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Chapters from My Diary

By Leon Trotsky



PUBLISHED BY
THE REVOLUTIONARY AGE
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I

Serbian Terrorists and French 'Liberators.'—Viennese Currents in the First Days of the War.

THE immediate provocation for the monstrous happenings of the present war was the work of a number of Serbian youths, almost boys, who, in July 1914, murdered the heir apparent to the throne of Austria-Hungary, at Sarajevo. Being revolutionists of a romantic, nationalist type, they expected less than anyone else, that their act of terrorism would be followed by the consequences, of universal scope, which were its sequel.

Later I met one of the members of this revolutionary organization in Paris; it was in the early months of the war. He was a member of the very group which had organized the Sarajevo assassination; but he had gone abroad before the murder and volunteered as an interpreter in the French Navy at the beginning of the war. The Allies were planning a landing on the Adriatic coast of Austria-Hungary, with the intention of arousing a revolt in the Southern Slavic provinces of the Hapsburg Monarchy. For this purpose, Serbian type was loaded onto French warships, to enable them to print revolutionary proclamations, as well as devoted Serbians who were to write these proclamations, and, in general, to bring about an uprising for "national independence." Officially they were designated as translators. As, however, Serbian revolutionists, on the warships of the Republic, might constitute an over-inflammable material, a gray-haired Serbian spy was also placed among them for the purpose of "first-hand" supervision over the youthful enthusiasts. It is extremely probable that this great foresight is attributable to the Russian Embassy in Paris, for in operations of this nature that organ has clear title to primacy among the Allies.

The whole business, as is well known, came to naught. The French vessels sailed around in the Adriatic, devoted some attention to Pola, but, after firing a few fruitless shots, turned back again. "Why?" was the perplexed question of all the uninitiated. But in French political and journalistic circles the explanation was already going the rounds: "Italy is not willing." To arouse a rebellion in the southern provinces of Austria-Hungary, it seemed, meant raising the banner of a national unification of the Jugo-Slavs. Italy, however, considers that Dalmatia should "by rights"—belong to her—by right, let us say, of imperialist appetite, and she issued a protest against the proposed landing of an allied force. At that time it was necessary to pay a price for Italy's benevolent neutrality, later, for her participation in the war. That is why the French ships turned back so unexpectedly, together with their portable printing presses, their Serbian interpreters and their gray-haired spy.

"What's this?" was the question the young Serb revolutionist whom I have mentioned before asked me. "It is clear the Allies are simply selling out the Serbs to Italy. How about the war for the liberation of the small nations? And, in that case, what have we Serbs to fight for? Is it possible that I have volunteered my services simply that I might shed my blood to secure the transfer of Dalmatia to Italy? And what was the reason for the sacrifice of my Sarajevo friend Gavriilo Prinzip, and the rest?"

He was in the depth of despair, this youth with the tawny, yet freckled face and the feverishly bright eyes. The true meaning of the war of "liberation" had revealed itself to him,—as far as Dalmatia was concerned. I got a good deal of information from him concerning the inner life of the southern Slav revolutionary organizations, and particularly the group of youngsters who killed the Hapsburg heir-apparent, the head of the Austro-Hungarian war party.

The organization, which bore the romantic designation "The Black Hand," was constructed

strictly on the basis of a carbonari* conspiracy. The initiation of new members involved a number of mysterious formalities; the blade of a knife was pressed against their bared breasts, and they were sworn to silence and loyalty under the penalty of death, and so on. The meshes of this organization extended over all the Jugo-Slav provinces of the Hapsburg Monarchy, making use of the most self-sacrificing elements of the educated youth, and centred in Belgrade, in the control of officers and politicians who were equally well-connected with both the Serbian Government and the Russian Embassy. As is well known on the Balkan Peninsula the Romanoffs have never hesitated in the use of dynamite.

Vienna clad itself in official mourning, although the great masses of the city's population paid mighty little attention to the news of the destruction of the heir to the throne of the Hapsburgs. So the press had to set about the task of working up the popular feelings. It is difficult to find words that will correctly designate the truly colossal vile-ness to which the press of all Europe—nay, of all the world—has resorted and still does resort with regard to the events of the present war. In this indecent orgy, the black and yellow press of Austria-Hungary, distinguished neither by knowl-ledge nor by talent, cannot be said to occupy an insignificant place. When the word was handed out from the centre, unseen to the public, from the diplomatic inferno in which the destinies of nations are hatched, the scribblers of every shade of political complexion, after the Sarajevo shoot- ing, spewed forth more lies than had ever before been seen in the history of the world.

We Socialists might have looked on with calm disdain at this irrefutable proof of the moral deg- radation of bourgeois society, which was mani- fest in the murderous industry of the "patriotic" press on either side of the trenches,—if—the most distinguished Socialist organs had not taken the same tack. The unexpectedness of this blow made it doubly mortifying to us.

*The *carbonari* were Italian revolutionists in the 19th century, who fought the Austrian tyranny.

By the way, when we speak of unexpectedness, we cannot employ the term more than in a half sense to the case of the Vienna "Arbeiterzeitung." In the course of a seven-years' stay in Vienna (1907-1914), I had ample opportunity to acquaint myself with the cast of mind of the leading circles of the Austrian Social-Democracy, and expected revolutionary initiative from them less than from any other quarter. The purely chauvinistic nature of the articles of Leuthner, who ran the international affairs end of the paper, was sufficiently well known even before the war. As early as in 1909 I felt obliged to write in the "Neue Zeit" an article against the Prusso-Austrian tendency of the central organ of the Austrian Social Democracy. More than once, on my journeys in the Balkans, I heard bitter complaints from Balkan (particularly Serbian) Socialists (particularly from my never-to-be-forgotten friend, Dmitri Tutsovich, who was killed as an officer in the present war) who were indignant that the Serbian capitalist press was maliciously quoting the chauvinistic attacks of the "Arbeiterzeitung" on the Serbs, as a clear demonstration that the international solidarity of the working class was simply a fairy tale. I nevertheless was not quite prepared for the boundless hatred of its fellow-men which this organ gave so many specimens of in the early days of the war.

After the presentation of Austria-Hungary's famous ultimatum to Serbia, patriotic demonstrations were held in Vienna. They were attended chiefly by youngsters. Of real chauvinism the mobs presented very little: but there was alarm and excitement, and expectation of great events, of changes—changes for the better, of course, for it was difficult to imagine anything worse. And the press eagerly encouraged this feeling, intensified and aggravated it.

"Now everything depends on what Russia does," I was told by Leopold Wienarsky, Socialist Deputy in the Reichsrath, who died last year, "If the Czar interferes, the war will be popular in this country."

And, as a matter of fact, there is no doubt

that the idea of the Czarist invasion of Austria and Germany has excited and alarmed the imagination of the Austro-German masses. The international reputation of Czarism, especially after the counter-revolution that succeeded the 1905 upheaval, was too black to be overlooked, and this may be said to have inspired the German statesmen and scribes with the idea of declaring the war against the Eastern despotism to be a "war of liberation." All of which does not give the Scheidemanns the slightest excuse for translating the Hohenzollern lies into the tongue of "Socialism." But it reveals to us the full depth of the fall of our Plekhanovs and Deutsches, who, in their declining years, discovered within their breasts the urge to come out as champions for the Czar's diplomacy at the moment when it was perpetrating its greatest crimes.

* * *

Events came piling in one after the other. The telegraph delivered the news of the murder of Jaures. The papers had already become so full of lies that it was possible—for some hours at least—to doubt the truth of the reports. All the more, since they were succeeded by news of the killing of Poincare and of uprising in Paris. But soon it became impossible to doubt any longer that Jaures had been killed. On August 2nd, Germany declared war on Russia; on that very day began the exodus of Russian emigrants from Vienna.

In the morning of August 3rd I walked over to the Wienzeile, to the "Arbeiterzeitung's" new building, in order to talk over, with the deputies, what was to be the lot of us Russians.

In the Secretary's Office, I found Friedrich Adler, or "Doctor Fritz," as he is called in party circles, to distinguish him from his father, Victor Adler, who is called simply "the Doctor," without further designation. Rather tall, lean, slightly stooping, with a distinguished brow edged by curly locks of blond hair, and with an expression of constant thoughtfulness on his face, Fritz was a figure all by himself in the rather numerous party intelligencia of Vienna, which was given

far too much to horseplay and petty joking. He had spent a year and a half or two years in Zurich, as a Privatdozent in the Department of Physics at the University, but also as editor of the local party organ, "Das Volksrecht." In the war period Swiss Socialism began passing through a radical process of internal rebirth; its interests began to pursue two divergent paths. The old mandarins of the party, deeming that the essence of Marxist wisdom is in the proverb "A rolling stone gathers no moss," withdrew into the background. But in the years that Fritz spent at Zurich, the atmosphere of Swiss Socialism was still characterized by a profoundly provincial quality. It proved too much for Fritz, who returned to Vienna, became Secretary of the Austrian Party and editor of its theoretical monthly, "Der Kampf." Simultaneously he took upon himself the bringing out of a weekly agitational sheet, "Das Volk," which was printed in a very large edition, intended chiefly for circulation in the provinces. During the weeks immediately preceding the war, Fritz was occupied with the preparations for the International Congress; on his desk lay the printed matter that had been prepared for this event, the jubilee stamps and other things: the party had expended some 20,000 kronen in the various preparations for the Congress.

It would be an exaggeration to say that it was already possible in those days to discern, in the building in Wienzeile, two distinct groupings of men based on divergent principles; they were not yet formed. But already it was possible to observe a profound difference of psychological attitude toward the war. Some seemed to delight in it, launched abuse at the Serbians and Russians, drawing no serious distinction between governments and peoples: these were the nationalists by nature, who had hardly been veneered by a thin coating of Socialist culture, which was being washed off, not day by day, but hour by hour.

The others, with Victor Adler at their head, regarded the war as an external catastrophe, and one had to grin and bear it. The watchful-waiting passivity of the party leaders served merely as

a cloak, however, for the unconcealed agitation that was carried on by the active nationalist wing. A sharp and incisive intellect, a charming character, Victor Adler stood far above his policy, which had been completely taken up, in the recent years, with the pursuit of combinations, in the hopeless muddling activity, so characteristic of Austrian conditions, and so fruitful as a ground for pessimistic resignation. Not only was the elder Adler far superior to his policy, but his policy, in turn, was superior, in its naturally individualized character, to the political consorts with whom his policy surrounded the chief. What was skepticism in him, became cynicism in them, and Adler's voluntary withdrawal into a "decorative" capacity was transformed, in their case, into open derision as to the basic values of Socialism. And this natural selection of his collaborators constitutes the clearest expression and condemnation of the elder Adler's system.

The son, with his genuinely revolutionary temperament, occupied, by his very nature, a position that was hostile to this system. He directed his criticism, his mistrust, his hatred, chiefly against his own government. When we last met (Aug. 3, 1914), he first of all showed the proclamation the government had just issued to the population, asking them to follow up and intercent all suspicious foreigners. With instantly-kindled aversion he spoke of the opening of the orgy of chauvinism that had set in. His outward reserve only emphasized his profound moral seriousness. Half an hour later, the "Doctor" arrived. He immediately proposed that we go together to the Prefecture, to see Geier, the Chief of Political Police, in order to consult with him on the intentions of the authorities with regard to the Russian emigrants living in Vienna.

In the automobile, on the way to the prefecture, I observed to Adler that the war was apparently producing, in Vienna, at least externally, a sort of holiday mood.

"Those who are having a good time are the ones who don't need to go," he answered, "and their joy appears now to be patriotic. Besides,

the streets are now full of the unbalanced and the idiotic; this is their hour. But decent people sit at home and shudder. The war will afford a free arena for every instinct and every form of insanity."

Being by profession a psychiatrist, and a medical man, Adler often applies to political affairs ("particularly to those of Austria," he remarks, ironically), the criteria of the psycho-pathological point of view.

How far he was at that moment from the thought that his own son would accomplish a political murder [the assassination of Premier Stuergh, for which Fritz was given 13 years in prison]! I recall this fact here, because, after Fritz's act, the yellow Austrian press, and a number of social-patriotic organs attempted to depict Fritz as abnormal,—from the standpoint, of course, of their own hollow "norms." But the legalistic Hapsburg machinery was obliged to break down before the clear intellect and the manly steadfastness of Fritz. What cold disdain he would show to the cries of the eunuchs of social-patriotism, if their voices could penetrate to his cell!

The Chief of Political Police expressed the opinion that tomorrow morning there may be an edict putting all Russians and Serbians under guard. "Those whom we know we will later liberate, but complications may arise. Besides, we should not be able to permit them to leave the country after that."

"So you would recommend leaving the country?"

"Absolutely. And—the quicker the better."

"Very well. I shall go to Switzerland with my family tomorrow."

"Hm!—I should prefer it, if you should leave today."

The time of this conversation was 3 P. M. At 6.40 I was already seated in the train, with my family, and the train was leaving for Switzerland (Zurich).

In Switzerland—The "German Treason"—Plekhanov—Greulich.

I ARRIVED in Zurich on August 4, 1914. Switzerland was then already over-run with fugitives from the warring countries. The central question in Swiss life had become—the potato. Would there or would there not be enough? The violation of Belgian neutrality, the first communications of the general staffs, lists of killed and wounded, these things were already finding difficulty in obtaining a hearing, but the question of the food supply was beginning to be imperative. And the Russians who were stranded in Switzerland also conceived of world affairs, in these early days, from the angle of the kitchen-garden. Credit suddenly had gone to pieces; communications with Russia were broken, the banks stopped changing Russian money, then they would pay 100 francs for 100 roubles, then the rate would go up, then down, and then they stopped altogether.

"They were giving 240 francs for 100 roubles this morning."

"You don't say!"

"Yes, they were. You see England declared war yesterday. Change your fifty roubles at once, or tomorrow Italy will come in, and they'll begin giving us nothing again."

The Russian traveling public, the emigrants, the students, the pleasure-seekers, formed a Committee of Public Welfare out of their midst, around which all the fugitives grouped themselves, the army deserter, the member of the Odessa supreme court, the Jewish laborer, the director of a hospital, some actresses, etc., etc. At Geneva they formed a General Administration for Economic Welfare, in the Russian colony, under the presidency of the Caucasian social-democrat T, who, as is the custom, was called "Comrade Chairman." Wessel, the Russian Consul, who was present at the meetings (oh, sweet were the days of national unity!) asked his neighbor in

great astonishment: "If this is only the Comrade of the Chairman, who is the real Chairman?"—after which he respectfully addressed his remarks to T.

After the food crisis had abated, there began a discussion, among the political emigrants, as to the conduct of the Socialist parties of the various countries. The agreement of the German Social-Democratic Party to vote the first five milliards of war credits, created an impression of dismay. Many would not believe it, and insisted that the August 5th number of the Berlin "Vorwaerts," which brought us Haase's declaration, was a simple creation of the German General Staff, intended to confuse the enemy as to the internal conditions of Germany.

The first rather indistinct tendencies were already observable toward the formation of groups within the party. P. B. Axelrod was completely upset by the "treason of the Germans": for that is what we called the consent of August 4th in our private conversations. "If Bebel were still alive," declared Axelrod, "he would never have permitted it." The action of the French Socialists, who on that very day, August 5th, did exactly what the Germans had done, namely, voted the war credits, made much less of an impression. Most of us had always considered the French Socialism inferior to the German, and others, Axelrod among them, found "extenuating circumstances" pleading for the French in the circumstances of the war itself.

We began to receive news of the position of Plekhanov, who, at the beginning of the war, was in Paris. This news was not very definite at first, but what there was of it was calculated to produce the greatest disquietude. I had a number of conversations with Axelrod on this subject and he would never admit the possibility that Plekhanov would turn out to be a patriot. "I admit that he will make distinctions in his estimates of French and German Socialism, and that he will desire a French victory, but that he will come out for a victory of the Czar's armies—never!"

I did not share this confidence. Already at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, Plekhanov occupied a position by himself in the "Iskra" Group of those days. To be sure, he did not voice his patriotic feelings aloud, and at the Amsterdam Congress he ostentatiously shook the hand of Katayama, yet at the same time, he was openly hostile to the confidence, then so dear to the revolutionist, that the forces of Czarism would meet with defeat in the war. But in 1913, when I was at Bucharest, Rakovsky told me that just at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, Plekhanov had assured him with greater frankness than he had shown toward us, that in his opinion the idea that Socialism should be "anti-nationalist," and that it should "work for national defeat" (to use the expression that has since become current), was an importation into the party that had been brought about by the Hebrew intellectuals. This assertion must have appeared all the more remarkable to Rakovsky in view of the fact that at that time not only the radical intellectuals, but even the majority of the Liberal intellectuals, with Milyukov at their head, were permeated with outspoken "defeatist" sentiments. Later, in July, 1914, two or three weeks before the opening of the war, on the occasion of the "unifying" Russian Conference at Brussels, I understood from a number of guarded observations made by Plekhanov, that he was not well-disposed toward the "anti-patriotic" campaign which I had carried on in my communications from Serbia and Bulgaria at the time of the Balkan War. All these things produced in me in August, 1914, an attitude of suspicion toward the anointed leader of the Russian Social-Democracy. But the actual course of events far outstripped my most gloomy expectations. In Paris, Plekhanov blessed the Russian Revolutionary Volunteers in their struggle with "Prussian militarism," and then was unable to muster manhood enough within himself to raise a voice in protest, when French militarism, represented in the persons of the non-coms of the Foreign Legion, subjected the unhappy Russian idealists to degrading indignities. Plekhanov

sent a communication to the Bulgarians, summoning them to intervene in the war on the side of the Allies. Plekhanov mobilized Kant in the defense of Czarist diplomacy. Plekhanov agitated for Italian intervention in the war by writing the most extravagant chauvinistic articles for the Italian yellow journals. And, finally, Plekhanov combined with certain backward laborites and populists, and with the renegade Alexinsky, to form the staff of the Paris "Prizyv" ("The Call"), which, from number to number, stamped us, the internationalists, as the agents of the German General Staff.

But let us return to the opening of the war. In Zurich I met Greulich, a German, the patriarch of the Swiss Social Democracy. Not of tall stature, but rugged; not stout, but heavy; a complete contrast to his contemporary, the late Bebel, whose leanness was more like that of an emaciated steel spring; Greulich produces an immediate impression of importance, with his white mane and the deep furrows of his thoughtful face. He was fiercely indignant in these first weeks with the action of the German Socialists; later the power of his indignation went down day by day.

"The International no longer exists," said Greulich, and I at once entered this observation of his in my notebook. "In the discharge of our every-day political labors," he continued, "we feel that we are a real force, and we really are a force. But when great masses sweep over the stage of action, when it is clear that we constitute a minority, we may easily be hurled out of our political pride into political self-debasement. To me, that is the key to an understanding of all that is going on. Victor Adler, Austerlitz, Renner, are splendid Socialists, but even they will be lost altogether with the rest of the party in the welter of the politically amorphous masses.

"We are entering upon a period of great crisis for the International. It may be reborn later, but it will not be on the same foundations. We must acknowledge before everything else that the political parties have compromised themselves. The

trade unions have kept aloof, but they cannot exist without international bonds between them. It is, therefore, my opinion, that the International will be reborn after the war on the basis of the trade unions."

But Greulich was only partly right in these words. Numerically, to be sure, we Socialists are in the minority. But the class that is waging the war is also in the minority. In our social system there are still great masses of the population that are completely "unhistorical" in their point of view, that is, who in normal times have no kind of political life. The conditions of Capitalism do not permit and never will permit of the elevation of these lowly petit bourgeois, semi-proletarian, semi-hobo classes to the level of an equal participation in the destinies of society. These classes are torn out of their intellectual death only by such catastrophes as war or revolution.

War shatters the fetters of the commonplace, and consequently the oppressive, debasing, unenlightened conditions. War destroys the existing equilibrium, tears one out of the accustomed track, and gives promise of change. War clutches all classes, and, consequently, those who are oppressed and overburdened feel themselves on an equal footing with the wealthy and powerful. These powerful hopes for decisive changes are one of the reasons why war so often brings revolution in its train. Because war alone can never make good the hopes which it arouses. Having convulsed the masses with the most excruciating physical crises, war invariably deceives them in the end. At the very same time sections of society, which in ordinary times are scarcely touched by our propaganda, look in the direction of the revolutionary party for the realization of the hopes which not so long ago they hoped the government would make good, with its apparatus of war. The success of the Revolution depends to no slight degree on the extent to which the Socialist party is able to convince these masses that their hopes are not illusions.

The Swiss Social Democracy.—"Gruetli."—"Eintocht."—Fritz Platten.—My German Pamphlet: "The War and the International."—Socialist Appendages to the General Staff.

SWISS Socialism is bound by ties of language on the one hand to the Socialism of Germany and on the other to that of France. It was entirely natural that the crisis in these two powerful Socialist parties should at once express itself in Switzerland, enclosed as the country is on all sides by the fires of war. The struggle was mirrored all the more fiercely due to the fact that the Swiss social-patriots were naturally attracted by the contradictory centres of gravitation, the German side and the French side. In this connection the following case of political symmetry is rather characteristic. In the Swiss Parliament there sit two deputies with identical family names and identical Christian names; they are Johann Sieg, of Zurich, and Jean Sieg, of Geneva. Both are social-patriots, but Johann Sieg is an outright Germanophile, while Jean Sieg is a still more outright Francophile. Under these circumstances the internationalist policy of the Socialist Party would seem to be the unified middle ground of self-preservation. The international position met with very general favor in the ranks of the party (and it was my privilege in those days to attend many party meetings), but this was not the case in the party leadership.

The support of the right national wing of the party was clearly the "Gruetli" organization, that well-known body out of which the Swiss Socialist Party sprang. The most warlike nationalist of this body was found to be the former pastor Pflueger, one of the party's representatives in the Federal Parliament. "If I were the German Emperor," he declared at one of the party meetings, in which the first dispute with respect to the war was being carried on, "I also should have stood by with drawn sword to oppose the Russian!"

Months later, Pflueger repeated the same sentence at the Party Congress at Berne, but, unfortunately for him, his eloquent oratory did not produce the desired effect; there arose a great noise, laughter, whistling, hisses, and the unhappy candidate for the post of German Emperor found himself unable to finish his speech.

The focus of the left wing was the organization known as "Eintracht," which was recruited almost exclusively from among the foreigners: Germans, Austrians, Russians, etc. Of real Swiss Socialists in this organization, the most active was Fritz Platten, Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Party. He was of tall stature, with a frank, open face, an excellent popular orator, himself a proletarian by birth and by his mode of life, although he was married to a Russian student. Platten represents, in himself, one of the doubtless most engaging personalities in the Swiss Social Democracy. "What a disgrace," he said at these first meetings, "that the workers should again have bent their backs in this critical moment. But I hope that they will yet show, before this war is over, that they know how to die, not only in the service of others, but also for themselves." And from Platten's lips these are not phrases. In 1905, when the Revolution broke out in Russia, Fritz, then a young man of twenty, decided to take active part in it, journeyed to Riga, fought in the first ranks, and acquired at first hand a thorough acquaintance with the inside of Russian jails. In 1912 he stood at the head of the general strike in Zurich, as one of its most determined and most influential leaders.

Already in September, 1914, the "Eintracht" Executive Committee worked out an aggressive internationalist manifesto, and invited the "leaders" of the party to a constituent meeting, at which I was to defend the manifesto in a lecture. But the "leaders" did not show up: they considered it too risky to take a definite position in such a delicate question, preferring a passive waiting attitude, and limiting themselves to an academic criticism of the patriotic "extravagances" of the German and French Socialists. This, by the

way, is the political mentality that is most frequently found in all the Socialist circles of the neutral countries, the United States among them: in fact it is more outspoken here than anywhere else. [This was written about one month before America's entry into the war.]

The "Eintracht" association almost unanimously passed the adoption of the resolution, which was subsequently published in the Socialist press and served as a serious stimulus to the public opinion of the party.

At the Party Congress at Berne, to which reference had been already made, an address on the war was delivered by Judge Otto Lang. The tone of the lecture was that of a very moderate internationalism, approaching the present position of Kautsky. But the attitude of the majority of the Congress was incomparably more determined than that of the lecturer. In fact, in general, in the time of the war, the Swiss Party accomplished a swift maneuver to the left, with the result that a considerable section of the Gruetli people were left high and dry, and were thus obliged to form an independent reformist and social-patriotic party. In this fact, it may be mentioned by the way, is another plain illustration of the extremely profound gulf that separates social patriotism from internationalism.

My stay in Switzerland was, as far as I was concerned, taken up chiefly with my work on my pamphlet, written in German, entitled "The International and the War." The pamphlet arose out of my diary, into which I entered, during the first few weeks, at first only for my own use, an attempt to elucidate the causes of the catastrophe of the Socialist parties, as well as the modes of escape from the catastrophe. Platten undertook the task of distributing the pamphlet, and saw to it that several thousand copies were forwarded to Germany and Austria. At this time, I was already in France, and read with astonishment in one of the French papers a telegram reporting that a German judge had sentenced me, in absentia, to a prison term for having written the pamphlet. I must confess that the Hohenzollern

judge, in thus sentencing me to a term which I have not shown undue haste in serving, did me a favor that was quite valuable. To the social-patriotic fabricators and "ideological" sniffers of the Alexinsky type,¹ this sentence by a German court, pronounced on me, will be a hard nut to crack when they turn their distinguished talents in the direction of proving that I am at bottom an agent of the German General Staff.

The French Customs, in their turn, held up the package of pamphlets that had been sent from Switzerland, and informed me that the pamphlets would be confiscated because of their German original (!). One of my Russian friends informed Gustave Herve about this, and Gustave Herve at that time still had his moments of oppositional spirit, and in "La Guerre Sociale," Herve's paper, there appeared a satirical note directed against the confiscation of this "anti-German" pamphlet. For this or for some other reason, the Customs delivered to me, a few days later, the package that they had held up.

It is hardly necessary to say that the German social-patriotic press attempted, on its part, to reveal the author of the pamphlet as a secret patriot and a defender of the interests of the Allies. What is the relative proportion of conscious misrepresentation and of chauvenistic fanaticism in accusations of this type? It would not be easy to determine. At any rate, so much is certain: Social patriotism debases men morally and mentally to such an extent that they are prevented from seeing in a Socialist simply a Socialist and nothing more. When two feudal serfs met on the road they would ask each other: "Whose man are you?"—"I belong to Sheremetyeff."—"And we belong to Bobrinsky."—Evidently the feudal notion of "belonging" to somebody is deeply anchored in the breasts of the social patriots. The interests of which general staff does he defend?

¹The latest number of the internationalist gazette, "Nachalo," arriving from Paris, brings the news that this former social-democrat of the Second Duma has been dismissed even from the personnel of the not over-fastidious social-patriotic paper "Prizyv".

The Romanoff master or the Hohenzollern master? These people are beginning to lose the ability to see that it is possible to be an enemy of all "masters" at once, to follow one's own flag, and to feel one's self,—to use Fritz Adler's beautiful expression—a soldier in "the eternal army of social revolution."

IV

Entering France. — Paris. — Viviani. — Joffre. — Briand. — Clemenceau.

NOVEMBER 19, 1914, I crossed the French boundary. Already there were many wounded all over, and Red Cross Sisters were at the doors of the cars with collection boxes. Everyone had a feeling that the war would end not later than the Spring, although no one could precisely say why. Simple humanity had not yet come to the point of regarding war as the normal condition of affairs.

Paris was sad: the hotels were closed, and by no means all the persons who had fled from the city in August had as yet returned; the streets were plunged in darkness at night, the cafes closed at 8 P. M. "What is the explanation for this last step?" I asked the people who knew. "That's very simple; General Gallieni, the Governor of Paris, does not wish to have any gathering of crowds. In times like these, the cafes might very easily become, in the evenings the centres of criticism and of dissatisfaction among the laboring classes, which are kept busy by day."

All over there were many women in black. In the first days, when the proudly patriotic mood was still upon them, mourning was worn not only by mothers and wives, but even by rather distant relatives. The children played at war all over, and many had been dressed in army uniforms by their mothers. Convalescent wounded soldiers, with fresh crosses on their breasts, swarmed in all the streets. In respectful, almost flattering conversation with them, stood old men, who were not only patriotic, but sometimes physically able, in

whose lapels were the ribbons of the Legion of Honor. There are a lot of them in Paris, these indestructible advocates of a "war jusqu'au bout" who in 1870 were too young to serve and now are too old.

At times there were Zeppelins. I remember a night in December (1914), when I was returning home through streets that were in semi-darkness. From one direction, later from another, there were trumpet blasts that were terrifying to the last degree. Dark shadows rushed by, and one by one the street lanterns, covered by screens across the top, were put out. A few minutes later the streets were absolutely dark, and not a soul in them. I did not understand at all, although I had an idea that something interesting was going on.

Suddenly there was a dull roar, then another—nearer, a third—again more distant. It became clear that there was a bombardment: were the shots fired from the ground upward, or out of the air downward? That is, were the canons shooting in order to fight off invisible Zeppelins, or were these cruisers of the air dropping explosive shells?

I learned later that both these things had been going on at once. Half an hour later the searchlight on the Eiffel Tower began to pierce the clouds. Once more in my hotel, I was confronted with an unusual tableau: all the time inmates were sitting on the steps of the winding staircase reading, conversing, or playing cards by the light of tallow candles. It was strictly prohibited to turn on the electric light in the rooms. From my window in the fifth story I had an indistinct sensation of the city that was in hiding beneath me. Distant explosions were twice heard again. The searchlights ceaselessly played over the clouds. Early in the morning we again heard the trumpet blasts, this time stormy and jovous: the enemy had been put to flight. you might turn on your light, and those who had sought safety in the cellars might with impunity mount the staircase to their rooms. The morning after that, the papers

announced in what parts of the city houses had been destroyed, and how many human victims there had been.

* * *

At the head of the French Government at the beginning of the war stood the rather colorless phrasemaker Viviani, who had formerly been a Socialist and a pupil of Jaures. In fact, the French bourgeoisie seems to make a practice of entrusting the most responsible government posts to the Socialists of yesterday. The French Radicals, who constitute the principal party of the Republic, are for the most part distinguished by their over-narrow and provincial petit-bourgeois outlook, which would prevent them from guiding the world interests of the French Bourse. A lawyer who has gone through the school of Socialism, and who knows what manner of speech to use toward the working masses, is much more adaptable to the complicated politics of the present day,—on the condition, of course, that this lawyer is prepared to sell his conscience, so to speak, to Capitalism for a sufficient consideration. Another former Socialist, Briand, once an exponent of the general strike, held the position of Minister of Justice in the Viviani Ministry. Briand assumed an attitude of unconcealed skepticism toward the head of his ministry, openly criticized the reactionary devices of his chief in the corridors of the Chamber, and did not a little toward preparing the downfall of his friend and superior in this way.

The prestige of Joffre, at this moment, just after the Battle of the Marne, by which the advance of the Germans had been stopped, had reached its highest point. The entire press could not speak of him without genuflections, and referred to the Parliament of the Republic, with Bonapartist contemptuousness, as to a body of windjammers, with no useful function in the world. The reactionary depths were boiling with active preparations for a great coup d'etat. Negotiations were being carried on with the chief newspapers of France, "Le Temps," in this connec-

tion and reports concerning them were a matter of every-day gossip. As far as words merely were concerned, the Bonapartist coup d'etat was already in the air. But, to reduce the hare to a ragout, as the French proverb puts it, it is necessary, first of all, to have your hare; that is just what was lacking: for you cannot have a Bonapartist coup d'etat without a Bonaparte.

At any rate, hardly anyone could have been less appropriate for this role than "Papa Joffre." His guarded and cautious character, the absence of any ideal spark, made him a precise opposite to the great genius of French military tradition, Napoleon. In the domain of strategy, Joffre is a precise counterpart of the conservative and narrow French petite bourgeoisie, which is afraid of taking any step that involves any risk. After the Battle of the Marne (the credit for which is ascribed by many not to Joffre, but to Gallieni), the military prestige of the generalissimo began to go down, at first gradually, later with great swiftness. Nor did the French army discover another eagle to succeed him. Of new victories and of new glories there were none. The chances for a military coup d'etat naturally went by the board.

In fact, there are no "eagles" in the military life of France at the present time. On the contrary, never has mediocrity prevailed with such undisputed sway in the Third Republic, as at the present tragic epoch. The greatest man whom the French bourgeoisie has managed to attract to a position of leadership is Aristide Briand. Without possessing a single dominating "national" idea, without the most necessary guiding principles of statesmanship or morality, a past master in the art of wire-pulling, a trafficker in the lost souls of the French Parliament, an instigator of bribery and corruption, a prestidigitator with the manners of a political grisette, Aristide Briand is, in his every quality, a complete caricature of the "greatness" of the "national" war for "liberation."

The most formidable opponent of Briand is the old undoer of ministries, the "tiger" of French radicalism, the seventy-five-year-old Clemenceau.

The impelling force of his great publicistic talent is that of malice. Clemenceau is too well acquainted with all the inside wire-pulling of French politics to cherish any illusions as to its possessing any idealistic motives. He is too evil to permit such illusions to remain unstained in others. Clemenceau did more than any other person to prick the inflated reputations of those who led the nation's war: of Poincare, President of the Republic, of Joffre, Commander-in-Chief, and of the head of the Briand Ministry. Yet the same Clemenceau that constituted a chip of Jacobinism in the reign of capitalist finance, utterly lacked any sort of "constructive" policy. He demands a tenfold exertion of forces to wage war to the end. Yet he knows the secret of success as little as does anyone else. And if his destructive criticism of the uninspired and deceptive and timid policy of Briand should bring about the downfall of the latter, it is hardly likely that the French Parliament will decide to summon as his successor the great "disintergrator," Georges Clemenceau.

P. S. — After the above lines were written, the fall of the Briand Cabinet and the formation of a new Cabinet became accomplished facts. Clemenceau has been passed over. At the head of the Cabinet was placed the aged Ribot, the conservative, somewhat "leftish" in tendencies, who has no definite ideas on the questions connected with the war. I should say that the Cabinet of Ribot is the Cabinet of fruitless waiting.

V

Letter to Jules Guesde, "Socialist" member of the French Ministry, concerning Trotzky's expulsion from France in 1916.

MR. MINISTER: Before I leave the soil of France, under the escort of a police officer, who personifies the liberties in whose defense you were appointed to the national ministry, I consider it my duty to express to you a few thoughts, not in the vain hope that they may convince you, but that they may at least be useful and of value against you. When my expulsion from France was decided upon, your colleague, Mr. Malvy, the Minister of Justice, did not have the courage to tell me the reasons for this measure. Nor did the other of your colleagues, the Minister of War, consider it proper to enumerate the causes that led to the suppression of the Russian newspaper "Nashe Slovo" (Our Word), of which I was the editor, and which had, for two long years, suffered continually the trials of censorship, under the watchful eye and special care of that same Minister of War.

Still I need not conceal from you the fact that the reasons that led to my expulsion are no secret to me. You feel the need of adopting repressive measures against an international Socialist, against one of those who refuse to accept the part of defender or voluntary slave of this imperialistic war.

Moreover, even though the reasons for this action against me have not been communicated to me, whom they above all concern, these reasons have been stated by Mr. Briand to the deputies and to the journalists.

In Marseilles last August a number of Russian mutineers killed their colonel. A court investigation is alleged to have disclosed that a number of these soldiers were in possession of several

numbers of the "Nashe Slovo." At least this is the explanation given by Mr. Briand in an interview with Deputy Longuet and with the president of the Chamber Committee of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Leygues, who, in turn, transmitted this version to the journalists of the Russian bourgeois press. To be sure, Mr. Briand did not possess the audacity to claim that the "Nashe Slovo," which stood subject to his own censorship, was directly responsible for the killing of the officer.

It is likely that his thoughts were somewhat along the following lines. In view of the presence of Russian soldiers in France, it is necessary to weed out the "Nashe Slovo" and to banish its editors from the soil of the Republic. For a Socialist newspaper that refuses to spread illusions and lies may, according to the memorable doctrine of Mr. Renaudel, open the eyes of the Russian soldiers to hypocrisies and lead them into dangerous paths of reflection and meditation. Unfortunately, however, for Mr. Briand, this explanation of his is based upon a very vexatious anachronism. A year ago Gustav Herve, at that time still a member of the permanent administrative committee of your party, wrote that this forcible removal from France of Russian refugees guilty of revolutionary internationalism would be accepted by public opinion without protest or resistance. Obviously Herve received the inspiration for this prophecy from ministerial sources.

At the end of July this same Herve whispered, officiously, that I would be expelled from France; at about the same time—i. e., still before the killing of the colonel in Marseilles—Professor Durkeheim, the President of the Commission for Russian immigrants, established by the Government, informed a representative of these immigrants of the impending suppression of the "Nashe Slovo" and the expulsion of its editors (vide, "Nashe Slovo," July 30, 1916.) Everything had been prearranged, even the public opinion of the slaves of Mr. Herve. They waited only for a pretext to strike the final blow. And the pretext was found. The unfortunate Russian

soldiers killed their colonel at a moment that was most opportune to the interests of certain people. This happy coincidence invites a suspicion that may, I fear, penetrate the invulnerable skin of even your ministerial shame. Russian journalists who made a special investigation of the case in Marseilles have established the fact that in this case, as in so many similar cases, the leading role was played by an agent provocateur. What was his aim, or rather what were the aims of the well-paid rascals who directed this agent, is not difficult to comprehend. An excess of some kind among the Russian soldiers was necessary not only to justify the rule of the knout against them, which was still somewhat offensive to the French authorities, but in order to create a pretext for repressive measures against the Russian immigrants, accused of abusing French hospitality by demoralizing Russian soldiers during the war. To their credit we will assume that the instigators of this project did not themselves believe that the matter would assume such a fatal aspect, that they did not intentionally desire what actually occurred from the very beginning. It is probable that they hoped great gains by small sacrifices. But all undertakings of this sort involve an element of business risk. In this case the provocateur himself went unmolested, but Colonel Krause and his assassins were the victims. Even the patriotic Russian journalists, who are openly hostile to the "Nashe Slovo," expressed the suspicion that copies of our paper were given to the soldiers, at the most auspicious moment, by the agent provocateur.

May I beg of you, Mr. Minister, to institute, through the services of Mr. Malvy an investigation of this matter? You do not see that anything could be gained by such an investigation? Neither do I. Because—let us speak openly—agents provocateur are at least as valuable for "national defense" as Socialist ministers. And you, Jules Guesde, having so generously assumed responsibility for the foreign policy of the Third Republic, for the Franco-Russian alliance and its consequences, for the conquest aims of the

Czar, and for all the aims and methods of this war—it remains for you to accept as well the renown for the deeds of these agents provocateur of his Majesty the autocratic ruler of Russia.

At the beginning of the war, when promises were spread with a lavish hand, your partner, Sembat, enchanted the Russian journalists with the perspective of the most beneficial influence to be exerted by the allied democracies upon the internal regime of autocratic Russia. Moreover, this argument was used persistently by the Social patriots of France and Belgium to reconcile the revolutionary Russians with the French Government, but with little success. Twenty-six months of constant military coalition between the generalissimi, between diplomats and parliamentarians, the visits of Viviani and Thomas to Tsarkoe Selo, in short, twenty-six months of incessant influence exerted by the Western democracies upon the Russian regime have only served to strengthen in our land the boldest and most impudent reaction, softened, to a small extent, by the chaos of the administration: have succeeded, moreover, in transforming the internal regime of England and France until they have become very similar to that of Russia.

The generous promises of Mr. Sembat are obviously less expensive than his "coal." The unfortunate fate of the "right of asylum" is but a conspicuous symptom of materialistic and police rule that are becoming more and more predominant on both sides of the Channel. Lloyd George, of Dublin fame, the imperialist incarnate, with the manners of a drunken clergyman, and Mr. Aristide Briand, for whose characterization I beg to refer you, Mr. Jules Guesde, to your own article of earlier days, these two figures represent, in the highest degree, the spirit of the present war, its justification, its morality based upon the appetites of classes and of individuals. Can there be a better and a more deserving partner for Messrs. Lloyd George and Briand than this Mr. Sturmer, who, like a real Russian, has made a career by pinning himself to the Cossacks of the Metropolitans and to the petticoats of bigoted

court damsels? What a splendid, what an incomparable trio! Verily, history could have selected no better colleagues and chieftains for Guesde, the minister.

Is it possible for an honest Socialist not to fight against them? You have transformed the Socialist party into a submissive chorus, that servilely imitates the leaders of capitalist highway robbery, at a historical epoch when bourgeois society—whose deadly enemy you, Jules Guesde, have hitherto been—has revealed and demonstrated its true nature to the core. From the events, prepared in a period of world-wide depredation and robbery, whose awful consequences we have so often predicted, from the rivers of blood, from the awful suffering and misfortune, from the crimes, from the bloodthirsty ferocity and hypocrisy of the Governments you, Jules Guesde, draw but one lesson for the enlightenment of the French proletariat: that Wilhelm II and Francis Joseph are two criminals, who, contrary to Nicholas II and Mr. Poincare, refused to respect the rules and regulations of international law.

French Socialism, with its glorious past, with its proud line of thinkers, of fighters and martyrs, has at last found (—and what a disgrace to think that it has found!—) in Renaudel, a translator, during the most tragic period of the world's history, for the elevating thoughts of the yellow book into the language of yellow journalism.

The Socialism of Babeuf, of Saint-Simon, of Fourier, of Blanqui, of the Commune, of Jaures, and of Jules Guesde—yes, of the Jules Guesde of the days of yore—has found its Albert Thomas, who consults with the Russian tyrant concerning the surest and safest method of capturing Constantinople; has found its Marcel Sembat, to exercise and display dilettante nonchalance over the corpses and the ruins of French civilization; has found its Jules Guesde, to follow the triumphal chariot of the trumreter Briand. And you believe and you hope that the French proletariat, that has been bled to the point of exhaustion in this endless war for the crime of the ruling classes,

will continue to tolerate quietly, to the end, this shameful union between official Socialism and the worst enemies of the proletariat? You are mistaken. The opposition is growing. In spite of martial law, in spite of this mania of nationalism, which, whatever its form, be it royalistic, radical, or socialistic, always preserves its capitalistic quintessence—revolutionary opposition is marching forward, slowly, but surely. Daily it is gaining ground. "Nashe Slovo," the paper that you have strangled, lived and breathed in the atmosphere of awakening French international Socialism. The group of "Nashe Slovo," expelled from Russia by the counter-revolution that is gaining in power and strength through the help and support of the French Banking Exchange, the group of "Nashe Slovo" was privileged to echo, even though it was hindered and hampered by your censor—the voice of the French side of the new International, that raises its head in the midst of the terrors of fratricidal war. In our capacity as "undesirable foreigners" we have identified our cause and our fate with that of the French opposition. We are proud to have received the first blow from the French Government, from your government, Jules Guesde!

We have the honor, together with Monatte, Merrheim, Saumoneau, Rosmer, Bourderon, Lorient, Guilbeaut, and so many others, to be accused, all of us, of being pro-German, of friendliness toward Germany.

The weekly Paris organ of your friend Plekchanoff, your partner in honor and glory as well as in your inglorious fall, has denounced us week after week to the police of Mr. Malvy, as being in the service of the German General Staff. Formerly you knew the value of such accusations, for you yourself had the honor of being subjected to similar accusations. But now you put your stamp of approval upon Mr. Malvy by collecting, for the government of "National Defense," the reports of Mr. Malvy's police spies. Moreover, my political correspondence box contains a very recent prison sentence pronounced against me, during the war, by a German court, in continu-

ation—as I was not present—for my pamphlet, “The War and the International.”

But besides this brutal fact, that can make an impression even upon the police brain-cells of Mr. Malvy, I should, I believe, emphasize that we revolutionary internationalists are more dangerous enemies of German reaction than all the Governments of the Allies taken together. Their hostility to Germany is, at the bottom, nothing but the hatred of the competitor; our revolutionary hatred of its ruling class is indestructible. Imperialist competition may again unite the rival enemy brethren of today. When the total destruction of Germany has been realized, England and France, after a decade, would again approach the Kaiserdom of the Hohenzollern in the friendliest spirit, to defend themselves against the superiority of Russia. A future Poincare will exchange telegrams of congratulations with Wilhelm or with his heirs; Lloyd George, in the peculiar language of the priest and the boxer, will curse and condemn Russia, as the defending wall of barbarism and militarism; Albert Thomas, as the French ambassador to the Kaiser, would be showered with flowers cut by the gentle hands of the court madams of Potsdam, as occurred so recently in Tsarskoe Selo.

All the banalities of present-day speeches and articles would again be unpacked. Mr. Renaudel would have to change, in his article only the proper names, a task for which his mental faculties and abilities would doubtless suffice. But we will remain the outspoken, sworn enemies of Germany's rulers that we are today, for we hate German reaction with the same revolutionary hatred that we have sworn against Czarism and against the French moneyed aristocracy.

When you dare, you and your newspaper lackeys, to applaud a Liebknecht, a Mehring, a Luxemburg, a Zetkin, as the inflexible enemies of the Hohenzollerns, dare you deny that they are ours, our faithful comrades, our comrades in battle? We are united with them against you and against your chiefs, with the unalterable unity of revolutionary warfare.

Perhaps you console yourselves with the thought that we are few in number? We are greater in number than the police souls of every grade believe. In your official myopia you do not see the ghost of rebellion that is arising from all the places of suffering and martyrdom; you do not see it spreading through France, through Europe, in the suburbs, in the workmen's dwellings, in the country places, in the shops and in the trenches.

You imprisoned Louise Soumoneau in one of your jails; but have you thereby diminished the despair and the despondency of this land? You can arrest hundreds of Zimmerwaldists, after having ordered your press agents to besmirch them again and again with police suspicions; but can you return the husbands to their grieving wives? Can you restore the sons to their suffering mothers, the fathers to their children, strength and health to the sick and debilitated? Can you return, to a betrayed, exsanguinated people, the trust in those who have deceived them?

Jules Guesde, get out of your military automobile. Abandon the gilded cage in which the capitalist state has imprisoned you. Look about! Perhaps then fate will have pity, for the last time, upon your enfeebled tragical old age, and let you hear once more the dull noise of approaching events. We expect them, we cause them, we prepare them! The fate of France would be too terrible, if the *via dolorosa* of its working masses did not lead to revenge, to our revenge, where there will be no room for you, Jules Guesde, and for yours. Expelled by you, I leave France with the deep certainty of our triumph. Over and above your head I send brotherly greetings to the French proletariat, that is preparing for great actions. Long live, without you and against you, Jules Guesde, Socialist France!

Leon Trotzky.

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