom of a free country the universal overthrow of existing institutions with a view to the reconstitution of society upon a communist basis.

Sent Home

On the morrow of a particularly insolent affront to wounded soldiers in Berne, whole lorry-loads of wild eyed, long-haired fanatics were swiftly conveyed to the railway station, and thence, by a train, avoided by the local inhabitants and other wayfarers as if it were plague-stricken, they were

dumped incontinently across the Russian frontier upon their native heath.

In the United States, after a conspiracy had been discovered aiming at the overthrow of the public authority by murder and outrage simultaneously planned at many points, several thousands of these infected persons, against whom in many cases, let us remember, no definite act of treason could be proved, were rounded up all over the States, and were dispatched, foaming and howling, in a series of "Red Arks"- across the Atlantic Ocean to those melancholy regions over which their high priest Lenin bears his sway, and in which they will have every opportunity of putting into practice, either collectively or individually, the principles of piracy and expropriation of which they are no doubt sincerely convinced.

"Lynching An Idea."

This spectacle, which most normal people will regard with healthy pleasure, which, indeed, appears to conform to an almost poetic justice, has led a number of respectable wiseacres in England to declaim against the folly of "lynching an idea." Nice articles are written to show how absurd and futile it is to attempt to combat an idea by a Policeman. "Opinions," it is said, "cannot be combated by force."

But what about opinions being propagated by force? That is a point which these well-meaning writers carefully conceal. The Bolshevist is not an idealist who is content to promote his cause by argument or example. At the first favorable opportunity he helps it forward by the bullet or the bomb. The essence of Bolshevism, as opposed to many other forms of visionary political thought, is that it can only be propagated and maintained by violence.

No contempt has equaled that with which Lenin has saluted every group of philosophical Socialists, who base their hopes of establishing Utopia upon the processes of reason, free speech, and fair play. No disdain which any despotic monarch, even the most foolish or the most arbitrary, has

ever felt for the opinions or wishes of the mass of the people can approach that with which Lenin and Trotsky and their associates regard the humble toiling millions, who form the raw material for their experiments. Power must be seized by force, force must be prepared in secret, power when gained must be exercised at the pleasure of those who have seized it, and they must exercise it in accordance with their theories undisturbed by the wishes, weaknesses, prejudices, or human sympathies of the prostrate masses subjected to their rule.

Whether it be true or not that opinions cannot be combated by force, it is certainly true that those who seek to propagate their opinions by force can be combated by force, and ought to be combated by force by every free and worthy citizen in every civilized State.

The Doctrine of Violence

Where the doctrine is a doctrine of violence, even though it remains only in the intellectual form, it may produce in other persons overt action of such a deadly character that those who are the source and origin of the doctrine cannot expect to be immune from the counter application of that same physical force on which they habitually rely.

It is surely a remarkable fact that the Government of these two Republics, so advanced in their social and political development, so different in their character and circumstances, should both, at about the same time, have become convinced that there were in their midst a number of persons whose minds were morbidly diseased to a point of actual contagion; and that these persons, if allowed to circulate freely among the ordinary citizens, would under favorable conditions produce an outbreak of a pestilence more destructive of human life than the Black Death or Spotted Typhus.

Associated Effort.

The metaphor of disease is, however, inadequate to the facts. Diseased persons contract or incubate their maladies as individuals; but it is just beginning to be realized that this class of persons

work it up together among themselves by a form of associated effort, and that they are in sympathetic relationship with one another, although they may be separated by distance, by race, by class, and by language throughout the world.

It is, in fact, coming to be understood in the United States and Switzerland, at any rate and possibly the conviction is growing in England too—that our present civilization, which is all we have been able to build up through the sufferings, the perils and the splendid achievements of so many centuries, is the object of a deliberate world-wide profoundly-conceived conspiracy.

All of the world, in every country, and in almost every class of society, there exist the members of the formidable Jacobin or Bolshevik sect and consideration. This is the same force as that which perverted the glorious achievements of the French Revolution, and having rendered unavailing the sacrifices which all classes had made to accomplish the modernization of France and Europe, marched through a welter butchery to the establishment of a military dictatorship.

It is the same force which overthrew the Russian Republic three years ago, while the Allies gaped ignorantly at their action, and which robbed the Russian people of the free constitution they had at last won, and the peace and victory which were almost within their grasp. It is the same force that at this moment is striving to overturn the German Republic and deprive that nation of its chance of self-redemption among the States of Christendom.

Germans and Lenin.

The Republics of the United States and of Switzerland are protecting themselves against this peril by driving from their bounds those plainly recognizable subversive types of foreign origin, and by rigorously controlling those of their own countrymen who may have become affected. But a far more remarkable manifestation is presented in the action of General Ludendorff and the Kaiser's Government during the war in unearthing Lenin and a selected band of his associates, and sending

them into Russia in the sealed compartments of a special train. That act alone, and the consequences that followed from it, ought to show English people how very small is British knowledge of the Continent of Europe compared with that of the Germans.

The confessions of General Ludendorff prove at once his perfect knowledge of the diabolical character of the act which was then perpetrated, his confidence that it would achieve its purpose, namely, the ruin of Russia, and his fear—which may prove only too well grounded—that it might in the long run bring about not merely the temporary collapse but the permanent ruin of Germany as well. The Bolshevist or Jacobin is, in fact, a definitely recognizable article capable of being exported or imported, and producing with almost mathematical certainty the same results under given conditions. These are facts which ought to be understood in England and Scotland, as they are in the principal countries of Europe and in America; and we think there is a remedy which is singularly efficacious in the treatment of this disease.

We have always to remember that the glory of our civilization, among its many defects, is its freedom of speech and action, the readiness to consider and profit by new ideas, and a willingness to move forward resolutely and calmly into the conditions of a broader and brighter age. We have, therefore, to be very chary, except in self-defense against an imminent danger, of attempting to fetter the far-ranging activities of the human mind.

Tyranny.

The Bolsheviks, when they obtain power in any country, rigorously suppress all forms of opinion except their own. For their own convenience they may enter into corrupt relations with wealthy and competent persons of the profiteering class; they are doing that now in Russia. But for the small shopkeeper, for the independent worker with brain or hand, for the peasant exulting in “the magic of ownership,” there is nothing but silence and submersion. And their worst rage and

vengeance is reserved not for the aristocrat or the bourgeois, but for the ordinary Socialist, the Social Democrat, the Social Revolutionary, whom they regard with that added malevolence which religious intolerance in its darkest days has always reserved for the heretic rather than the pagan.

No newspapers but their own must appear. No political organization but their own can be tolerated. No party is allowed except the Communist. Recently persons have even been punished in Russia for declaring themselves “non party.” And for all forms of criticism or protest the dead penalty of death and ruin to home and family stands every ready.

We must avoid imitating these monsters of wickedness, even in self-defense of all that life holds dear. We have got to keep a free country going on a wide basis where millions are consulted, where the poorest and the richest have a right to share in the Government, have a right to choose their Government, to check their Government, and to change their Government. The remedy which we must apply to this malady must be one which does not destroy our own native health.

The Cure.

Happily there is a cure which, as the years pass, civilized nations will more and more be inclined to adopt. It is a very simple cure, and wherever it has been tried it has proved invaluable. It consists in giving these subversive beings a chance to put their theories into practice among themselves, and among themselves alone. Instead of wrecking a score of great States and squandering in a single convulsion the capital which mankind has acquired in long, blind ages of slow improvement, the Bolsheviks should be collected and segregated into a country—we beg their pardon, into an area of the earth’s surface which they can really call their own. In some region sufficiently wide to accommodate their numbers, and sufficiently productive to support their existence, the devotees of Jacobinism (or Bolshevism as it is now called) should be given their chance to put their theories into the fullest application against one another. There, with no peasants

or workmen to mislead or oppress, with no middle classes to starve, or princes to butcher, with no toiling millions to exploit, and with no glittering civilization to pillage, the apostles of Lenin and Liebknecht, the successors of Robespierre and Marat, might enjoy among themselves the massacres of a bloodier September and the rigors of an unnatural equality.

The New Utopia.

It is a fair proposal. Exclusive contact with one another, perfect freedom of thought and action in every direction without limit or restraint of any kind, no authority to suppress their mental or physical impulses, no policemen to round them up, no capitalists to grind them down, no obligation of any sort or kind to any institution, human or divine—except, of course, the necessity of getting their own living from the soil! Moreover, it would give them a chance of proving the truth of their theories, of setting an example to a benighted world, and of bringing into actual existence—by their own unaided efforts—the airy Utopia of their dreams.