GERMAN INFLUENCE ON THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

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Coming as it did during the World War, the Russian Revolution of 1917 at once captured the attention of the world. The effect of the Revolution was expected to contribute greatly to the outcome of the War, and both the Central Powers and the Entente watched with undisguised interest as the events of the February-March and October-November Revolutions unfurled. Germany's war position, however, was not one that could permit her to wait patiently on the sidelines for revolution to bring desolation to her Eastern enemy. Because it appeared that a separate peace with Russia would bring decided military advantages to the Central Powers, Germany immediately set forth to encourage and contribute to the Russian Revolution in the hope that Russia, as a direct result of her internal wounds, would be forced to withdraw from the War. German influence on the Revolution was deliberately perpetrated, therefore, through the mediums of propaganda and agentry, the immediate aim of all German efforts being the separate peace.

It is by no means easy to determine to what degree the course of the Revolution was molded by German conduct. However, the available material of such documentary sources as *Fall of the German Empire 1914-1917*, *Documents of the German Revolution*, edited by Ralph Haswell Lutz, and *Documents of Russian History*
1914-1917, edited by Frank Alfred Golder, provide a wealth of evidence on the matter. Also, the memoirs of such participants in the period as Lloyd George, Maurice Paleologue, Bernard Pares, and Bruce Lockhart were quite useful in completing this study. Leon Trotsky's three volumes on The History of the Russian Revolution supplied information for practically every phase of the subject, and in dealing with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk John Wheeler-Bennett's The Forgotten Peace was an excellent source of material. The books of the members of the German General Staff, Ludendorff, Hoffmann, Falkenhayn and Hindenburg, were the most conclusive sources on matters concerning the German viewpoint, and the German Generals are quoted frequently.

It should be noted that throughout the study all dates, with the exception of those mentioned in directly quoted material, have been changed to fit the Western calendar.
CHAPTER I

ADVANTAGES AND PROBABILITY OF A RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
FROM THE GERMAN VIEWPOINT, 1914-1917

Germany, upon her venture into the Great War, faced two formidable foes—Russia on the Eastern front and the Anglo-French forces in the West. Of the two, Russia was always to be considered the lesser enemy, but as long as she could raise any sort of arms against Germany and her allies, the Central Powers were unable to turn their undivided attention to the West, where the final war decision was to lie. For this reason, and with the aim of forcing Russia to an early separate peace, Germany persistently strove toward encouraging internal chaos in Russia; and her policies exerted both direct and indirect influence upon the course of the Russian Revolution.

Germany's international position in 1914 was not an enviable one. The nation bordered on complete isolation, and if there was ever a period in the course of history demanding special prudence and vigilance from her statesman, it was certainly that which preceded the World War.¹ In the absence of rapid and decisive victories on both fronts, the Central Powers could have but small hope of success. The general trend of war events later proved clearly that

the main chance of success lay for Germany in throwing her efforts behind the forces of the Russian Revolution. The success of this policy on the part of Germany postponed her defeat for another six months.2

The general situation of the Central Powers had become extremely difficult by the middle of September, 1914. The retiring movements which were connected with the Battle of the Marne had, at any rate, come to an end. The German Western army faced the enemy again; yet the front between the Oise and Rheims was only maintained with difficulty against the assaults of the on-coming enemy. In the Champagne, too, the German lines were not yet consolidated.3 In addition, the danger of an effective outflanking movement threatened from beyond the Oise. The German right wing, which stood on this river without any reserve worth mentioning, was hanging in the air. The Allied powers were continuing the movement of strong forces westward. Whether the formations which had been drawn after September 5 and later from the German Armies in the Vosges and the Argonne, where the Allies' pressure was lighter, and which were either on the march or ready to start, would arrive in time, could not be foretold.4

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2 Ibid.
4 Ibid., pp. 10-11.
The weakening of the Western front which had taken place during the rearrangement of the command in the East before the Battle of Tannenberg, after General von Hindenburg had taken over the command of the German Eighth Army, still made itself gravely felt. The numerical superiority of the enemy in the West, that had existed from the outset, was considerably increased thereby. Also, the Russians were greatly superior in numbers to the Allied German and Austro-Hungarian armies opposed to them. On both fronts the German fighting strengths had been reduced.

According to General von Falkenhayn, Chief of the General Staff of the Army in the Field, the root of the original plan of German campaign was to first seek a decision in the West. At any rate, to restrict the forces employed in the East to a minimum, so long as the front in the West was not securely established. These conditions had not been approximately realized in September of 1914. Of the prospects on the Russian front at this time the General wrote:

... There was no hope of finishing them before the enemies in the West had either won a decisive success or had so strengthened themselves with their almost unlimited resources as to leave little prospect of any German success over them. The fact that the Russians in 1914 acted contrary to the intentions here ascribed to them, probably being fully aware of the German schemes of concentration, is no proof to the contrary.5

It was assumed that, if worst came to worst, the new

5 Ibid., p. 16.
formations which were training in the Empire at home would suffice to hold the Eastern situation in hand until the severe winter would have brought operations to a standstill there.

In the East the Russians were retiring about the middle of September out of East Prussia, but it was known that fresh Russian forces were massing. At the time it seemed as though any further successes on the part of Russia over the Austro-Hungarian forces would destroy the hope of inducing the Balkan nations, principally Turkey, to join the Central Powers. As far as human calculations went, Russia would not be able permanently to meet the demands of such a struggle and, at the same time, to effect the reconstruction of her whole economic life, which was necessitated by the sudden closing of the western frontiers and of the Dardanelles.

For Germany these reflections pointed to the necessity of an immediate, speedy and ample support of her allies. However, any weakening of the Western Army was inexpedient, and if it succeeded, the most effective operation, that of directly relieving the German allies had to be abandoned. General von Falkenhayn left the political leaders in no doubt as to the seriousness of his view of the general military situation. He started with the assumption that there was no reason to despair of winning the war but that the issue of the war had been rendered altogether uncertain by the events on the Marne and in Galicia.6 England

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6 Ibid., p. 25.
at this time was attempting to win the war by starvation and attrition. It was to be hoped that with careful economy of Germany's and her allies' means, this plan would not be successful. A very much longer duration of war than was generally assumed was to be reckoned with. General Falkenhayn commented:

If the political leaders had at their disposal any practicable method for the opening a way to an understanding with the enemy—whether in the East or in the West was all the same from a military point of view—it was advisable to employ it."

The offensive begun by the German Ninth Army and the Austro-Hungarian Army at the end of September on both sides of the Upper Vistula did not obtain its object. The German allies were not able to hold the Russians in the San sector. The Russians not only succeeded in driving in the Austro-Hungarian northern flank on the left of the Vistula, but also in threatening to encircle the northern flank of the Ninth Army in Warsaw. Again and again urgent appeals for assistance came from the Eastern front to the West from the middle of October onwards. But the position in the West had to be maintained and the request for additional troops was denied.

In January of 1915 there was circulating on the German homefront what General Falkenhayn referred to as "the unfortunately widespread catchword 'the war must be won in the East'." Even peoples in high leading circles inclined to

the opinion that the Central Powers could actually force Russia to her knees by force of arms. The general labeled it "a grave mistake to believe that our Western enemies would give way if and because Russia was beaten." 8

By April of 1915 the serious attacks of the French and the English during recent weeks had left the German front in the West unshaken. 9 Conditions on the German portion of the Eastern front, between the Baltic and the Pilitza, were not so favorable. This front stood firm although the Russians, as far as military value was concerned, could not be compared with either the English or the French. The persistence of the enemy's offensives diminished from week to week. The enormous losses which the Russians had suffered in their reckless attacks during the winter in the Carpathian mountains could only be made good by bringing up ill-trained troops. The Russians were short of arms and ammunition. In the spring of 1915 the Germans planned for a break-through into the Russian front from Gorlice to Gromnik in order to make the enemy's position untenable as far as the Lupkow Pass. The Russians were unequal to the heavy fire and the break-through succeeded.

By July of 1915 Russia had suffered defeat after defeat and the consequences of the Gorlice-Tarnow battle for Russia and the failure of the Italian Army had strengthened Germany's
conviction that she could win the war. At the end of 1915 Germany had been compelled to abandon her intention of conducting the operations in the West in such a way that the French and English would lose all hope of changing the situation in their favor before "France bled to death." They had been compelled to be satisfied in the Western theatre with holding the line they had already won. They had not yet reached the goal in the East they had set for themselves—total destruction of the Russian armies.

The campaign of 1916 was to bring Germany closer to her goal for the Eastern front. In the second half of March the Russians were badly beaten. The offensive power of Russia was almost paralyzed, but the ability to win a real victory in the East was difficult. The Russian troops could always withdraw into the vast confines of her territory and return to fight again. For the Russians the opening of the Battle of the Somme was the signal for redoubled efforts and at the moment Field-Marshall von Hindenburg took over the conduct of affairs the general situation was serious. "It had never been anything else since September 14, 1914," General Falkenhayn concluded. Still, he felt that at the end of 1916 the position of Germany, contrary to claims, was not yet desperate.10 The strain at the homeland was very great, but Germany was still in a position of "holding out."

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10 Ibid., p. 326.
How greatly improved would be Germany's position of "holding out" if Russia could be forced out of the fighting! The longer the war lasted the greater for Germany were the dangers and difficulties, and the more imperious grew the demands of the army and navy for spiritual and moral reinforcement. "How often had I not hoped for a revolution in order to lighten our military burden?" states General Erich von Ludendorff.11 And how often since 1914 had Germany looked into Russia for signs of such a revolution.

During the agitated week which preceded the outbreak of the war, the view that Russia could and would not fight was prevalent in Berlin. "Russia," it was said, "is on the verge of a revolution, and her government will not dare to draw the sword; and even should she go to war with us, her revolutionary forces will at once break loose and paralyze her action."12 This belief permeated all classes of German society during those days of tension. Government officials, business men, members of the professions and artisans all agreed on this point. Nor can there be any doubt that the persuasion that Russia was rendered impotent by impending revolution was one of the chief factors in determining Germany's policy.13

12 E. H. Wilcox, Russia's Ruin, p. 1.
13 Ibid.
Germany's belief in the imminence of a Russian Revolution was no new idea, created from the confused emotions of the crisis. For nearly a year, German travellers to Russia had all brought back the same story, which had gained importance as time went on. The revolution in Russia was not a sudden and unexpected eruption of a volcano that had given no warning or shown no symptoms of disturbance. Every visitor to Russia during the early part of the century had heard the rumbling of it beneath the surface of events.

Naturally enough, the political attitude of Germany toward Russia had undergone a complete transformation in August of 1914. Before this date Russia's senseless war with Japan and the first revolutionary outburst which followed it convinced the Germans that there was no need to stand on ceremony with Russia, "although sometimes, in their lucid moments," relates Sazonov, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1914, "they seemed to recognize the presence of great, although hidden, forces in Russia, and to acknowledge her right to future development." More often, continues Sazonov, they were inclined to place Russia on a level with Austria-Hungary as a political force and to accord the minimum of consideration to Russia's claims and demands.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{14}\) Sazonov, op. cit., p. 168.
enticement of Russia into the Teutonic alignment by wean-
ing the Tsar away from his English and French alliances. The
preservation of the monarchical principle, as vital to the
Hohenzollerns as to the Romanovs, was a serious deterrent to
the natural hostility felt by the Kaiser at the growing Pan-
Slavic aspirations of his Eastern neighbor, and he limited
his diplomats, therefore, to two courses: they urged Russia
toward her disastrous adventures in the East, counting on
Japan to keep the Russian Bear occupied on his Eastern frontier,
and, as an extra precaution, they poured fuel on the national-
istic fires forever smouldering among the non-Slavic elements
in the Tsar's empire.

But with open warfare declared, the family ties between
the reigning houses and the inviolability of the monarchical
principle could not stand in the way of Germany's eventual
knowledge that Russia was indeed not on the level with Austria-
Hungary as a political force. The resistance of the Russian
armies seriously upset German strategy, successfully divided
German forces, and, in the end, contributed to her downfall.

The war had been going on but a few months when the
German Government set to work to make trouble in the Russian
camp and to separate Russia from her allies. Being well-
informed of Russian internal conditions and of growing jeal-
ousies between the Tsar and Grand Duke Nicholas, the Germans
proceeded to fan these sparks of jealousy into a flame by
spreading false information among the soldiers. The next
move was to bring about a separate peace. For this purpose use was made of people close to the Russian Court. The Grand Duke of Hesse, brother of the Tsarina, and Maria Vasilchikova, a friend of the Empress and Emperor, did their best to draw Russia away from the Allies. When her letters remained unanswered, Maria Vasilchikova came to Petrograd to plead her case. When all their efforts failed, Count Eulenburg, Marshal of the German Court, wrote to Count Fredericks of the Russian Court on the same subject. But to all the flatteries, scares of Yellow Peril, and promises of the Straits, Nicholas II turned a deaf ear. His last words to the army were that the war "must be continued and brought to a victorious end." 15

A separate peace with Russia had always been prominent in the thought of the German people. As early as the autumn of 1914 General von Ludendorff reports that "I received 'authentic' news of the presence of Count Witte in Berlin." 16

Relating this incident the General states:

This was, of course, no more than an empty rumor, England and France having then too firm a hold on Russia. Sturmer had for a long time now been the Premier, and there was again talk of the possibility of peace being secured through his activities. Naturally, peace with Russia would have been more welcome to me than the whole Polish army, with the whole Kingdom of Poland thrown in, to which, as a native of the province of Posen,

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15 Frank Alfred Golder, editor, Documents of Russian History 1914-1917, p. 40.
I naturally had a strong repulsion. The Polish army could at best provide only a few divisions, which were not to be weighed in the scale against the relief which we should experience of the disappearance of Russia from the ranks of our enemies.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 476.}

To bring Russia to a separate peace would solve many problems for Germany. The final overthrow of Russia and Roumania would completely change the military prospects of the Central Powers. The best part of the army which Germany and Austria had been compelled to maintain on their Eastern front would be free to take part in operations on the West; in France and in Italy. Also, one of the likeliest hopes which the Central Powers had of obtaining supplies of food and certain essential raw materials was in the exploitation of Russia.

The consequences of the desertion of the Allied cause by Russia as analyzed by the Allied Military Conference when it met near the end of July in 1917 would involve the following:

\begin{itemize}
  \item **Political.** It would modify the political aims of the Entente. It is therefore, suggested that the Governments should at once consider and decide what would be the new political aims to be pursued.
  
  \item **Economic.** It would place at the disposal of the Central Powers the vast resources of Russia, especially grain, and thereby greatly minimise the efficiency of the blockage.
  
  \item **Morale.** It might result, especially in the case of the smaller Allies in the Balkans, in a profound depression which might cause them to seek a separate peace. It is practically certain that Roumania would be compelled to share the fate of Russia and that, in consequence, the Bulgarian
forces, and even a certain number of Turkish divisions, might be free to augment the forces at the enemy's disposal.\textsuperscript{18}

All these factors would amount to decided advantages for Germany should she be able to promote a separate peace. That Germany welcomed every evidence of domestic strife in Russia is a certainty. The importance which the military heads attached to the expected benefits from a revolution in Russia finds expression in a memorandum by General von Ludendorff to his First Quartermaster-General. On September 14, 1917, he wrote:

\begin{quote}
... Russia is drifting toward internal dissolution, and thus disappears as an important opponent. Her internal conditions are bound to lead to a crisis in the matter of fuel-and-food-provisioning. These conditions will react upon Roumania. Affairs in the East have taken a decisive turn in our favor. The rest of the Entente Powers have no longer been able to count strongly upon Russia and Roumania.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{19}

Taking everything into consideration, it is curious how slow the German Higher Command was to perceive the real trend of events in Russia, in spite of its available channels of information. Russia's military strength had flickered out with the collapse of Brussiloff's last offensive in July, but it was not until November that the Germans ventured to reduce the number of their divisions in Russia to less than eighty.


one-third of their total strength in all theatres. It was at that time, according to Ludendorff, that the idea of an offensive in the West first originated. During November and December twenty-four German divisions were transferred from Russia to the West. 20

While Germany was doubtless right in believing, in the summer of 1914, that Russia was on the eve of another revolution, she was absolutely mistaken in her inference that a European war would partecipate the outbreak. The war had, in fact, exactly the opposite effect. In no other war did the civilian population play such a visibly active part as in the World War. At the outbreak of hostilities, party differences were laid aside, coalition governments were formed, and national unity was achieved. England and France made use of this unity to enlist in the service of the Government captains of industry and commerce and public-spirited citizens in general. It seemed for a time as if Russia would pursue a similar policy. In his declaration of war Nicholas II said:

\[\text{... let domestic strife be forgotten. Let the union between the Tsar and His people be stronger than ever, and let Russia, rising like one man, repel the insolent assault of the enemy.}\]

Whatever differences of opinion existed between the reactionaries and liberals before August, 1914, disappeared immediately after the declaration of war. All parties in the

21 Golder, op. cit., p. 78.
Duma, from the reactionaries to the moderate Socialists, rallied around the Emperor and promised their support. They were carried away by a spirit of idealism and by the vision of a better day for Russia and the world. For the first time in his reign, the Tsar was popular and in agreement with the representatives of the people.

It is completely understandable that the later unsatisfactory progress of the war should not be long in producing internal chaos in Russia. The enormous casualties suffered by the Russian armies undoubtedly killed the "will to war" of the peoples in Russia. The national life had been dislocated by the over-mobilization of the country's manhood, and the harshness and inefficiency of the bureaucracy caused widespread unrest. Apart from these factors, few Allied statesmen or soldiers had realized either the degree to which the economic life of Russia depended on Germany, or the powerful ramifications of German influence in all grades of Russian society. The economic interdependence of the different parts of Russia on their vulnerable inland lines of communication was also a vital element which had not been sufficiently appreciated. The German blockade of Russia was just as effective in its consequences as that of Germany by the Allies.²²

²²Temperley, op. cit., p. 5.
two and a half million killed, or forty per cent of all the losses of the Entente. Discussing these startling figures, Sazonov wrote:

I am profoundly convinced that the downfall of the Russian Empire could only have happened because from the very beginning of the war Russia found herself in incomparably worse conditions than her allies. Could she have fought shoulder to shoulder with them, she would undoubtedly have successfully carried out the tremendous task that had fallen her lot. But she was deprived of the chief factor which had insured victory to her allies—of the possibility, namely, of closely co-operating with them and being able to share their material resources.23

In the months preceding the revolution discipline in the Russian army was badly shaken. There were reports of officers' complaints, of soldiers disrespectful to the command; their treatment of horses, of military property, even of weapons was indescribably bad. The report of the Petrograd Police gives a vivid impression of the spirit of the troops in October, 1916. According to this document, the representatives of the Union of Zemstvos belonging to the Constitutional Democratic Party took an extremely pessimistic view of the conditions at the front and in the rear:

Particular interest in this respect (says the report) is due to the account of a commissioner of the Union who visited Riga and other places in connection with the organization of the supply of foodstuffs. He says that the atmosphere in the army is very tense, and the relations between the common soldiers and the officers are much strained, the

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result being that several unpleasant incidents leading even to bloodshed have taken place. The behavior of the soldiers, especially in the units located in the rear, is most provocative. They openly accuse military authorities of graft, cowardice, drunkenness, and even treason. One everywhere meets thousands of deserters perpetrating crimes and offering violence to the civilian population. These express their regret that "the Germans did not arrive," that "the Germans would restore order," and so on.24

A similar viewpoint of the state of the Russian army was recorded by Leon Trotsky. He wrote:

The first days of war were the first days of disgrace. After a series of partial catastrophes, in the spring of 1915 came the general retreat. The generals took out their own criminal incapacity on the peaceful population. Enormous tracts of land were violently laid waste. Clouds of human locusts were driven to the rear with whips. The external rout was completed with an internal one. In answer to alarmed questions from his colleagues as to the situation at the front, the War Minister Polivanov answered in these words: "I place my trust in the impenetrable spaces, impassable mud, and the mercy of Saint Nicholas Mirlikisky, Protector of Holy Russia" (Session of August 4, 1915). A week later General Ruszky confessed to the same ministers: "The present-day demands of military technique are beyond us. At any rate we can’t keep up with the Germans." That was not the mood of the moment. Officer Stankevich reports the words of an engineer of the corps: "It is hopeless to fight with the Germans, for we are in no condition to do anything; even the new methods of fighting become the causes of our failure."25

As early as June 1915 the German General Staff had already received notice of the lowered morale of the Russian

army. In answer to a report on this matter General von Falkenhayn replied to the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army:

In the report concerning the internal conditions in Russia which Your Excellency (the Chief of the Representative General Staff of the Army, Berlin) sent to me with your letter of the 19th instant, there is among other things a reference to the low morale which dominates the Russian Army. Similar descriptions are often received by me here. Nevertheless, I believe that I must warn against them so that our people will not accept the view that the Russian Army is already an outworn instrument in the hands of its leaders. A very important number of the Russian regiments have fought remarkably well in the last battles. Where this is not the case with certain troop units it was mostly due to the fact that they lacked arms, equipment, and munitions.

The power of resistance of the Russian Army in its entirety is not yet by any means fully broken.26

Excerpts of the conversations which took place at a conference of the Russian Commanders-in-Chief at headquarters less than a year later would have been more encouraging to the German general. At this conference on December 30-31, 1916, the following pertinent statements were recorded:

**General Ruzski** (Northern Front).- Riga and Dvinsk—the misfortunes of the Northern Front, especially Riga. These two places are hot-beds of propaganda.

**Brusilov** (Southwest Front).- Quite right. When the Seventh Siberian Corps came from the Riga district it was completely under the influence of propaganda. The soldiers refused to fight. There were cases of mutiny. One officer was killed. It was necessary

to take severe measures; to shoot several men, and to change the commanding officers, and now the corps is improving.

Evert (Western Front) . . . . It is necessary to put in supplies the empty central and food warehouses. Instead of having a month's provisions on hand we live on daily imports. We are under-supplied and undernourished . . . which reacts banefully on the spirit of the soldiers . . . the local supplies are also exhausted . . .

Ruzski. The general opinion is that we have everything but it is impossible to get anything. For example, in Petrograd the poor man is in need but the rich man may have everything. We lack internal organization.

Shuvaev (Minister of War). At the outbreak of the war we had to feed 1,300,000 soldiers and now we feed ten million. To this number should be added about two million workmen. It is not right to give everything to the Army and nothing to those who work for the Army . . .

Gurko (Commander of Sixth Army). There is plenty of meat in Siberia but we cannot get it here because we need three hundred locomotives which we do not have. Our railways are functioning badly, all the railway men were sent to the front at the very beginning of the war and there is no one to repair the locomotives.27

The gradual demoralization of the Russian Army resulted in a corresponding lack of fighting strength at the front. At the beginning of 1917, despite the terrible experiences it had suffered, the Russian Army was still a force of great numerical power. Its weakness was mainly behind the front, and at the front its chief deficiency was munitions, but the requisite supplies of food and clothing were also lacking.28 Eventually, however, the soldiers no longer cared why or for

27 Golder, op. cit., p. 225.
what they were fighting. To them the struggle became the "Tsar's war." War-weariness had overtaken almost every fighting unit, and recruiting within Russia went from bad to worse. The police were unable to handle the slackers who hid in the forests and in the grain fields.\(^29\) "Long before the destruction of the Czarist regime" March 12, 1917) wrote A. F. Kerensky in The New York Times of May 22, 1927, "the army at the front had developed acute indications of disintegration."\(^30\) By January 1917 more than a million deserters were roaming about in the rear of the army. In the first weeks of the March revolution the Russian Army ceased to exist as a fighting force.

The smouldering embers of revolution within Russia was undoubtedly fanned to a flame by evidence of the unsatisfactory progress of the war. Still, contributing factors upon which Germany sought to obtain her hopes of eventual chaos were ever present. Most historians and observers of the period, including Lloyd George, attribute the main cause of the revolution not to the war but to the Tsarina and Rasputin, with the Tsar as the unconscious head of the conspiracy.

The story of the reign of Nicholas II is the story of desertion of the throne by one class after another until it ultimately stood alone without any support and crumbled like

\(^{29}\) Golder, op. cit., p. 220.

\(^{30}\) Louis Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, p. 15.
a giant with feet of clay. The process of disintegration was hastened by the war, but it was not solely due to it. The throne might conceivably have been saved by an effort of will on the part of the sovereign, but that will was non-existent.

In 1904 when the Empress gave birth to a son the throne was laid open to all sorts of charges of duplicity. The child was a victim of an incurable illness and since no relief could be expected from human aid, the Tsar and his wife took refuge in every form of mysticism. The wonder-workers with which they surrounded themselves were self-seeking and intriguing "cliques." But neither Rasputin nor functionaries can really be held responsible for the downfall of the empire; they were merely the visible symptoms of the moral decay of that force which for three centuries had been the only creative force in the history of Russia.

In reality, the World War broke out suddenly at the very moment when Russia's internal struggle had reached an acute stage. Unfortunately, both the Tsar and the Government misunderstood the situation completely. They failed to seize the opportunity of putting the affairs of state into better order. Acting on the advice of his wife, the Tsar tried to turn the tide in such a way as would benefit autocracy. If the victory had been won, he might have succeeded, but events proved too strong for him. The uncertainty of whether or not the army would hold together, and the foolish behavior of the bureaucracy at home brought about serious circumstances.
A fatal step was made by the Tsar when on August 20, 1915, he took over the command of the army. By doing so, he left the control of things at home to the Tsarina, who generally caused a great deal of conflict in whatever moves she made. On the matter of her handling of the Government, Trotsky remarked:

After Nicholas' departure to the army in the capacity of fictitious commander-in-chief, the tsarina began openly to take charge of internal affairs; the ministers came to her with reports as a regent. She entered into a conspiracy with a small camarilla against the Duma, against the ministers, against the staff-generals, against the whole world--to some extent indeed against the tsar. 31

The Tsarina had been instrumental in bringing about the appointment of Sturmer as foreign minister of Russia, and this was a source of much comment since Sturmer was believed to be pro-German and in favor of a separate peace. At the time of the appointment the Cologne Gazette reported:

... we Germans have no reason to complain of the change that has taken place in the heart of the Russian Government. Sturmer will offer no obstacle to the desire for peace which from now onward will be born in Russia. 32

The Tsar's decision to take command of the army was not only fatal from a military point of view, but from that of internal politics. It meant the total estrangement of the

31 Trotsky, op. cit., p. 58.

throne from the country. Under the Tsarina the Government floundered, and during the last months of the reign the country was under the control of Protopopov, a man of unbalanced mind. In such circumstances the slightest incident was sufficient to kindle the fires of the revolution, which began by the looting of several bakers' shops in the last days of February, 1917.

The personality of Nicholas II was a contributing factor to his downfall. The impression of people who knew him personally was that as a private citizen the Tsar would have enjoyed some measure of success. In his home life he was a loving husband and father, but as a monarch he was a miserable failure. The Tsar's many letters to his wife are the best of all testimony to the indifference which he seemed to feel toward the problems of his position. From day to day during Russia's death struggle drags along the record of his apparent unconcern:

Today I saw our fine fellows in Odessa at grand inspection. (He wrote April 14, 1915) Visited two hospitals. Lovely summer-like weather.33

And on May 12, 1915: "Warmest thanks for news and dear letter. Divine weather; the lilac has come out in bloom ..." 34

33 The Letters of the Tsar to the Tsarina, 1914-1917, as edited by C. E. Vulliamy, p. 49.

34 Ibid., p. 56.
On May 7, 1917, when Mackensen was bombarding Przemysl, and Lutkov had fallen the day before, Nicholas wrote:

Best thanks for sweet letter. Tell her that I was touched by her note. The news is unsatisfactory. I wish you a happy journey, and hope that it will not prove fatiguing. I kiss you fondly. Nicky. 35

At the time, when, according to Sir Bernard Pares, the Russian losses were 3,800,000 on June 11, 1915, Nicholas wrote to his wife:

Have arrived safely. During the journey had heavy warm rain. Thanks for news. There is nothing specially bad to report. I hope you will feel quite strong again . . . 36

In a telegram of May 25, 1916, in which he mentioned the loss of the "Hampshire" with Lord Kitchener on board a week previously, Nicholas said:

Sincerest thanks for your letter. Once more we both send you, with all our hearts, our best wishes. I long for you terribly. The loss of Lord Kitchener must indeed be very distressing for Georgie. I kiss you tenderly. 37

In a reply on December 18 of 1916 to his wife's letter informing him of the murder of Rasputin the Tsar declared himself "horrified and shaken" but almost in the same sentence he mentioned the "heavy frost." 38

Nicholas did not seem to grasp the significance of anything that was going on. He seemed to be incapable of understanding the real meaning of events, and he watched one

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35 Ibid., p. 53.  
36 Ibid., p. 56.  
37 Ibid., p. 190.  
38 Ibid., p. 312.
crisis after another with the alternate placidity and timid-
ity of a child. A strange example of resignation, indiffer-
ence, concealment or restraint is found in a telegram sent
to the Tsarina March 2, 1917, shortly before his forced ab-
dication: "Arrived here at dinner-time. Hope that everybody's
health is better and that we shall soon see each other. Close
embrace."39

An equally vivid picture of how opposite was the nature
of Alexandra to that of Nicholas can be traced in the lines
of her correspondence to him. Her writing was characterized
by the dominance which she exercised over the weaker Nicholas,
and a correlation of her letters with political events proved
that she assumed the responsibility and the power of govern-
ing Russia. Such an example is found in a letter of June 23,
1915, in which she advised Nicholas on a political matter
and urged him to put his faith in Rasputin. The letter reads:

... Remember you have reigned long, have far
more experience than they--N. (the Grand Duke) has
only the army to think of & success--you carry the
internal responsibilities on for years--if he makes
faults (after the war he is nobody), but you have
to set all straight. No, hearken unto our Friend,
believe Him. He has yr. interest & Russians at
heart ... 40

Subsequent events were to reveal that Nicholas should
have indeed "set all straight." It was just a short while
before the revolution that Sir Henry Wilson noted in his

diary that "it seems as certain as anything can be that the
Emperor and Empress are riding for a fall." The notation
continued:

Everyone--officers, merchants, ladies--talk
openly of the absolute necessity of doing away
with them ... They have lost their people,
their nobles, and now their army, and I see no
hope for them; there will be terrible trouble
one day here.41

The terrible trouble of which Sir Henry Wilson wrote was
not long to make its appearance. Internal dissatisfaction
with the monarch and his wife, the tragic events of the war,
and general domestic confusion were joining together to
bring about Germany's greatest hope for Russia--revolution.
From the early days of the war, Germany had looked for it,
had counted on it, and had planned to exploit it for the
benefit of her war aims; and at last the Russian people seemed
ready for it to occur. Germany was more than willing that
they should have their wish.

41 Note from the diary of Sir Henry Wilson, as quoted in
CHAPTER II

THE QUESTION OF THE GERMAN-BOLSHEVIK CONSPIRACY

No study of the influence of Germany on the Russian Revolution would be quite complete without a detailed examination of the alleged German-Bolshevik conspiracy, which was to create such wide-spread debate and defensive discussion throughout the world. The lengths to which Germany was willing to go in order to promote revolution in Russia hinge on the evidence of this matter. At one time there were people in all countries of the world who believed that the leaders of the Bolshevik movement were German agents and that Russia's second great social upheaval of 1917 was conceived in Berlin. Kerensky and the Provisional Government believed it. The United States published documents to prove it; and all the Entente nations did much to spread the story. Only time and sound, historical testimony have arranged the facts of the case into their proper perspective.

It is not unnatural that Germany should be accused of instigating a foreign revolution to further her war aims. It had been hinted throughout Europe that the date of the Bolshevik uprising was known in Berlin beforehand,¹ and the

¹James Mayor, The Russian Revolution, p. 75.
circumstantial evidence of the "sealed car," and the question
of where the Bolshevik Party obtained its financial backing
heaped fuel on the propagandist fire which the factions that
wished to destroy Bolshevism were quick to seize, and which
the Allies, as enemies of Germany and the Bolshevists, as
willingly used.

Even the personality and philosophies of Lenin gave
authenticity to the cry of "German Spy" that went up against
him. Here was a revolutionist who classified himself as an
"internationalist" owing no allegiance to any country. His
one aim in life was to kindle a revolution not only in Russia
but throughout the whole world, so it is a small wonder that
the world could suspect him of betraying Russia. "Who will
not sacrifice his fatherland for the triumph of the social
revolution,"2 were Lenin's own words, and those words were
to be taken at their literal value. The Russian poet, N. M.
Minsky, who was at one time associated with Lenin, gives the
following compendious description of the Bolshevik leader:

Men and conditions are nothing to Lenin but a
means to accomplish his aims. This is why some of
his former associates now call him a hangman. But
he is really a monomaniac, a man with a fixed idea.
Whoever met for the first time this ungainly, poorly
dressed, somewhat round-shouldered, bald-headed man,
with his impenetrable Mongol face and slow move-
ments would take him for a small bureaucrat, and
would never figure he was face to face with one of
the most fearless, crafty and wilful maniacs of our

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2John Wheeler-Bennett, The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and
Germany's Eastern Policy, p. 5.
time. Only after scrutinizing his narrow sharp eye and unforgettable smile, might one guess the extraordinary will-power concealed behind the ordinary mask of his face.\(^3\)

The original charge of friendship with the German Government which was brought against Lenin and his followers dates back to the days before the revolution. The outbreak of the World War found Lenin and Zinoviev in a little village in the environs of Cracow where they had been directing the action of the Social-Democratic Party in Russia. Like other Russian subjects living in Austro-Hungary, they were arrested; and the circumstance of their release has never been satisfactorily explained. It is said that the police found special grounds for suspicion against them in some statistical diagrams on the agrarian question, which were in their possession and which at first were believed to be plans of fortifications.\(^4\)

But they were soon set free "apparently on the insistence of the German General Staff," to quote Sir Bernard Pares on the matter. Pares continues:

\[\ldots\text{ and in September 1915 he, (Lenin) with a small number of extremists from various countries, took part in a conference at Zimmerwald in Switzerland, at which he demanded with his accustomed vigor that the imperialist war must be turned into a class war; and at a further conference at Kienthal in April he again urged the same course. His defeatist literature was circulated without difficulty among the Russians in the prisoners camps in Germany and Austria.}\]^{5}


Concerning Lenin's release, G. A. Alexinski, a well-known Russian politician and a member of one of the earlier Dumas, has stated that, at a meeting in Paris with Ganetski (Furstenberg), the latter said to him: "As soon as I heard of the arrest, I dashed to Cracow, and I succeeded in obtaining both for Lenin and Zinovieff the right of free passage to Switzerland." When Ganetzki was asked in what capacity he was allowed to meddle with Austrian official proceedings, he was silent, and his boast did a good deal to strengthen the suspicion, which subsequently arose, that he was one of the main intermediaries between Lenin and the German Government. The Austrian Socialist leaders Victor and Friedrich Adler are also said to have had a hand in the liberation of the two Bolsheviks. However, the finally decisive factor seems to have been the direct intervention of the Minister President Sturgkh, who considered that Lenin's activity on the side of the frontier would be in the highest degree advantageous for the Central Empires, and its ultimate result would be confusion in the political life of Russia.6

An account of the Austrian Socialist leaders' efforts to obtain Lenin's release is found in David Shub's Lenin A Biography. Shub relates that Adler visited the Austrian Foreign Minister in Lenin's behalf, assuring him that Lenin's attitude toward the Tsar would be most useful to the Austro-

6Wilcox, op. cit., p. 235.
German cause. Lenin, if free, would be able to conduct active propaganda against the Allies and the Tsar, Adler argued. This reasoning impressed the foreign minister, and the conversation continued:

Minister: You say then that Lenin is the greatest foe of the Allies?

Adler: Even more than yourself, Your Excellency. 7

Subsequent events justified Adler's attitude, for no sooner had Lenin entered Switzerland than he started his violent defeatist propaganda.

The most important accusation that was to be made against the Bolsheviks in regard to their relationship with the German General Staff developed from the fact that, immediately after the February-March Revolution, Lenin was transported through Germany on the way to Russia in a train obtained under the auspices of the German General Staff. It has been estimated that at the time of this first uprising and the displacement of the Tsar, there were about one hundred thousand prisoners and political exiles released from the Siberian prisons by a decree of the Provisional Government. 8 The Provisional Government also opened the doors of Russia to citizens exiled from the country; and thus, Lenin, who was in Switzerland,

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7 David Shub, Lenin A Biography, p. 131.
8 "Back from Siberia," Literary Digest, LIV (April, 1917), 1180.
and Trotsky, who was in New York, were legally free to return to the homeland.

Transportation for Lenin's return was not an easy matter. In an article published in Petrograd immediately before his arrival there, Lenin stated that the British and French Governments refused to allow him to pass through territories controlled by the Allies. A telegram was sent by Lenin to Ganetsky in Stockholm on March 30, 1917, expresses the futility of such a plan of return. Lenin wrote:

Your plan impossible. England will never allow me transit, but will sooner intern me. Milyukov will deceive us. Only hope is to send somebody Petrograd and insist on exchange interned Germans through Soviet Workers' Deputies. Wire.

The final plan to travel through Germany was, according to Lenin, devised by the old Social Democrat, L. Martov. His scheme proposed that the German Government should allow the Russian exiles to pass through Germany in exchange for a corresponding number of Germans and Austrians interned in Russia. It was at first decided to request that the Swiss Government act as intermediary, but this move was rejected when the Swiss Government replied that the Entente Powers would view the action as a break in the neutrality agreement. The men in charge of these negotiations was Robert Grimm, one

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9 Mavor, op. cit., p. 78.
of the leaders of the Swiss Socialist movement; and at this turn of events, Grimm sought the aid of another Swiss Socialist, Fritz Platten.\textsuperscript{1} Platten then presented the German Embassy in Berne with a copy of the plan, stating that he would be personally responsible for the conduct of the exiles; and within a few days the German Government gave their approval. Before the arrangements were finally completed, we find reference to the proceedings in a telegram sent by Lenin to Grimm on March 31, 1917:

\begin{quote}
Our party definitely decided accept offer for Russian emigrants to pass through Germany and to organize transit at once. At present we number ten passengers. We absolutely cannot agree to further delay. Protest strongly against it and are travelling alone. We insistently beg you to end negotiations and, if possible, to send us decision tomorrow.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

Following the final agreement, of which the main points were that some thirty odd emigrants should be allowed to return to Russia whatever opinions they held on the war, that the car in which they were transported should be inviolable, and that those who were allowed to pass should endeavor to secure the return of an equal number of German and Austrian prisoners of war, Lenin and other such well-known revolutionaries as Kamenev, Lunacharsky, Radek, and Krylenko rode in a special car attached to a train leaving Switzerland for

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\textsuperscript{11} Adriadna Tyrkova-Williams, \textit{From Liberty to Brest-Litovsk}, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{12} Hill and Mudie, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 421.
\end{flushleft}
Germany April 8, 1917. The group subsequently arrived in Petrograd on April 16, 1917.

Leon Trotsky's detailed account of the arrangements for the "sealed car" is marked with open admiration for Lenin's cleverness in handling the situation.

In the organization of this unusual trip through hostile territory in wartime, the fundamental traits of Lenin as a statesman expressed themselves—boldness of conception and meticulous carefulness in its fulfillment.

He continues:

... Inside that great revolutionist there dwelt a pedantic notary—one who knew his function, however, and drew up his paper at the moment when it might help in the overthrow of all such notarial acts forever. The conditions of the journey through Germany were worked out with extraordinary care in his unique international treaty between the editorial staff of the revolutionary paper and the empire of the Hohenzollerns. Lenin demanded complete extra-territoriality during the transit: no supervision of the personnel of the passengers, their passports or baggage. No single person should have the right to enter the train throughout the journey. (Hence the legend of the "sealed car!") On their part the emigrant group agreed to insist upon the release from Russia of a corresponding number of German and Austro-Hungarian civil prisoners.

At the same time a joint declaration was drawn up with several foreign revolutionists. "The Russian internationalists who are now going to Russia in order to serve there the cause of the revolution, will help arouse the proletariat of other countries, especially of Germany and Austria, against their governments."

So speaks the protocol signed by Loriot and Gilbeaux from France; Paul Levy from Germany, Platten from Switzerland, by Swedish left deputies and others. On those conditions and with those precautions, thirty Russian emigrants left Switzerland at the end of March. A rather explosive train load even among the loads of those war days. 13

According to Eduard Bernstein, the German Socialist leader who was to cause so much trouble for Lenin's group, the whole idea of sending Lenin through Germany originated with General von Hoffmann. However, there is no available evidence to substantiate this claim. In the matter of Lenin's trip through Germany, the initiative seems to have definitely come from Lenin himself—in the very first form, indeed, from the Menshevik, Martov. The German General Staff only consented to the plan, and the reasons which motivated its actions are in accordance with Germany's hopes for the Revolution.

Commenting along these lines, General Hoffmann has said:

"We naturally tried, by means of propaganda, to increase the disintegration that the Russian Revolution had introduced into the Army. Some man at home who had connections with the Russian revolutionaries exiled in Switzerland came upon the idea of employing some of them in order to hasten the undermining and the poisoning of the moral of the Russian Army. He applied to the deputy Erzberger, and the deputy of the German Foreign Office. And thus it came about that Lenin was conveyed through Germany to Petersburg in the manner that afterwards transpired.

I cannot say if the German General Headquarters was cognizant of this measure. The Commander-In-Chief in the East knew nothing about it. We only heard of it months afterward, when the foreign newspapers began to reproach Germany about it and asserted that we were the fathers of the Russian Revolution. This assertion, which is as false as so much of the enemy propaganda, cannot be denied emphatically enough. As I have already said, the Russian Revolution was brought by England; we Germans, who were at war with Russia, had unquestionably the right, when"

the Russian Revolution did not lead to peace, as at first had been expected, to augment the disorders of the Revolution both in the land and in the Army.

In the same way as I send shells into the enemy trenches, as I discharge poison gas to him, I, as an enemy, have the right to employ the expedient of propaganda against his garrisons. On the other hand, at the same time as Lenin, there appeared in Russia a number of Bolsheviks who until then had lived as political refugees in England and Sweden.

As I have already said, I personally knew nothing of the transport of Lenin through Germany. However, if I had been asked, I would have scarcely have made any objections to it, as at that time nobody could foresee the fatal consequences that the appearance of those men would have for Russia and for the whole of Europe. 15

Germany's approval of the plan to send Lenin to Russia as outlined by General Hoffmann was a decidedly practical one from their position and point of view at the time. Trotsky imagined that Ludendorff may have said to himself, "Perhaps relief will come from that side," 16 and Lloyd George commented that Germany's calculation that Lenin would be an element of discord in Russia and thus help to break up Russian unity "was sound." 17 At the Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences of radical Socialists in 1915-16, Lenin had proclaimed a policy of general strikes, of sabotage, and of domestic civil war in each of the belligerent countries to stop the World War by means of revolution. Thus the way would be cleared for the

17 War Memoirs of David Lloyd George 1917-1918, p. 76.
new international Socialist federation and thus would Russian workers take the lead in ending the war by "the greatest proletarian revolution in history." With such ideas in his baggage, small wonder that the German General Staff felt confident that, while he was setting up "dictatorship of the proletariat" in Russia, Germany would win the war. An article by Ludendorff published February 26, 1921, in the German Army Weekly confirms such a hope:

The (First) Revolution had so weakened the Russian Army that the German General Staff considered it feasible to shatter it by a vigorous offensive. Unhappily we had a very inadequate force at our disposal. At the same time, the more complete and decisive Russia's collapse the better for us. The Revolution in Russia afforded us an opportunity, first to compel that country to make peace, and second to start a successful offensive in the West.

By sending Lenin to Sweden the Chancellor believed he could speed up the Russian Revolution and greatly strengthen the peace currents already known to exist in the Russian Army and nation. For the German General Staff the main thing was to render Russia's army machine impotent as speedily as possible.

We did not know who advised the Imperial Chancellor to help Lenin reach Sweden. We assumed at Headquarters the Social Democrats had recommended it. Up to this time the German General Staff knew nothing whatever about Lenin, not even his name. But its assumption as to what he could accomplish was subsequently confirmed.18

The evidence of the "sealed car" was to have repercussions around the world, but the charge that the Bolsheviks

18Ludendorff in Militar-Wochenblatt ("Army Weekly"), as quoted by Edgar Sisson, One Hundred Red Days, p. 384.
received German money to carry out their purposes was equally as influential in molding public opinion against Germany and Bolshevism. The charge maintained that in 1915 and 1916 when Lenin was living in Berne, he co-operated with a Major of the German General Staff, and received seventy million marks for the purpose of defraying the cost of his revolutionary agitation in Russia and countries allied with Russia. Other prominent Bolsheviks, including Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Radek, were allegedly given financial assistance by German authorities and bankers in Stockholm and Copenhagen.19 An article in the Literary Digest of April, 1921, quoted Eduard Bernstein "who is a sincere opponent of Prussian militarism," as declaring that he had positive information that in 1917 the German General Staff furnished Lenin with at least 50,000,000 marks.20

In connection with Lenin's journey to Russia in 1917, the pamphlet, The German-Bolshevik Conspiracy, issued by the Committee on Public Information, Washington, D. C., October, 1918, cited as a cause for the preservation of the Bolshevik regime in Russia the support which Lenin received from the German government all through 1918; and even Helfferich, who in August, 1918, spent ten days in Moscow as German Ambassador and who considered himself an authority on Russian affairs,

20 "The Bolshevik German Partners," Literary Digest, LXIV (April, 1921), 18.
thought that but for the German support, the Bolshevik regime would long since have been overthrown by the Russian people.\textsuperscript{21}

The publication by the United States Government of the famous "Sisson Documents" upon which the official pamphlet, \textit{The German-Bolshevik Conspiracy}, was based greatly assisted the circulation of the story that the Bolsheviki were German agents and had received German gold. These documents were a collection of material obtained by Edgar Sisson of the United States Committee of Public Information then in Russia which purported to prove conclusively the connection between the Bolshevik leaders and the German High Command. Their accuracy was vouchef for by prominent Slavonic scholars of the United States; but there was much controversy as to their validity at the time of publication and they were eventually held to be forgeries almost generally.\textsuperscript{22} Some months before Sisson had acquired it, the collection had been offered to and refused by the British Foreign Office, who rightly suspected its authenticity.\textsuperscript{23}

On the question of German financial aid to the Bolsheviki one is forced to draw the conclusion that the hundreds of thousands, or rather millions, spent by Lenin and his followers,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Joseph A. Berlau, \textit{The German Social Democratic Party 1914-1921}, p. 204.
\item \textsuperscript{22} John Reed, \textit{Ten Days That Shook The World}, p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Wheeler-Bennett, \textit{The Forgotten Peace}, p. 42.
\end{itemize}
were furnished them from some source which possessed millions at its disposal. Only banks and state exchequers have the possibility of subsidising propaganda on such a scale. Bolshevism was of no advantage to banks; they were rather a menace, and of all the States, Germany and Austria were the only ones interested in the destruction of the Russian people through the medium of the Bolsheviks. Therefore, one is faced with the solution that the millions of rubles spent by the Bolsheviks upon agitation and preparation for the seizure of power might possibly have come to some extent from German sources.\footnote{Tyrkova-Williams, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 291.}

Under the old Russian regime there were a few rich men who sympathized with even the most extreme revolutionists and contributed to their funds. From some of these it is conceivable that the Bolsheviks obtained a portion of their resources. It seems certain, however, that they were indebted for a not inconsiderable part of their funds to Germany—how much may never be known. The Provisional Government at the time of its fall was inquiring into this matter. If evidence did exist and was in the hands of the Political Police, it was probably destroyed with the premises of the police department in the second Revolution; if it was in the Ministry of Justice, it has probably been destroyed by the Soviet Government.\footnote{Mavor, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 154.} On July 26, 1917, the Executive Committee of
the Soviet passed resolutions demanding prosecution of those Bolsheviks who had incurred suspicion of receiving money from Germany, but these resolutions had no consequences. 26

In addition to the "evidence" of Lenin's trip through Germany and of having received German gold, the charges against the Bolsheviks as German agents included open intrigue. On November 7, the day of the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks, the following letter is alleged to have been sent by one of the branches of the German General Staff to the "Council of the People's Commissars":

"As per agreement made in Kronstadt in July, 1917, between members of our general staff and the leaders of the Russian revolutionary army and democracy, Messrs. Lenin, Trotsky, Raskolnikov, and Dibenko, the Russian branch of our general staff in Finland commandeered officers to Petersburg for the information of the intelligence branch of the staff. At the head of the Petersburg branch are to be the following officers who know the Russian language perfectly and who are conversant with Russian conditions: Major Leobertz, to be known as "Major"; von Belke, to be known as "Schott"; Major Bauermaister, to be known as "Bear"; Lieutenant Hartvin, to be known as "Heinrich". The intelligence branch, as per agreement with Messrs. Lenin, Trotsky, and Zinoviev, will have to watch the foreign missions and military-delegations and the counter-revolutionary movement, and will also do the intelligence and counter-intelligence work in the interior of their fronts. For this purpose agents are to be sent to different cities. At the same time we inform you that the following advisers to the Government of the People's Commissars have been appointed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Herr von Schenemann; and to the Ministry of Finance, Herr von Poll.

The chief of the Russian branch of the General Staff
O. Rausch, N. Wolff, Adjutant. 27

26 Ibid., p. 109.  27 Ibid., p. 163.
The authenticity of this letter would be difficult to prove or disprove. Indeed, the entire evidence against the Bolsheviks is difficult to prove or disprove. The only conclusion which can be drawn from the foregoing material, however, is that German imperialists undoubtedly permitted Lenin to pass through Germany hoping that the revolutionists would serve them while the revolutionists were actually exploiting the friends of the Kaiser for their own ends. Lenin, above all, was an opportunist who wished to keep alive the Revolution, and if a special train from Ludendorff or financial aid and advice from the Allies helped this end, he felt justified in accepting them. Nevertheless, the consequences of the charges of treason against the Bolsheviks gave them many a difficult moment after their return to Russia. According to Trotsky, "The demand for slanders against the Bolsheviks had reached such intensity that a supply could not fail to turn up;" and he titles the prosecution which Lenin and his group underwent in Russia in July of 1917 as "The Month of the Great Slander."

"The Month of the Great Slander" started early in July with the announcement in the Russian press that material had been discovered connecting Lenin with the German General Staff. The primary source of this material was the testimony of a certain Ermolenko, a former agent in the Russian Intelligence
Service who had been dismissed and who later took service with the Germans. In the service of the Germans, his duty was reporting secrets and promoting a separate peace; and the crux of his testimony was that German officers, Captains Shiditsky and Liebers, in contracting with Ermolenko for these services, informed him in passing "without any practical necessity and evidently merely in order to keep up his spirits," that besides himself Lenin would be working in Russia in the same direction. That was the foundation of the whole affair.

Still later in the month other evidence turned up. As Trotsky explained:

However, when people seek long, especially if they are armed with power, they find something in the end. A certain Z. Burstein, a merchant by official calling, opened the eyes of the Provisional Government to a "German espionage organization in Stockholm headed by Parvus," a well-known German social democrat of Russian origin. According to the testimony of Burstein, Lenin was in contact with this organization through the Polish revolutionists, Ganetsky and Kozlovsky. Kerensky wrote later: "Some extraordinarily serious data--unfortunately not of a legal, but merely of a secret police character--were to receive absolutely unquestionable confirmation with the arrival of Ganetsky in Russia, who had been arrested on the border, and were to be converted into authentic juridical material against the Bolshevik staff".

The testimony of the merchant, Burstein, concerned the trade operations of Ganetsky and Kozlovsky, between Petrograd and Stockholm. This wartime commerce, which evidently had recourse at times to a code correspondence, had no relation to politics. The Bolshevik party had no relation to this commerce. Lenin and Trotsky had publicly denounced Parvus, who combined good commerce with bad politics, and in printed words

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29 Ibid., p. 86.
had appealed to the Russian revolutionists to break off all relations with him. When Kerensky recognized the evidence against Lenin as "extraordinarily serious," the prosecution of the Bolsheviks continued on a somewhat larger scale. Kerensky returned from the front to demand decisive measures against the Bolsheviks, and the Provisional Government resolved to bring to trial all the leaders of the "armed insurrection." However, the military detachment sent to the apartment of Lenin for purposes of search and arrest had to be content with search; for although Lenin was still in Petrograd, he was hiding in a fellow worker's apartment.

Rumor then carried a hundred stories—that Lenin was on a destroyer, that he had fled to Germany in a submarine. Actually, in company with Zinoviev, he was living in a forest near Petrograd. He eventually crossed to Finland for a while but later returned and lived secretly in Petrograd.

A decree of the Ministry of Justice was published late in July indicting on a charge of state treason Lenin, Zinoviev, Kollontai and a number of other people. This decree stated the charges as follows:

The leaders of the Bolsheviks being Russian citizens did, according to a preliminary agreement between themselves and other parties, with the aim of aiding other states engaged in hostile activities within the borders of Russia, enter into an

agreement with the agents of the said governments to co-operate in the disorganization of the Russian army and rear for the purpose, with monies received by them from these states, they did organize a propaganda among the population and troops, summoning them to an immediate refusal of military activity against the enemy, and they did also with the same ends in view, during the period from the third to the fifth of July, 1917, organize in Petrograd an armed insurrection.31

"In the assault upon the Bolsheviks," writes Trotsky, "all the ruling forces, the government, the courts, the Intelligence Service, the staffs, the officialdom, the municipalities, the parties of the Soviet Majority, their press, their orators, constructed one colossal unit."32 As an example of the "assault" he relates that the paper of "the liberal Moscow professors" printed a communication that in a search in the editorial offices of Pravda a German letter had been found in which a Baron from Gaparanda "welcomes the activities of the Bolsheviks and foresees what a legitimate rejoicing this will cause in Berlin."33

The Bolshevik Party had been forced by the adverse publicity to go underground, but their press continued to pour forth effective propaganda, which undoubtedly contributed much to their later return to power. By the end of August the "slander" had already begun to exhaust itself; for in the last analysis, as Trotsky said, "nothing remained but Lenin's trip through Germany." In Trotsky's opinion the very fact of Lenin's trip,

advanced oftenest of all as proof of Lenin's friendship with the German government, in reality proved the opposite. An agent would have travelled through the hostile territory concealed and without the slightest danger, he contended. Only a revolutionist confident of himself to the last degree would have dared to openly transgress the laws of patriotism in wartime. 34

Although it was to the advantage of the Allied Powers to encourage the belief in the connection between the Bolsheviks and the German General Staff, there were several prominent persons who spoke in behalf of the personal honesty of both Lenin and Trotsky. Notable among these was Colonel Raymond Robins of the American Red Cross who remarked that "if the German General Staff bought Trotsky, they bought a lemon." 35 Bruce Lockhart of the British Government agreed with this observation. Of Trotsky he wrote: "He struck me as perfectly honest and sincere in his bitterness against the Germans." 36 Sir George Buchanan also gave Trotsky a bill of relative health when he said "even if he does take money from the Germans for his own purposes he is not their agent." 37

The activities of the so-called "German agents" at the Brest-Litovsk peace conference when the eyes of the world were

34 Ibid., p. 98.
35 Bruce Lockhart, British Agent, p. 222.
36 Ibid., p. 224.
37 Fischer, op. cit., p. 32.
upon them substantiated these views. At the conference propaganda and appeals over the heads of the government by the Bolsheviks became the order of the day. In fact, almost in the very hour of the opening of the conference December 22, 1917, Trotsky announced in Petrograd that "yesterday a freight car full of propaganda for peace and socialism was dispatched to Germany." "Although we are negotiating peace with Germany," declared the Foreign Commissar, "we continue to speak our usual revolutionary tongue." The stenographic record of the conference contains no proof of Bolshevik sympathy for Germany or Austro-Hungary.

The unproved accusation that Lenin, Trotsky, and the Bolsheviks generally were paid or unpaid accomplices of the Germans played its important role during the war. Of equal importance—not to the world, but to Russia—was the charge of German intrigue that was laid at the door of the Russian Empress. "It is only because we absolutely know the real mind of the Empress with regard to Russia, Germany and the war that we cannot fall into the mistake—which was made by practically the whole Russian public—of regarding her almost as a traitor," Bernard Pares has remarked. He relates that besides himself he heard no other view except from one person, Sir George Buchanan, "who assured me earnestly that he could stand guarantee for her loyalty."
The amazing transformation which the power of the Tsar suffered during the War was, of course, an open secret, and in the rumors the name of the Empress was often coupled with those of her German relatives and of the enemies of Russia in general. There was a firmly established belief in the existence of a pro-German party of which Alexandra Feodorovna was reputed to be the leader. This legend seems to have been given some semblance of reality by the large number of officials closely connected with the Imperial household and government circles who bore German names. The influential conservative newspaper Novoe Vremya amused itself and its readers by publishing long lists of the members of the Russian embassies and by pointing out that in some of them there were to be found either no Russian names, or very few.40

A trivial enough but interesting fact was the anxiousness of Nicholas II to remove the many existing traces of German influence in Russia. At the very beginning of the war, he substituted the Slav name of "Petrograd" for the German name "Petersburg." Many a time since he showed himself to be shocked and annoyed at the German words which were met with in profusion in the nomenclature of official titles and ranks. The Emperor made up his mind to remove all these evil-sounding names from the hierarchical lists and replace them by words

40 Florinsky, op. cit., p. 67.
drawn from the national idiom\textsuperscript{41} In the army there was much bitterness against the Empress who was even openly accused of supporting the cause of Germany. On the evening of the Revolution, this charge was generally accepted as true. On February 12, 1917, Madame Rodzianko wrote:

I have just had a visit from an officer arriving from the army. He says that the feelings against both of them (the Emperor and the Empress) are stronger than they have ever been before. It is openly said in the Riga sector that she supports all German spies whom, on her orders, the commanding officers let go free.\textsuperscript{42}

In his memoirs, General Denikin testifies:

In the army there was loud talk, unconstrained both in time and place, as to the insistent demands of the Empress for a separate peace, her treachery in the matter of Field-Marshal Kitchener, of whose journey she was supposed to have told the Germans, etc. . . . This circumstance played a colossal role in determining the mood of the army in its attitude to the dynasty and the revolution.\textsuperscript{43}

On December 23, 1916, French Ambassador Maurice Paleologue related in his diary that:

The public in Moscow was furious with the Empress. In drawing-rooms, shops and cafes, it is openly said that the Niemka, the "German Woman" is about to ruin Russia and must be put away as a lunatic.\textsuperscript{44}

The accusations against the Empress followed her even after the fall of the Tsar. In a March issue of the Petrograd

\textsuperscript{41} Maurice Paleologue, \textit{An Ambassador's Memoirs}, III, 121-2.
\textsuperscript{42} Florinsky, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 232.
\textsuperscript{43} Trotsky, \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. II, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{44} Paleologue, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 121.
Gazette, the Grand Duke Cyril Vladimirovitch had a long interview published in which he attacked the fallen sovereign:

I have often wondered (he wrote) whether the ex-Empress were not in league with William II; but each time I have forced myself to dismiss so horrible a suspicion.45

No attack or accusation of treason to come out of the war seems as unjustified as that of Russia upon the Empress. Even Kerensky believed that the rumors of her treason were untrue and Trotsky wrote, "No evidence of a connection between the Rasputinists and the German Staff was discovered after the revolution."46 Although she was publicly condemned for desiring a separate peace, the actual news of the negotiations for a separate peace was bitter grief to the royal family. The ex-Emperor, remembering the accusations so often brought against his wife, asked indignantly, "Who are the traitors?" and she in a remarkable letter of December 22 wrote "What an infamy! That the Lord God should give peace to Russia, yes, but not by way of treason with the Germans." In all her letters there is the same indignation, and above all, at the thought of any German protection. Another strain which runs through them is her constant unwillingness to leave Russia, which she regarded as "breaking the last link."47

47 Pares, op. cit., p. 488.
In the final analysis, to make use of Trotsky's phrase, nothing remains of the charge that Germany was the father of the Russian Revolution except Lenin's trip through Germany and the fact that the Russian people thoroughly despised their Empress. In reality, no analysis of the available evidence can hold that Germany originated the uprisings. Germany merely took the advantage of an opportunity when she saw it and made the most of it. The type of role which she actually played in influencing the course of the Revolution was summarized by General Ludendorff when he said:

If anyone says to me that the Russian Revolution was a happy accident for us, I always protest that the Revolution in Russia was no lucky accident, but the natural and necessary consequence of our conduct of the war. Things happen in a curious way in modern war. Formerly armies made war against each other; now it is a war of peoples. In former times the war was ended by the hostile army being conquered; now the war ends by the hostile people being conquered. Before this war we none of us knew this, and we have simply had to learn it. There are no more decisive battles such as there were in earlier campaigns, or rather, the battles decide, as the battle of Tannenberg decided, not directly but indirectly. Military defeats shake the confidence of the peoples in their governments. The opposition is strengthened and gains power; the government falls, and if, as in Russia, the whole system is rotten and ripe for decay, there is a universal collapse. No, the Russian Revolution is no lucky accident; it is the consequence of our victories.\(^48\)

CHAPTER III

GERMAN CONDUCT DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

I awoke. It was nine in the morning. The telephone rang and rang.

"Hello."

"Is that you, Vasil Vitalevich?" asked Shingarev.

"It is time to go to the Duma. It has begun."

"What are you talking about?"

"It has begun. There is an order to dismiss the Duma, the city is in an uproar. Let's hurry. They are occupying the bridges. We may never get there. An automobile has been sent for me. Come at once to my place and we will go together."

"I am coming."

This happened on the morning of March 12, 1917. During the last few days we had been living, as it were, on a volcano. Petrograd was without bread--transportation had broken down because of the unusually heavy snows, frosts, and principally, of course, of war. There were street disturbances. It was not, of course, a question of bread. It was the last straw. The trouble was that in that large a city it was impossible to find a few hundred people who felt kindly toward the Government. That's not all. The Government did not feel kindly toward itself. There was not a single Minister who believed in himself or in what he was doing. . . . There was not one who could bang his fist on the table. . . . Lately the Ministers even stopped coming to the Duma . . . .

As we were driving Shingarev said: "That's the answer. Until the last I continued to hope that they would somehow see the light and make concessions. But no, they dismissed the Duma. That was the last opportunity. Any agreement with the Duma, no matter what kind, was the last chance to escape revolution."

"Do you think this is the beginning of a revolution?"

"It looks like it."

"Then it is the end."

"Perhaps the end. Perhaps the beginning."
"No, but I cannot believe this. If it is revolution then it is the end."¹

With the enactment of the foregoing drama so vividly related in the memoirs of V. V. Shulgin, a member of the last Duma, the "lucky accident" for which Ludendorff claimed credit was ushered in to offer Germany her most likely opportunity for the long-awaited separate peace. The achievements of Germany and the German Army in the early war years had been impressive, but the beginning of 1917 found the Central Powers in a moment of greatest difficulty. In March of 1917, in the hour of that great difficulty, the Russian Revolution once again raised German hopes for a military victory. "It was evident that such an event would produce a great effect on the moral of the Russian Army," General von Hoffmann was quick to perceive, and he commented:

The idea naturally occurred that it would be a good thing to accelerate the collapse of the Russian Army by a few strong thrusts on the Eastern Front. However, on the other hand the Commander-In-Chief in the East had not the necessary means to do so and on the other our Foreign Office entertained the delusive hopes of being able to enter into negotiations with the new ruler, Kerensky, which would eventually lead to peace.²

It was Germany's plan for promoting a separate peace with Russia that was to dominate her conduct throughout the revolutionary period. In regard to the West, the German High

¹The Memoirs of V. V. Shulgin, Golder, op. cit., pp. 258-259.

²General von Hoffmann, The War of Lost Opportunities, pp. 172-173.
Command could be certain that the governing minds of the Fatherland, and the feelings of the majority of the nation, were on their side. "Here was a moral factor not to be despised." But when the conduct of the operations was subsequently instructed to him, Marshal von Hindenburg found many who suggested the idea of formally sparing Russia. It was commonly believed that it would be relatively easy for Germany to come to an understanding with Russia by the methods of peace. The attitude of the Russian troops was in some places friendly, and the Germans gladly met them halfway. On other parts of the front active fighting continued, but the forces of the Central Powers kept as quiet as they could. "In April and May, and right on into June, the general military position was not such as to encourage us to seek greater activity on the Eastern Front," recalls General Ludendorff, for the Government was afraid that an attack on its part might check the disintegration of Russia. The fluctuations of mood among the Russian troops and upon the difference in spirit between the artillery and the infantry had been closely observed by Hindenburg, who drew the conclusion that at any moment the Russian troops might have dropped their sullen inertia and

4 Ibid., pp. 162-163.
turning upon the German lines. Looking back upon the wisdom of Germany's military strategy in avoiding an all-out attack, Hindenburg had this to say:

Ought we not to have attacked when the first cracks of the Russian edifice began to be revealed? May it not be that political considerations robbed us of the finest fruits of all our great victories? On the other hand, the effect of an attack in the early stages of disintegration might have been to reunite the demoralized forces of Russia.

... Even to me the decisive battle in the West, a battle which would have meant final victory, was the ultima ratio, but an ultima ratio which could only be reached over the body of a Russia stricken to the ground? Fate answered this question in the affirmative, but only two years later. For by that time our situation had fundamentally changed. The numbers and resources of our other foes had in the meantime reached giant proportions, and in the circle of their armies Russia's place had been taken by America, with her youthful energies and mighty economic powers.

I believed that in the winter of 1914-15 we could answer the question, whether we could overthrow Russia, in the affirmative. I believe it just as much today. Of course, our goal was not to be reached in a single great battle ... . The preliminary conditions for this were present, as had already been revealed, in the generalship of the Russian army commanders, though not of their commander-in-chief. Tannenberg had showed it clearly ... I have never underestimated the Russians ... .

It was Germany's fear that a fighting offensive against Russia's troops would serve to unite her fighting strength that guided Germany toward use of the most powerful weapon she was to wield for her purposes throughout the Revolution. In the years before the War the Germans had made a very thorough study of Russian. So much so, that Russians were in the habit

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6Hindenburg, op. cit., pp. 163-164.
of saying that, even not excluding themselves, the only people who used their language with a complete mastery of its grammatical refinements were the Germans. By their mutual knowledge of one another's languages, Germans and Russians were able to converse with one another freely, and that was, at the bottom, why Germany's knowledge of conditions in Russia was so much more intimate than that of the Allies. This knowledge was based on the familiarity with languages which is the only key to the secrets of other nations. And because she understood the Russian mind through the medium of their language, Germany realized the disastrous effects that might be wrought by a military offensive. Again, because she understood the Russian mind, Germany realized the powerful effect she could have upon the course of the Revolution through propaganda.

German authorities do not deny that propaganda in Russia was aided and fomented by German agents throughout the war. The only question which remains unanswered to satisfaction is the date on which Germany extensively began her campaign. Many Russian authorities are inclined to the opinion that socialist propaganda was fostered by the Germans at a somewhat earlier period than the war years; and Rodzianko, president of the fourth Duma, dates the increase of previously existing German socialist propaganda among Russian workmen from the steps taken by the Duma in February, 1914, to reorganize the Russian military system.

7 Wilcox, op. cit., p. 2. 8 Mavor, op. cit., p. 32.
On the eve of the war, in the early summer of 1914, the working people of St. Petersburg were full of revolutionary ideas, and these spread among other than the working groups. Demonstrations and meetings were held, tramway cars were overturned, telephone and telegraph poles were cut down, and barricades were built. "There can be no doubt," Rodzianko stated at the time, "that the excitement among the working class was the result of the activity of the German General Staff;" and he also attributed to German agency the agitation in the villages which occurred simultaneously.⁹

General Ruszky complained in December of 1916 that Riga was the misfortune of the northern front. This is a "nest of propaganda, and so is Dvinsk." General Brussilov confirms this: "From the Riga district troops arrived demoralized; soldiers refuse to attack, etc., etc." Rodzianko, who was in close association with officers and visited the front, concluded: "The ground for the final disintegration of the army was prepared long before the revolution."¹⁰

Proof to substantiate Rodzianko's point of view can be found in the evidence of a military report labeled Number Sixty-Four which was sent by Baron von der Goltz, Major and Military Attache, to the Imperial German Legation as early as February 5, 1915. The report informed:

⁹Ibid., pp. 42-43.
Attached is a report concerning the inner conditions of Russia in 1915, prepared by Dr. Tranjen, who has been mentioned by me already in previous reports and has in the meantime been bound to the local Imperial Legation for our purposes. He will go immediately to Bucharest in order to work out a program of action with the Russian Revolutionary Committee there.

It is proposed to prepare revolutionary leaflets for circulation in Russia. These will be distributed to the new recruits in order to bring the revolutionary propaganda into the ranks of the fighting army. The sending of emissaries is also envisaged. They will, according to present plans, also be available for military intelligence.11

The flow of German propaganda into Russia was stepped up as a matter of course when the Revolution occurred. According to Ludendorff, at the break of the Revolution, orders were given for propaganda to be set on foot at once to encourage a strong movement for peace in the Russian Army.12 Probably owing, at least in part, to the early effect of this propaganda, already, on March 27, the Petrograd Soviet had sent a wireless message to all the peoples of the world appealing for an immediate peace, instructing the populations of belligerent countries to act over the heads of their governments; and German propaganda planes had begun to shower down on the Russian trenches multitudinous offers of separate peace: "The Russian Revolution wants peace. Then why tarry?" The enemy promised, too, that not another shot would be fired by the Germans unless provoked by the Russians.13

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11 Lutz, op. cit., I, 81.  
12 Ludendorff, op. cit., II, 14.  
13 Walsh, op. cit., p. 235.
Justification of Germany's new and powerful propaganda campaign comes easily from a purely matter-of-fact point of view. "It would be naive," remarked Sazonov, "to suppose that Germany, who invented the theory that it was legitimate to harm the enemy by all possible means, should refrain from making use of it."14 And in defense of Germany's actions along these lines, Ludendorff stated:

... Should Germany neglect to use this powerful weapon, the effects of which she daily experienced in her own body? Should we not attack the morale of our enemies in the same way as they were, unfortunately but so successfully, attacking ours? This contest had first to be transferred to neutral countries, and thence into hostile territory. But Germany always lacked one mighty means of propaganda—starvation of the enemy peoples by blockade.15

Actually, according to Ludendorff, the German propaganda kept on its feet only with difficulty. The General felt that its achievement in comparison with its mighty task, was insufficient and said: "We wrought no real effect on the enemy peoples." He added:

... In the East the Russians were the creators of their own collapse, and our work there was of secondary importance. In the West the front was not rendered open to infection by the destruction of morale at home, and no success awaited the propaganda that we gradually introduced.16

At the outbreak of the World War the official propaganda of Germany was conducted by the Press Bureau of the Imperial

14 Sazonov, op. cit., p. 237.
15 Ludendorff, op. cit., I, 4.
16 Ibid., p. 454.
Foreign Office, the affiliated telegraph agencies, and foreign press bureaus. The official versions of the causes of the war and the war aims of the belligerents were circulated throughout the world. The Government also established centers of propaganda in neutral states, notably Switzerland and Holland.

The chief topics of the home propaganda were: the war of self-defense against the encircling policy of the Entente, the certainty of victory and the consequent necessity of fortitude, the violations of the laws of the land and the naval warfare by all the enemies, the historic mission and high culture of Germans, the need for national expansion and the proclamation that German victory would be good for the world.17

The chief topics of the propaganda in enemy countries were: proclamation of the certainty of German victory, proclamation of disaffection between the Entente Powers due to their divergent war aims; encouragement of nationalist and revolutionary movements within the British and Russian Empires; attempts to inflame anti-patriotic or defeatist opinion in all Entente states; and encouragement of pacifism in enemy and neutral countries.18

By word and picture, and above all, by means of the moving pictures, Colonel von Haeften sought to obtain a secure footing in neutral countries. Oral propaganda was held to be of the utmost importance. The passing of news from mouth to mouth

17 Lutz, op. cit., pp. 72-73. 18 Ibid.
was considered to be the best, because it is the most dangerous
means of propaganda. The idea is planted, and no man knows
whence it comes. Propaganda by pictures and films was also
encouraged by the formation of a special graphic department,
and "the picture and film office," and later of the Universal
Film Company, Limited. The film is a means of popular educa-
tion and Colonel von Haeften desired to employ it as such after
the war, his war organization being designed to that end. At
the same time, press propaganda was carried on by telegraphic,
wireless, and correspondence service, other propaganda and
pamphlets and lectures, and work was also done in connection
with the neutral War Press camp.19

The one purpose of the German propaganda campaign in Russia
might be set forth as the desire to win a separate peace. To
understand how much closer the German High Command believed
their desire to be because of the Revolution, it must be re-
membered that many members of the High Command, including Gen-
eral von Hoffmann, believed that the will of England was keep-
ing the Tsar from entering into peace negotiations. Hoffmann
felt that the Tsar had realized that Russia was unable any
longer to support the burden of war, and by continuing it, he
would expose his State to severe internal convulsions. But,
according to Hoffmann, "The British Ambassador in Petrograd,
Sir George Buchanan, had received orders to prevent a Russian

separate peace at any price, and he acted in accordance with his instructions when he joined Kerensky and Gutschkov in deposing the Tsar."\(^{20}\)

A very real obstacle to a separate peace had in reality been removed when Nicholas II abdicated the throne. Contrary to German belief, the Emperor was violently against a separate peace throughout his reign in wartime and he remained against it to the end. In November of 1916 a curious rumor undoubtedly fostered by the Germans had been going around in Petrograd that Russia would never be able to win Constantinople by force of arms. In any case, the rumor contended, whatever France and England may have promised, they would never allow the empire of the Tsars to annex the Straits. Germany alone, according to this propaganda, was in a position to secure Constantinople for Russia, and she had only to leave the Turks to their fate—and "she is prepared to do so if Russia will realize where her true interests lie and agree to sign peace at once."\(^{21}\)

When Sir George Buchanan of England, in conversation with the Tsar, alluded to the manoeuvres on which the advocates of a separate peace were openly engaged in so many quarters, and in so many ways, the Emperor replied: "The leaders of this campaign are traitors." When Buchanan asked if His Majesty had not heard that if Russia would agree to separate from her allies, Germany would leave Constantinople to her, the Emperor

vaguely shrugged his shoulders and said: "Yes, someone men-
tioned that to me. But who was it? I can't remember now.
Perhaps it was M. Trotopopov? In any case, I don't attach the
slightest importance to it..."22

The Revolution was almost certain proof that the peoples
of Russia were anxious to consider peace. The uprising had
taken place because the patience of the Russian people had
broken down under a system of unparalleled inefficiency and
corruption. No other nation would have stood the privations
which Russia stood for anything like the same length of time.
What it is important to realize is that from the first the
revolution was a revolution of the people. From the first
moment neither the Duma nor the intelligentsia had any control
of the situation.23 To French Ambassador Maurice Paleologue,
Miliukov said worriedly at the time:

> We didn't want this revolution to come dur-
ing hostilities; I didn't even anticipate it;
but it has taken place, as the result of other
agencies, and through the mistakes and crimes
of the imperial regime. Our business now is to
save Russia by ruthlessly prosecuting the war
to victory. But the passions of the people have
been so exasperated and the difficulties of the
situation are so frightful that we must at once
make great concessions to the national conscience.24

The German Government had established knowledge that the
revolution was a revolution for land, for bread and peace--

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22 Ibid., pp. 81-82.
24 Paleologue, _op. cit._, p. 243.
but, above all, for peace; and, far better informed as to the actual state of affairs in Russia than were the Allies, the Supreme Command at once divined that the weakest spot upon which to work was the war-weariness of civilians and soldiers alike. The whole strain of German propaganda accordingly exhorted the Russians to desert the Allies and sue for peace. "What is it that the free Russian people desire?" inquired one of the leaflets distributed in the trenches:

... Is it the attainment of the aims of the Allies which Russia has not yet repudiated, or is it the conclusion of peace, murmurs of which we seem to hear from the Russian Army? ... . If the new Russian Government, prompted by its Allies, wishes to make sure whether the German divisions and German heavy artillery are still intact upon your Western Front—let them try. Oh, when will you come to realize that your grave-digger is England?  

As Kerensky and his followers were attempting to perfect the structure of their Provisional Government, German propaganda centered its point of concentration on the Russian Army. The obvious answer to the peace aims of the Central Powers was to completely demoralize the already-disintegrating Russian fighting units; and the major portion of the propaganda was devoted to this end.

Germany understood that the soldier, since the very first of the war, did not want either to die or to fight. "But he did not want this," said Trotsky, "just the way an artillery

horse does not want to drag a heavy gun through the mud."
Like the horse, continued Trotsky, he never thought that he
might get rid of the load that had been hitched to him. The
Revolution has showed him the connection between his will and
the events of the war, and thus the Revolution meant the right
to a personal life, "and first of all the right to life in
general, the right to protect their lives from bullets and
shells, and by the same token their faces from officers' fists . . . ."26

With regard to Germany and the war, the Revolution showed
the soldier that a decision of peace might be his, and as de-
feat after defeat marked the Russian campaign, the Russian
troops became not so interested in the common enemy as they
were in reports from home. With what vigilence Germany must
have awaited the effects of her propaganda! A scene visualized
by Edmund Walsh, author of The Fall of the Russian Empire, re-
veals a Russian soldier creeping out toward the German lines,
unmolested by the watchful enemy. He reaches a crude post-
box set up near the German position, and takes out the latest
number of The Russian Messenger (printed in Berlin or Vilna,
then in German hands), and plods sullenly back to the trenches.
He reads aloud from the "news" sheet:

The English want the Russians to shed the last
drop of blood for the greater glory of England, who
seeks her profit in everything. . . . Dear Soldiers,

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you must know that Russia would have concluded peace long ago had not England prevented her...
.. The Russian people demand it; such is their sacred will.27

Such condemnation of England ran through much of the propaganda that was to reach the Russian troops. A typical example reported by the Russian Military Commission read as follows:

SOLDIERS:—There is revolution in Petrograd. Don't you see that you are being deceived? Don't you see that the English are leading Russia to ruin? The English have deceived your Tsar and incited him to fight, so that with his aid they may conquer the whole world. In the beginning the English were with your Tsar, but because he did not agree to their selfish demands, they have turned against him. They have cast your God-given Tsar from his throne.

Why has this happened? Because he had realized and made public the cunning and treacherous English schemes. The English are getting countless millions of rubles from Russia for war munitions they supply, and they alone are interested in the continuation of the war. But who is fighting this bloody war? Your own brother, the brave muzhik, who lays down his life without a murmur, not realizing that it is for England that he sheds his blood. Who else is suffering through this bloody war? Your mothers, wives, and children, whose sons and husbands were taken away almost three years ago, and who now live in hunger and destitution, suffering from the high prices and lack of food. How can we explain this want and the high prices? By the fact that profiteers, allied with England, are holding back all foodstuffs and other articles of prime necessity, so as to obtain an even higher price. The English and the speculators grow rich on the war. Open your eyes, Russian people! England is responsible for your ruin. England now acts in Russia as if it belonged to her. Soldiers, England has cast your Tsar from his throne. There is revolution in Petrograd. England is your enemy.28

27Walsh, op. cit., p. 237.
28Golder, op. cit., pp. 385-386.
With daily onslaughts of propaganda encouraging them to seek peace, to realize that the Allied Powers were their enemy and that Germany wanted to be friends with her Russian comrades, it was evident that the Russian Army gradually gave greater evidence of Germany's hopes for it. The mutiny of the Russian armed forces was a protracted and varied process. Sometimes it assumed relatively mild forms; refusal to obey orders or to go into the trenches, desertion. Sometimes it found expression in the lynching and beating of officers and commissars. The disintegration of the army was cumulative and progressive in character. The collapse of the summer offensive and the complete and ignominious collapse of the Kornilov attempted coup had a most disastrous effect on the position and prestige not only of the officers, but also of the commissars and committees; and during the weeks which preceded the Bolshevik seizure of power the tide of soldiers' revolt was rising higher and higher. And when the decisive moment of the fight for power came in Petrograd Kerensky could rally to his support only a pitiful handful of the six million soldiers who were on Russia's farflung fronts, a few military students, a few women, whose enlistment had been one of the curiosities of the "democratization" of the army, and a few hundred Cossacks.

The degree to which German propaganda contributed to the demoralization of the army can only be estimated. A foreign military observer attached to the Russian Army, the British General Knox, on returning from a visit to the Northern Front...
at the end of April, told the British Ambassador of "the deplorable state of affairs at the front." He related that the infantry was refusing to allow the guns to shoot at the enemy, and that friendly meetings between the Russian and German soldiers were not uncommon, the Russians sometimes exchanging bread for cigarettes.  

Two members of the Duma, Maslennikov and Shmakov, after a visit to the front, also told of "extreme speeches" at soldiers' meetings and the demand that the Russian Government's treaties with the Allies should be published as a guaranty that "we are not fighting for the imperialist and capitalist ambitions of our Allies." The Duma members went on to report:

The soldiers are no longer eager for battle; the talk is only of defense, and even so with fear of protecting mythical French and British capital. The rear is already considerably infected with this propaganda. Our gallant artillery and the Cossacks are not affected by this propaganda. . . .  

Undoubtedly a list of the specific causes of the mutiny of the Russian Army in the summer of 1917 would include German propaganda, which was at once defeatist and destructive of discipline. Through propaganda, an element which constantly undermined the authority of the officers was German encouragement of fraternization between the enemy troops. Reports of this were numerous. Day after day Germany insisted that

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30. Ibid.
England was Russia's enemy and that the Russian and German soldiers were "brothers."

The encouragement of fraternization on the part of the Germans had excellent results. Paleologue reported that one of the signs of the general derangement was the attitude of the Soviets and their following toward the prisoners of war. He related that at Schlusselburg the German prisoners were allowed to go about unattended in the town. Within a distance of five versts from the front, one of the French Ambassador's officers had seen groups of Austrian prisoners walking about without hindrance, and "to crown everything, a regional conference of German, Turkish, and Austro-Hungarian prisoners has demanded—and successfully—that the 'eight-hour-day' should be applied to them."31

Another example of the results of the German efforts, Paleologue recalled an incident which occurred at a concert-meeting at the Michael Theatre on May 2, 1917. Before the speakers for the evening arrived, a former Siberian convict took the platform and read letters that had been received from the front to the effect that all the Germans asked was to fraternize with their Russian comrades. Paleologue recorded in his *Memoirs* that the crowd received the news enthusiastically.32

The Kerensky government made vacillating efforts to stem the flood of propaganda which had been released over confused

Russia. A statement by the Coalition Provisional Government before the Congress of Delegates particularly condemned a resolution adopted by the Bolsheviks on the question of fraternization in the trenches. The Bolshevik resolution, which was published in Pravda, stated:

The (Bolshevik) Party will especially support the fraternization of the soldiers of the belligerent countries which has begun at the front and which has for its object the transformation of that unconscious solidarity of the oppressed into an understanding and a more organized movement toward taking the power from the hands of the Government of the belligerent countries and handing it over to the revolutionary proletariat.33

In answer to this resolution the Coalition Provisional Government replied:

We think it very important to call this resolution to the attention of our comrades and to warn them that it is dangerous for the defense of the revolution at the front.

We receive resolutions and telegrams on the fraternization daily from the front, and their general tenor is that fraternization in the trenches is dangerous and suspicious. Under the guise of fraternization, spying is going on . . . . 34

Although the bulk of German efforts to promote a separate peace with Russia was concentrated in her propaganda appeals, her activities were by no means limited to this indirect campaign. German agents infiltrated Russia throughout the revolutionary period to a degree that even now cannot be estimated. Although the Bolshevik Party vehemently repudiated the idea that they were in any way connected with Germany, even Trotsky

33 Goldner, op. cit., p. 396. 34 Ibid.
announced that the idea of German agentry was not in itself "mere raving." Of this matter he wrote:

The German espionage in Russia was incomparably better organized than the Russian in Germany. It is sufficient to recall the fact that the War Minister, Sukhomlinov, was arrested even under the old regime as the trusted man of Berlin. It is indubitable that German agents inserted themselves not only into the court and Black Hundred circles, but also among the Lefts. The Austrian and German Government had flirted from the first days of the war with separatist tendencies, beginning among the Ukrainian and Caucasian emigrants. It is interesting that Ermo-
lenko, recruited in April, 1917, was sent over to struggle for the secession of the Ukraine. As early as 1914, both Lenin and Trotsky in Switzerland had demanded in print a break with those revolutionists who were getting caught on the hook of Austro-German militarism. Early in 1917 Trotsky repeated this printed warning to the left German social democrats, the followers of Liebknecht, with whom agents of the British embassy were trying to establish connections . . .

Trotsky also stated that during the July events the Bolsheviks themselves sought for an alien and criminal hand in certain unexpected excesses that were obviously provoked with malice aforethought. Trotsky wrote in those days:

What role has been played in this by counter-revolutionary provocation and German agents? It is difficult to pronounce definitely upon this question . . . We must await the results of an authentic investigation . . . But even now it is possible to say with certainty that the results of such an investigation will throw a clear light upon the work of Black Hundred gangs, and upon the underground role played by gold, German, English, or 100 per cent all Russian, or indeed all three of them . . .

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Throughout the short reign of the Provisional Government while Russia was still at official war with Germany, the Russian war effort was impeded by reports of espionage and, at times, sabotage. At the head of many of the State factories were German subjects who could not be removed because they were under "the protection of the Minister Maklakov, some of the grand duchesses, and the court cliques." This situation suggested treason, "otherwise," stated Rodzianko, "some of the things that were taking place right before our eyes could hardly be explained." He gave as an example an explosion in a powder mill which was laid to the men at the head of the mill. These men "happened" to be of German extraction.\(^3\)

An excellent commentary on German conduct during the revolutionary period was made by Colonel Robins of the American Red Cross, who revealed that in a raid on some anarchists after the October-November Revolution, the Bolsheviks captured a set of machine guns of the newest pattern—so new (the pattern) that they were the first specimens to be seen in Russia. But the German support of the anarchists was only, after all, to be expected, Robins commented. It was in precise accordance with their favorite formula of intrigue in Russia. He went on to say:

Under the Czar the Germans had spread their influence as widely as they could among the officials of the extreme Right, who were more

\(^{3}\)Golder, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
reactionary than the Czar; and they had also sent their agents among all the revolutionary factions fighting the Czar. Under Kerensky they gave all possible aid to the friends of the deposed Czar—conservatives; and, on the other hand, they added their insincere peace propaganda to the genuine peace propaganda of the radical enemies of Kerensky. Under Lenin and Trotsky they offered support to many friends of the deposed Kerensky, some of whom accepted it, in order to restore "law and order" in Russia; while, simultaneously they sent munitions from Germany to the anarchists, in order to establish a society in Russia without law and order. They tried, of course, to keep their fingers in all Russian parties, including the parties in power; but their special favorite formula was to give special attention to the parties at the most extreme conservative Right and to parties at the most extreme radical Left at any given time, and so at all times to play both ends against the middle and against any existing Russian government at all.38

An unusual role which Germany may have played during the Revolution, after she had obtained her separate peace, is suggested by Historian Edmund A. Walsh in regard to the identity of the Comrade Jakolev who took Nicholas II on his last important "mission." On the basis of the available evidence, Walsh asserts that Jakolev, who introduced himself as an "Extraordinary Commissar," producing three documents from the Tzik, the Central Executive Committee of the new Soviet Government, the third document declaring that Jakolev was charged with a mission of "particular importance," was really Count Mirbach, the German ambassador in Moscow.39

38 William Hard, Raymond Robins' Own Story, pp. 81-82.
The nature of this particularly important mission during the time of the Tsar's unofficial imprisonment was to take the royal family out of Tobolsk, "but as your son is ill I have received a second order which says that you alone must leave," Jakolev told the Tsar. No indication was vouchsafed as to the ultimate destination, but it was thought to be Moscow; and Nicholas believed that they were planning to make him sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Walsh thinks the military history of the War and the situation on the Western Front were motivating Germany's actions in the matter. Germany had suffered a fatal check by the entrance of the United States into the arena on the side of her adversaries. With fresh and seemingly unending American forces pouring into the trenches, the German High Staff prepared for a supreme drive on Paris, and, according to Walsh, the scales hung even. The disappearance of Russia from the Allied line was followed by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which reduced Bolshevist Russia to the "status of a sullen vassal of the Teutonic Powers."

The interpreter of Germany's will and the virtual dictator of Russia's foreign policy was Count Mirbach, and Walsh contends that, fully aware of the fundamentally revolutionary character of Bolshevism, with its threat to German monarchism as well as to Russian autocracy, and perfectly willing to repudiate the dubious alliance which military necessity had obliged her to contract with Communist Russia, Germany decided on a bold move. She would restore monarchy in Russia and
place Alexis on the throne—provided the Tsar would consent to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and align Russia with the Teutonic Powers!

Walsh substantiates his theory by pointing out that the Tsar's indignant reaction to Jakolev's very first proposals and his outspoken resentment against Germany support this view: "I will let them cut off my hand before I do it." Walsh also says that the coachman who drove the team which carried Nicholas and his wife to Tiumen reported that Jakolev had sought in vain to win the Tsar over to some weighty project. Although unable to hear the exact words, the driver made out that Nicholas was always refusing—that he did not "scold the Bolsheviks, but somebody else." 40

General Ludendorff, Walsh emphasizes, gives solid ground for a similar surmise. In his Memoirs the German General wrote:

> We could have deposed the Soviet Government, which was thoroughly hostile to us, and given help to other authorities in Russia, which were not working against us, but indeed anxious to cooperate with us. This would have been a success of great importance to the general conduct of the war. If some other government were established in Russia, it would almost certainly have been possible to come to a compromise with it over the Peace of Brest. 41

If Mirbach was authorized to sound out the Tsar on this important possibility, Walsh continues, he had to get the Tsar back to Moscow, or, better still, out of Russia. It was noted

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40 Ibid. 41 Ibid., p. 194.
at Tobolsk that Jakolev was not the usual type of Bolshevist Commissar. He treated the monarch with courtesy and saluted him when he entered the cart for the trip to Tiumen. His nervous haste and ill-concealed anxiety to get this prisoner out of the danger zone indicates knowledge of some coup d'etat ahead. However, Walsh surmises, something went wrong. Either the Tsar refused point-blank to accede to the Teutonic advances, or Mirbach himself was double-crossed by Sverdlov, who permitted the escape as far as Omsk and then ordered the farce to be ended at Ekaterinburg. In any case, concludes Walsh, the final decision was abrupt and unexpected; no preparation had been made for the imprisonment at Ekaterinburg and the "death house" was requisitioned at a moment's notice.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 194-195.}

Unfortunately, from the point of view of the historian and the world, both Sverdlov and Mirbach were assassinated too soon to affirm or deny this story. Whether or not Germany actually planned to overthrow the Bolsheviks and return the Tsar to the throne is not known. However, if Walsh's theory is correct, the episode will stand as one of the few failures Germany experienced in the matter of her efforts to promote her aims through the Revolution. From the first murmurs of dissension that arose against Kerensky's government, Germany watched her hopes of a separate peace with Russia draw nearer to realization.
The pledge that had been given to the Allies by Miliukov, the new Foreign Minister in the Provisional Government, that Russia "will fight by their side against the common enemy until the end, without cessation and without faltering" was not at any time in accord with the real sentiment of the great mass of the Russian people. A few days later a "Proclamation by the Petrograd Soviet to the Peoples of the World" gave a strong hint of other sentiments which, with the help of German propaganda, were soon to sweep through Russia. This manifesto declared the success of the Russian Revolution and continued:

> The time has come for the peoples to take into their own hands the decision of the question of war and peace... Refuse to serve as an instrument of conquest and violence in the hands of kings, landowners, and bankers... Laboring peoples of all countries! We are stretching out in brotherly fashion our hands to you over the mountain of corpses of our brothers, across rivers of innocent blood and tears, over the smoking ruins of cities and villages, over the wreckage of treasures of culture, --we appeal to you for the re-establishment and strengthening of international unity. Proletarians of all countries, unite!

And on March 23, 1917, the Central Committee of the Soviet had adopted the following motions:

1. Negotiations with the working-men of the enemy countries to be opened at once.
2. "Systematic fraternization" between Russian and enemy soldiers at the front.
3. Democratization of the army.
4. All schemes of conquest to be abandoned.

When the people of Russia desired peace, the one government which thought the war must be continued had come into

43 Dennis, op. cit., p. 9.  
44 Ibid.  
45 Paleologue, op. cit., p. 268.
power. A proclamation of the Provisional Government in reference to its early war aims released on April 10, 1917, stated:

Having examined the military situation, the Russian Government has decided to tell the people directly and openly the truth.

The regime which was overthrown left the defense of the country in a badly organized condition. It weakened the whole of the country's economic organization.

The state is in danger. United national will must be created.

The Provisional Government, which has given its solemn oath to serve the people, is firmly confident that with the general and unanimous support of each one and all, it will itself be able to do its duty to the country to the end.⁴⁶

Still later, when the rising public cry for peace had distinctly made itself heard, the reorganized Russian Provisional Government again issued a statement on its policy with respect to war aims, the alliance and a separate peace, asserting that the Government rejected all sorts of separate peace and that "the Provisional Government believed that the Russian revolutionary army will not suffer the German troops to destroy our Western Allies and then throw themselves upon us with the full force of their arms. . . ."⁴⁷

It is interesting to note that despite the prevalent and honest desire of the Russian peoples for peace, both the


⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 102.
Provisional Government and the Allies gave much credit to Germany for the existence of this desire and for general revolutionary conditions. A statement issued by United States Secretary Lansing in respect to the possibility of Russia concluding a separate peace, April 23, 1917, reported:

The Department of State has received a telegraphed report on conditions in Russia. Concern is shown over reports of the possibility of a "separate peace" which have appeared in the press, evidently inspired by Germany. The telegram says that Russia is no more likely to abandon the war without achieving her object than is the United States. It is pointed out that the charge that the Imperial Administration was planning a separate peace caused its overthrow and hastened the revolution, which was brief and bloodless.

It is stated that the revolution will expedite the defeat of Germany and establishment of a general peace, permanent and universal. . . .48

Even the July revolution, which, of course, was partially stimulated by German efforts, was attributed by many not to the Bolsheviks at all but to the Germans. Sir George Buchanan, British Ambassador in Petrograd at the time, wrote a dispatch dated July 23, 1917, while the Paris Conference was in session, describing the chaos in Petrograd; and on July 16 and 17, he noted the close connection of the rebellions with the progress of the German campaign. He commented:

There can be no doubt that this so-called counter-revolution—a term which everybody interprets in his own sense—was engineered by the Germans to synchronise with their offensive.

48 Ibid., p. 97.
The news of what was passing in Petrograd was circulated among the troops at the front by German aeroplanes and by Bolshevik agitators. . . .

After the July revolt had been put down, the Provisional Government issued their statement of war policy, saying:

The criminal propaganda of irresponsible elements was used by enemy agents and provoked a revolution in Petrograd. At the same time part of the troops on the front were seduced by the same propaganda, forgot their duty to the country and facilitated the enemy piercing our front.

Viewed in retrospect the eight crowded tumultuous months that elapsed between the overthrow of the Tsar in March and the coming to power of the Bolsheviks fall into three main periods. The first period, which ended with the disorderly uprising of the Petrograd soldiers and workers in July, was one of steady deepening of the Revolution. After the suppression of the July uprising there was a very feeble and unstable reaction, which endured until General Kornilov made his unsuccessful attempt at a coup d'etat in September. After that, the tide of events flowed strongly and irresistibly up to the climactic seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in November.

Although Kornilov's coup collapsed without the firing of a shot, its political consequences were momentous. It achieved results which were precisely the reverse of those which the General and his advisers had hoped for and expected. And it


gave the dissatisfied masses just the blow that was necessary to arouse them to violent revolutionary action. Later Kerensky stated that the final turning point of the Revolution was General Kornilov's rising against the Provisional Government. He added that the Brest treaties came after that as a matter of course and for that reason, "probably no other single event has had so decisive an influence on the course of the war as the Kerensky-Kornilov imbroglio."

In no sense of the word can Germany be held responsible for the coming to power of the Bolsheviks in November of 1917. However, German conduct during the revolutionary period undoubtedly contributed to the gain in popularity and influence experienced by the Bolshevik Party. Germany had helped to make the Russian people less satisfied with their lot, with the war, and she had increased their longing for peace. And Lenin's followers reaped the profits by promising to right all wrongs. The Bolsheviks even gained directly from German propaganda. In June when representatives from Women's Councils throughout Russia were invited to an All-Russian Congress of Delegates of Soviets, Lenin delivered an impassioned attack upon the Provisional Government in phrases which subsequent comparison revealed as taken word for word from the latest German wireless propaganda.  

In turn, it cannot be denied that the Bolshevik's seizure of power directly benefited Germany. When the Party came into control of Russia, foremost stood the problem of the war. Immediately the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which had gathered in Petrograd, met on the very night of the Revolution and was pushed to the front by the Bolshevik leaders of the Petrograd Soviet. Lenin proposed, on November 8, and the Congress unanimously adopted a "Decree of Peace." This document proposed to "all warring peoples and to their governments a just and democratic peace." The first act of the new authorities, preceding even the decree on land, which abolished all private ownership, was an international document. The decree of peace, involving as it must a plan of foreign policy became, therefore, the corner-stone of the new edifice.

The revolutionary proclamation announcing the Bolshevik coup in Petrograd, which was printed as a poster, also announced plans for peace. "To the Citizens of Russia," the poster declared:

The Provisional Government has been overthrown. Governing power has passed into the hands of the agent of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the Revolutionary Military Committee, which stands at the head of the proletariat and garrison of Petrograd.

The cause for which people fought: The immediate proposal for a democratic peace, the abolition of landlordism, control of production by the workers, the creation of a Soviet government—all is secure.

Long live the revolution of the workers, the soldiers, and the peasants!

And where the German propaganda authorities had once exhorted the Russian soldier to lay down his arms, the new Bolshevik Government, to reverse the circumstance, now campaigned for peace among the soldiers of the German Army. In a propaganda release to the German soldiers immediately following the counter-revolution, the Council of the People's Commission advised:

The Provisional Government has fallen; the power is now in the hands of the Russian People, and the new Government considers the immediate conclusion of peace as its foremost duty.

We have taken every measure so that the text of our peace terms should be distributed among the belligerent powers. We now charge you soldiers to stand by us in the fight for peace and Socialism; for Socialism alone can give the Proletariat a lasting peace. It alone is in the position to heal all wounds which the war has inflicted.

Soldiers, Brothers! The shining example which your leader Liebknecht has given you, the struggle which you have been carrying on in your assemblies and in the press, finally the revolutionary spirit of the German people, assures us that your Battalion of Workers are girded for the fight for freedom.

Brothers! If you will support us, the cause of freedom is assured. All other powers will agree to a righteous and democratic peace.

If you stand by us in the fight for Socialism, then the spirit of your organization and your experience will help to bring about a universal Socialist victory. Our soldiers have laid down their arms, it is now for you to follow this standard of peace.

May Peace Triumph!
May the Socialist and International Revolution Live!

The various proclamations by the Bolshevik Party left no doubt of their willingness to conclude peace with Germany.

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55 Lutz, op. cit., p. 112.
From the very moment that Lenin assumed control of the Russian Government, the separate peace for which Germany had worked throughout the revolutionary period was practically assured. Rumors of a separate peace had existed from the very early days of the war, with every other power that had an interest in the Great War weighing the chances pro and con.

In late 1916 when the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna (to be distinguished from the much younger lady of the same name, the sister of the Duke Dmitry Pavlovich) confided to French Ambassador Paleologue her depression about the state of Russia at that time, the Ambassador voiced the opinion of practically all the Entente nations when he replied:

> Whatever may happen, France and England will go on fighting until complete victory. That victory cannot escape them now, as it is perfectly clear that Germany is as incapable of crushing them as of carrying on the war indefinitely. If Russia deserted her allies today, which is unthinkable, she would at once find herself in the camp of the vanquished. It would mean not only eternal disgrace for her, but national suicide.56

Unfortunately, time was to find the Ambassador’s statement only partially true.

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56 Paleologue, op. cit., p. 72.
CHAPTER IV

THE TREATY OF BREST-LITOVSK

In June, 1931, a defeated Kerensky sat in the Carlton Grill Room in London lunching with Bruce Lockhart of the British Government when Lord Beaverbrook came over and joined the table. With his keen interest in human psychology, Beaverbrook began at once to ply Kerensky with questions.

"What was the reason of your collapse?" he asked.

Kerensky's answer was that the Germans forced on the Bolshevik rising because Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey were on the verge of making a separate peace with Russia. The Austrians had decided to ask for a separate peace less than a fortnight before the October-November Revolution, he said.

"Would you have mastered the Bolsheviks if you had made a separate peace?" asked Lord Beaverbrook.

"Of course," said Kerensky, "we would be in Moscow now."

"Then why," said Lord Beaverbrook, "didn't you do it?"

"We were too naive," was the reply.¹

The events which were responsible for Kerensky's lunching in a London restaurant in 1931, far removed from his native Russia, could bear out the truth of the fallen leader's reply.

¹Lockhart, op. cit., p. 177.
The Bolsheviks had come to power in November, 1917, promising "bread to the workers, land to the peasants, and peace to all." The end of the World War, they believed, would bring all three; and therefore almost the first act of the Communist Government was to take steps toward a cessation of hostilities. Immediate peace was demanded by the internal situation. The country was weary of fighting; the soldiers were tired of the trenches; and the quick success of the Bolsheviks is explained, to a large extent, by their ability to exploit these circumstances. By not seeing fit to do so himself, Kerensky had indeed been naive.

In view of the fact that the failure of the Provisional Government was largely due to its unwillingness to end the World War, the peace negotiations of Brest-Litovsk represented at once one of the most vital and one of the most difficult problems of the new Soviet regime. It was a matter of life and death to win peace. The Bolshevik leaders and a comparatively small number of their convinced followers felt, of course, that there was a substantial difference between war in defense of the Soviet Republic and war in defense of the "capitalist" Provisional Government. But the overwhelming majority of the Russian soldiers in the trenches were no more inclined to fight for Lenin than they were inclined to fight for Kerensky. Their sympathy for Lenin against Kerensky was based on the belief that Lenin stood for peace and for giving land to the peasants. Peace, peace "without annexations and indemnities" if possible,
but peace at any price, was an indispensable condition of the survival of the Soviet Government; and no one saw this more clearly than Lenin, whose hard realistic mind was not intoxicated by the success of the Revolution in Russia. In defense of an immediate conclusion to a separate peace he said in January of 1918:

... Another argument in favor of immediate war is that, by concluding peace, we, objectively speaking, become agents of German imperialism, for we afford it the opportunity to release troops from our front; surrender to it millions of prisoners, and the like. But this argument too is clearly incorrect, for a revolutionary war at the present juncture would, objectively speaking, make us agents of Anglo-French imperialism, by providing it with forces which would promote its aims. The British bluntly offered our commander-in-chief, Krylenko, one hundred rubles per month for every one of our soldiers provided we continued the war. Even if we did not take a single kopek from the Anglo-French, we nevertheless would be helping them, objectively speaking, by diverting part of the German army... In other words, the underlying principle of our tactics must not be which of the two imperialisms is it more profitable to aid at this juncture, but rather, how can the Socialist revolution be most surely and reliably ensured the possibility of consolidating itself, or, at least, of maintaining itself in one country until it is joined by other countries.

From the first moment of the fall of the Provisional Government it was essential that the Soviet conclude peace. At the same time, it was imperatively necessary that the Bolsheviks hold out as long as possible against German

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2 Chamberlin, op. cit., p. 389.

annexationist demands, to utilize the negotiations as a forum from which to proclaim to the world what the Soviet Government regarded as peace conditions, to dispel, so far as circumstances would permit, the accusation that the Bolshevik were German agents, to give the German and Austrian workers an opportunity to react to the course of the negotiations and to protest against excessive demands of their own Governments. The question of how far the Soviet Government was morally obligated to resist the demands of the Central Powers was to be a subject of major disagreement between Lenin, who believed from the beginning that it was necessary to sign even a bad peace, and many of his associates in the Party Central Committee.  

In reality, the meaning of the Brest-Litovsk capitulation was summed up for Lenin in the words "breathing spell."  

"We began peace negotiations," wrote Trotsky, "in the hope of arousing the workmen's parties of Germany and Austria-Hungary as well as those of the Entente countries." And for this reason, they were obliged to delay the negotiations as long as possible to give the European workmen time to understand the main fact of the Soviet Revolution itself and particularly its peace policy.  

4Chamberlin, op. cit., p. 389.  
6Wheeler-Bennett, The Forgotten Peace, p. 115.  
7Ibid.
To fully appreciate the inwardness of the Bolshevik proposals in the matter of Brest-Litovsk, they must be regarded in the light of Bolshevik philosophy. The creed of Bolshevism which has taken its place among the constitutions of the world and was finally released to the world in 1918, might be set forth as follows:

1. The present is the period of destruction and crushing of the capitalistic system of the whole world.

2. The aim of the proletariat must now be immediately to conquer power. To conquer power means to destroy the governmental apparatus of the bourgeoisie and to organize a new proletarian governmental apparatus.

3. The new apparatus of the Government must express the dictatorship of the working class.

4. The dictatorship of the proletariat must be the occasion for the immediate expropriation of capital and the elimination of the private right of owning the means of production, through making them common public property.

5. In order to protect the Socialist revolution against external and internal enemies, and to assist the fighting proletariat of other countries, it becomes necessary to entirely disarm the bourgeoisie and its agents and to arm the proletariat.

6. The world-situation demands the immediate and as perfect as possible relations between the different groups of the revolutionary proletariat and a complete alliance of all the countries, in which the revolution has already succeeded.

7. The most important method is the mass action of the proletariat, including armed struggle against the Government power of the capitalists.

Lenin explained with the utmost simplicity the meaning of the Bolshevik's strategy in the matter of Brest-Litovsk in November of 1920, two years after the outcome of the War had repudiated the Treaty. "Brest was notable because for the

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8 Dennis, op. cit., p. 16.
first time, on a gigantically large scale amidst immense difficulties, we managed to exploit the antagonism among the imperialists in such a way that in the final analysis socialism won," he said. He went on to explain:

. . . At the time of Brest there were two colossally powerful groups of imperialist robbers: the German-Austrian and Anglo-American-French. They were engaged in a furious struggle, which was to determine the destiny of the world in the near future. If we held out, although we counted for zero from the military point of view, and from the economic point of view we had nothing, we were going straight downhill to the bottom of the pit; if we held out, that miracle occurred only because we correctly exploited the antagonism between German and American imperialism. We made enormous concessions to German imperialism and, by making concessions to one imperialism, we at the same time fenced ourselves off from persecution by both imperialisms. Germany could not set about strangling Soviet Russia either economically or politically; it had other things on its mind. We gave up the Ukraine to them; take as much bread and coal from it as you like; of course if you can take it, if you have the men to do it with. Anglo-French-American imperialism could not attack us, for we offered them peace from the start. Robins is just bringing out a big book in America which tells how they had conversations with Lenin and Trotsky, and had an agreement for the conclusions of peace. Although they helped the Czecho-Slovaks and dragged them into intervention, they were busy with their war and could not intervene.

. . . We only exploited the difference between the two imperialisms in such a way that in the long run both lost. Germany got nothing from the Brest peace except a few million puds of grain, but it brought Bolshevik disintegration into Germany. We won time, in the course of which the Red Army began to form. . .

The making of peace between Russia and Germany was a protracted affair. The setting revealed two great powers.

9 Degras, op. cit., pp. 221-222.
each as eager as the other for negotiations. The Bolsheviks had built their whole regime upon the promise of peace, and Germany still seriously needed to start negotiations in order to put down murmurs of discontent at home, to release badly needed forces for the Western front, and to appease her allies, who even more than Germany were anxious for peace. It was certainly to the relief of the Central Powers when, immediately after the second Russian Revolution in 1917, the Bolshevik Government notified the German Government of its willingness to negotiate a treaty.

Before entering into direct negotiations with the Central Powers, Trotsky proposed to the Allied ambassadors in Petrograd that an armistice be declared on all fronts. The terms of his general peace were as follows:

1. No forcible annexations of territory taken during the War.
2. Complete restoration of independence to the nationalities who had lost it during the war.
3. Nationalities not hitherto enjoying independence to have the right to decide by plebiscite whether they would be united to other states or acquire independence.
4. Safe guarding of the rights of minorities in territories inhabited by several nationalities.
5. No war indemnities, but war requisitions to be returned.
6. Colonial acquisitions to be decided on the same principle.¹⁰

Trotsky's terms reached Germany by wireless and at first, because they were of a general peace, Germany's negotiations with Russia could not be extended beyond the limits of a

¹⁰ War Memoirs of David Lloyd George 1917-1918, pp. 116-17.
general peace. Russia was obliged to wait until Germany had declared the lines of the terms to be capable of discussion to amplify them so as to make it possible for them to give a detailed answer. When Germany had declared the terms to be capable of discussion, Russia then stated that Germany's reply was a suitable basis upon which the Entente might conclude peace and that if within the fixed period of ten days the Entente had not joined in the peace negotiations on this basis, then, according to the Russian view a bad will was clearly proved, and Russia would feel herself free to enter into separate negotiations.\textsuperscript{11}

Needless to say, since a general cessation of hostilities at that time would have redounded to the advantage of the Central Powers and since many of the Allies assumed that the Bolshevik Revolution was the work of German propaganda, the Entente Countries failed to respond to the general peace terms. Throughout the revolutionary period the Allies had tended to underestimate the essential factors that had compelled Russia to make peace and they persisted in their idea that the Bolsheviks would not be long in power. Sir George Buchanan, who was quite familiar with Russia's tragic circumstances, had proposed some time before the Brest negotiations that the Entente Powers formally release Russia from her obligation under the agreement of September, 1914, thereby at one stroke recognizing

\textsuperscript{11} Peace Proposals, op. cit., pp. 261-262.
fait accompli and making a bid for continued good relations with the Soviet Government. In the separate negotiations which would follow, he suggested, national resentment in Russia would turn against Germany if peace were delayed, or had to be purchased on too onerous terms, and that, of course, would benefit the Allies.¹²

Bushanen's point of view was plausible enough to impress Lloyd George, but the Continental Allies would have none of it. The inter-Allied conference which met in Paris on November 30 suggested as a substitute to Buchanan's proposal that the Allies "proceed to a revision of war aims together with Russia, and soon as there shall be a government aware of its duties to the country and defending the interests of the country and not the enemy."¹³ So in the face of this earlier "slight" and the Allies' indifference to their peace plan, the Soviet Government had no choice but to enter into negotiations with Germany alone.

Obviously, Germany was in agreement with the idea of a general peace at this time. On December 28 the Russian Delegation was notified that their principle of a "peace without annexations and indemnities and the recognition of the right of self-determination for all peoples" would be accepted by Germany and Austria provided the Allied and Associated Powers agreed to this principle as the basis for a general peace.

¹²Wheeler-Bennett, op. cit., pp. 76-77. ¹³Ibid.
And when the Entente Countries ignored the Bolshevik peace proposals, the Central Powers were ready to start negotiations for a separate peace. On January 7, the conditions of such a peace were presented by the Central Powers to the Russian Delegation.

To understand the subsequent steps that took place at Brest-Litovsk, it must be noted that negotiations began with the Bolsheviks still playing for time and publicity. On the very day that the proceedings began the first condition that the Russians made was that of entire publicity. They demanded to have the right, at the conclusion of each consultation, to make known by telegraph or wireless the exact text of what each party had said. General von Hoffmann, the German military representative at the peace conference, remarked that he had nothing against this, but "in order to avoid the publication of erroneous interpretations on one side or the other, I suggested the appointment of an auxiliary Commission which would draw up the minutes of each meeting immediately after it had taken place."\textsuperscript{14} Hoffmann added that other Russian attempts to change the negotiations into propagandistic channels he was also able to check and that the further demand for the free admission into Germany of all Bolshevik literature and works of enlightenment he was obliged to refuse.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} General von Hoffmann, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 197-200.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
Throughout the early negotiations, a casual observer of the conference would have thought by their actions that the Russians were the victor and the Germans the conquered. The fact that a beaten Russia had been permitted to make original peace proposals had caused wide-spread comment, and, as the negotiations proceeded, the German authorities became exceedingly annoyed by Russian "high-handed" tactics. Apparently not realizing that the Russians were stalling for further time, Germany was completely taken aback when Trotsky objected to the conditions of the separate peace and left the conference January 18 and did not return until January 30.

Actually, the negotiations for the Peace of Brest-Litovsk had caused a fundamental difference of opinion between Lenin and Trotsky over accepting the terms. Trotsky did not want to accept the humiliating peace and favored procrastination, by one means or another, until there should be a revolution in Germany. Lenin, on the other hand, was willing to accept any peace so long as it would permit him time to reorganize and consolidate his new regime. Finally, even though he had returned to Brest-Litovsk on January 30, the deadlock led to Trotsky's breaking off negotiations on February 10, stating that Russia would not renew hostilities but would not accept the German peace terms.

At this step representatives of the Central Powers were aghast. Hoffmann was certain that Russia was devastated by the war years, was urgent and pleading for peace, and the refusal
of her leaders to take the role of the vanquished was incredible. As for the other Central Powers, when the Russians threatened to break off the conference, Count Czernin was "beside himself." He had brought instructions from the Kaiser not to allow the Conference of Brest to fail on any account, and if the worst came to worst, and the German demands endangered its continuation, he was even to make a separate peace with the Russians. Said Hoffmann, "his (Czernin's) nerves completely gave way," while he (Hoffmann) remained more or less unmoved, secure in the opinion that Russia had to have peace. 16

In view of the Bolshevik's latest move, there was nothing for Germany to do but to denounce the armistice. Subsequently a German Army advanced through Esthonia threatening Petrograd, and the next day the Bolsheviks accepted the previous conditions. However, perceiving that the Bolshevik tactics had been a "front" and that Russia had practically no army left, Germany issued a new ultimatum. Now thoroughly beaten and in spite of the fact that the Germans had submitted even more drastic conditions for peace than those Trotsky had rejected, Russia accepted the new ultimatum February 26, only two days after she had received it. In agreeing to the terms dictated by the enemy, G. Y. Sokolnikov read the following announcement:

The Russian delegation wish to make the following statement:

The peace about to be concluded is not the fruit of agreement between two sides. This peace, I repeat, is dictated to us at the point of a sword. We have no opportunity of examining the terms of this peace. It is clear to all that the three-day limit left to us in fact provides no possibility of subjecting the terms offered to a through scrutiny. At the same time, Germany is continuing its offensive operations against Russia. That being so, peace is being concluded in unprecedented circumstances, in an unparalleled atmosphere of violence. Since Russia has demobilized and since for its part it has ceased to wage war, the Russian delegation consider that the only dignified way out of this situation is to accept the conditions of peace in the form in which they are put forward.\textsuperscript{17}

The Treaty was signed March 3, 1918, and received the approbation of the Reichstag on March 18, 1918.

In short, by the Russian Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Russian sovereignty was renounced over Poland, Lithuania, and Courland, and their future fate was to be decided by Germany and Austria-Hungary in agreement with the inhabitants. Finland and the Åland Islands were to be evacuated (the Bolsheviks had already recognized Finnish independence). A German "police force" was to remain in Esthonia and Livonia "until security is guaranteed by their own national institutions and until public order is restored." The evacuation of the remainder of the occupied territories was to take place after the complete demobilization of the Russian Army and after the conclusion of the general peace. The Bolsheviks were to

\textsuperscript{17}Degras, op. cit., p. 46.
recognize the Ukraine Treaty of February 9, and to conclude peace immediately with the Ukraine. In the Caucasus, the district of Kars, Ardahan and Batum were ceded to Turkey.

Thus the dismemberment of the Russian Empire was rendered as complete as the Germans at that time could hope for. The economic and financial articles followed the same general lines as Germany's other Eastern treaties and were designed to make Russia a commercial preserve for the Central Powers. The Russo-German commercial treaty of 1904, which was unfavorable to Russia and had been imposed on the Ukraine a month previously, served, with suitable modifications, as the basis for the regulation of economic matters; most favored-nation treatment was guaranteed till 1925; the usual special precautions were inserted to safeguard a commercial Mittel-Europa, and, in general, all Russian imports and exports were regulated in such a manner as to insure German predominance. The ground covered by the series of treaties was immense, and no details were overlooked; on such relatively minor matters as the cost of maintaining prisoners of war and merchant shipping the Central Powers were just as insistent as on the immediate resumption of the payment to their nationals of the Russian State Debt. Finally, it should be noticed that special protection was provided for Germans in Russia, and they were expressively excepted from the nationalizing and expropriatory decrees of the Bolsheviks; this was also extended to the numerous German
colonists (about 2,000,000), who were to a large extent relieved of their allegiance to Russia.

The terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk hit the world with the impact of a blow. Even the ratification of the Treaty by the Reichstag involved long discussions and heated debates on the moral issues of the German war aims. Opposition to ratification came largely from the Socialistic factions.

Stated Dr. Eduard David, SPD writer:

We agree to the motions to refer both the treaties to the Committee. Otherwise our feelings toward the Russian treaty are still very mixed. We, too, rejoice that all along the Eastern front fighting has come to an end. . . . Still, we regret that the peace of Brest-Litovsk is not the result of a process of mutual agreement, but is obviously imposed by force . . . .

In reply to David's speech, Dr. Gustave Stresemann, German statesman, went on record as saying:

Gentlemen, yesterday Dr. David criticized the treaty with Russia very sharply as one won by superior force . . . . The German people, he said, is very uneasy over it and fears that Russia's weakness will only help England by giving free play to its expansion in Asia . . . .

At once Dr. Naumann showed that this was not so, that Russia's decay was already complete. Dr. David contradicts his own party, which admits that Russia was ruined not by the German arms but because it was impotent even before the war. . . .

What elements are there in Russia today with whom we can make an alliance? 19

The attitude of the portion of the Reichstag opposing the general terms was summarized by Philip Scheidemann, leader

18 David's Speech to the Reichstag, Lutz, op. cit., p. 779.

19 Stresemann's Speech to the Reichstag, Ibid., p. 783.
of the German Socialist Party, when he said:

The aim of the Social-Democratic policy is to end the war by a true peace of peoples after the country has been successfully defended, a peace—based on understanding—which will exclude the use of armed force in the future. This aim has not been furthered by the treaty submitted. The Central Powers had promised to effect and understanding with Russia as to the right of self-determination of the border peoples. In contradiction to this, they had in advance required Russia to renounce Poland, Lithuania, and Courland. This policy of might pursued in the East, did not take into account the interests of the German Empire, which demanded permanent peaceful relations and a close friendship between the German and the Russian peoples. We must demand that the true democratic right of self-determination of the Poles, Lithuanians, and the Courlanders shall be secured, so that permanent friendly relations with them, as also with the Russian people, may be made possible for Germany.

We cannot express agreement with the way in which the treaty was accomplished . . . . But as the state of war has actually been ended in the East by this treaty, we do not propose to reject it. For these reasons we will abstain from voting. 20

Despite the verbal opposition, on the third reading the Russian Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was approved by the Reichstag, the Independent Socialists voting against, while the Majority Socialists abstained from voting. 21

When it is realized that the bitter terms of the Brest Peace caused comment even in Germany, a severe reaction within the Allied Nations and Russia is a foregone conclusion. A secret resolution on war and peace, adopted by the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party in March of 1918, declared

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21 Lutz, op. cit., p. 795.
that the Congress recognized that it was necessary to ratify "the most oppressive and humiliating peace treaty" because of the extremely unhealthy condition of the demoralized front, because of the necessity of exploiting any "even the slightest possibility of a breathing space before the assault of imperialism on the Soviet Socialist Republic." And a statement of the London Conference of Entente Ministers in regard to the Treaties of Brest-Litovsk issued March 18, 1918, condemned the Treaty in harsh tones. The statement read:

The Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of the Entente, assembled in London, feel it to be their bounden duty to take note of the political crimes which, under the name of a German peace, have been committed against the Russian people. Russia was unarmed. Forgetting that for four years Germany had been fighting against the independence of the nations and the rights of mankind, the Russian Government, in a mood of singular credulity, expected to obtain by persuasion that "democratic peace" which it had failed to obtain by war. . . .

For us of the Entente Governments the judgement that the free peoples of the world will pass on these transactions could never be in doubt. Why waste time over German pledges, when we see that at no period in her history of conquest—not when she overran Silesia, not when she partitioned Poland—has she exhibited herself so cynically as the destroyer of national independence, the implacable enemy of the rights of man and the dignity of civilized nations.

Even Lenin, who had throughout the negotiations held to the theory that a bad peace was better than no peace at all, in commenting on the drastic terms of Brest, remarked:

22 Chamberlin, op. cit., p. 498.
In any case, and in whatever conceivable circumstances, we are doomed if the German revolution does not break out. Nevertheless, that does not in the slightest degree weaken our duty to know how to endure the most difficult situation without blustering... 24

The signing of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk settled many old issues and opened up new ones. For the Entente, the signing created a new, important diplomatic consideration—that of military intervention in Russia. "I have been sweating blood over the question of what is right to do in Russia," stated President Wilson; 25 and while the President of the United States felt that military intervention would further push Russia against the Allied cause, the French were particularly vigorous in their demand for intervention. To the Entente Powers in general it seemed that to counteract the effect of the Brest Treaties, it was of the first importance to reconstruct the Eastern Front by sending in an expeditionary force which might serve as focus for the mobilization of anti-German elements in Russia. At the same time, the Allies were wary of such a step. Subsequently, intervention was undertaken in such a way that little, other than further antagonism on the part of the Bolshevik Government, resulted from the Allies actions.

24 Degras, op. cit., p. 57.
By signing the Treaty, Soviet Leaders, at the risk of a serious breach in the Party, redeemed their pledge to the Russian people to end the war. They still had to fulfill their promise to provide the population with bread, but at least the main issue had been met. With the signing of Brest, Russia legally became a country "owned" by Germany, and yet Russia was never quite forced to assume the role of the captive slave.

Taking everything into consideration, the separate peace for which she strove so persistently throughout Russia's two revolutions of 1917 was never the boon to her war aims that Germany had expected. The abdication of the Tsar and the subsequent uncertainty of command at Petrograd had presented a superb opportunity for Germany to make every effort to bring about a separate peace with Russia, but once this had been accomplished, Germany was in such a position as to be able to do little about it. Here was an ironic situation. To gather the fruits of Brest-Litovsk large numbers of German troops had to be retained in the East, and even so, as Lenin put it, they got no more than a few million "puds" of grain. At this same time Germany needed to transfer the majority of her Eastern troops to the Western front, but because such a large force was necessary within Russia to enforce Brest-Litovsk, she was unable to do so.26

To evacuate Russia was a military absurdity, reasoned Ludendorff, who launched the great spring offensive on the

26 Wheeler-Bennett, op. cit., p. 352.
Western front, which was very nearly fatal for the Allies, only five days after the Brest Treaty was ratified by the Soviets. He added:

... We needed it (Russia) for our existence and had no mind to deliver it up to unscrupulous Bolshevism. We declined to evacuate it on this military ground, quite apart from the fact that no exercise of the right of self-determination was possible under the Bolshevist knout. On both these questions opinions are now probably clearer, and people may perhaps understand the view of General Headquarters. If we had left the country the armed forces of the Bolshevists would long ago have been in Germany. They were not the least interested in the right of self-determination; all they wanted was more power. They were politicians who govern by violence, and assumed that the territory evacuated by us would fall into their hands without further parley. They were, moreover, so nationally minded that they looked upon the severance of Courland, Lithuania, and Poland—self-determination notwithstanding—as a measure hostile to Russia.27

The advent of the Bolsheviks to power and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was destined, in the end, to bring nothing but chaos and ruin to Germany. At the signing of the Treaty the pacifist determination of the Soviet leaders had been translated into immediate German profit at Brest-Litovsk;28 but subsequent events proved that Trotsky's prophesy of the result of Bolshevism was a valid one. In an article in a New York Socialist paper in the spring of 1917, he said:

The creation of a revolutionary labor government in Russia will be a mortal blow to the Hohenzollerns

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28 Seymour, op. cit., p. 386.
because it will give the final stimulus to the revolutionary movement of the German proletariat.

And fifteen months after Brest-Litovsk and after Germany had lost the war and was in revolution, General Hoffmann said to Ben Hecht of the *Chicago Daily News*:

Immediately after conquering those Bolshevists, we were conquered by them. Our victorious army on the Eastern front became rotten with Bolshevism. We got to the point where we didn't dare to transfer certain of our Eastern divisions to the West. Our military machine became the printing-press of Bolshevik propaganda. It was Bolshevik propaganda that rotted Germany from the East and broke her morale and gave us defeat and this revolution you now see ruining us.

A cloud had long been gathering on the Russian Front before the Germans seemed to notice it. At any rate, its significance was long unsuspected by the German Higher Command. Germany's policy with regard to Russia had been to employ indirect methods to undermine Russia's power of resistance, while economizing her own military effort. To quote Ludendorff: "What we anticipated took place; the Russian Revolution weakened the fighting strength of the army," and the idea of peace seemed to be gaining strength in Russia. This policy succeeded, but only too well. The German design was to hypnotize Russia into a nerveless and inert mass, which could be molded to Germany's future aims, but her spells went wrong, and she invoked instead a demon of savage anarchy, which eventually contributed to her own downfall. Ludendorff later

29 Hard, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
31 *Temperley, op. cit.*, p. 12.
confessed to this fatal development of the German plans:
"Looking back, I can see that our decline obviously began
with the outbreak of the Revolution in Russia." But he was
blind to it at the time, although he remarks that "Bethmann-
Hollweg and Count Czernin were both completely obsessed by
the Russian Revolution," and that both feared similar events
in their own countries.  

All along, the aims of the Bolsheviks was world revolution
and throughout the preliminary negotiations of Brest-Litovsk
and indeed ever since Krylenko's order to begin fraternization,
Bolshevik agents had not ceased to make use of the time for
propaganda purposes. Copies of the Decree of Peace, together
with a special proclamation to the German Army, were not only
smuggled into the trenches but dropped from airplanes far be-
hind the lines. One of Trotsky's earliest innovations in the
Foreign Office had been to institute a press bureau under Karl
Radek and a Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda
under Boris Reinstein, among whose assistants were John Reed
and Albert Rhys Williams, and the full blast of these power-
houses was turned against the German Army. A German newspaper,
Die Fackel (The Torch), was printed in editions of half a mil-
lion a day and sent by special train to Central Army Committees
in Minsk, Kiev, and other cities, which in turn distributed
them to other points along the front.  

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33 Wheeler-Bennett, op. cit., pp. 90-91.
It was during the first conversations of the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations that the first doubts rose to his mind of the right for Germany to enter into negotiations with the Bolsheviks at all, General von Hoffmann confessed later. "I have often thought since," he said, "that it might have been better if the leaders of the German State and Army had refused to have any sort of negotiations with the Bolshevik usurpers."34

By giving the Bolsheviks the possibility of concluding a peace, and thus satisfying the longing of the people, the Germans also gave them the opportunity of fortifying themselves in power and of retaining it. If Germany had refused to negotiate with them and had demanded representatives of the Russian people and a government that would have been formed by a free election, he reasoned, the Bolsheviks would not have been able to remain in power.35

Further doubts came into Hoffmann's mind as he talked with officers during the conference, especially with Admiral Altvater. Hoffmann had talked much with him about the extraordinarily fine Russian Army, and wondered how the Revolution could have so completely corroded it. Altvater replied:

The influence of Bolshevik propaganda on the masses is enormous. I have already often talked with you about it, and complained that at the time I was defending Osel the troops actually melted

35 Ibid.
away before my eyes. It was the same with the whole Army, but I warn you the same thing will happen in your Army. 36

It may be well here to insert what is known of Russian cooperation in the German November Revolution, which so many German authorities lay at the hand of the Bolsheviks and their propaganda for world revolution. On October 30 Germania complained of the political activities of subordinate members of the Russian Legation, the Frankfurter Zeitung reported that Russian diplomatists were actually speaking at Socialist meetings, and the Deutsche Tageszeitung asserted that Joffe, Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, was himself taking part. Four days later the Berliner Tageblatt spoke of the distribution in Berlin of a leaflet inciting soldiers to disobedience; but it could not believe that the Independents had anything to do with this, which was as bad as Pan-German propaganda. On November 5 it was officially announced that revolutionary pamphlets had been found in a Russian courier's baggage; the Government demanded guarantees against a repetition of such conduct, and meanwhile insisted on the recall of all diplomatic representatives; and the next day Joffe left Berlin. 37

In replying to the charges of Russian interference in internal German affairs, Joffe said on December 4, 1918:

... may I state that the propagandist literature was distributed by the Independent Social Democratic

Party. As to the purchase of arms, the total quantity mentioned in the telegram, i.e. 159 Mausers, 28 Brownings and (illegible) and approximately 27,000 rounds of ammunition, is incorrect. This was the quantity destined for export to Russia. The quantity of arms purchased and (illegible) to the present Minister Barth was, as you know, considerably greater. Similarly, the total sum of money spent, as given in the wireless telegram, is incorrect. It was not 105,000 marks, but several hundred thousand marks, that were handed to the Minister Barth for the purchase of arms. As I am anxious to have the true facts established, I consider it a service on my part that, as a result of these activities, which I undertook with the full consent of the Independents, in particular of the present Ministers Haase and Barth, and others, I too helped as far as lay in my power in the victory of the German revolution.

Again and again the German Supreme Command had drawn the attention of the Imperial Government to the danger of Joffe's work and his presence in Berlin, and the reply was always the same: it was better that he should be in Berlin than anywhere else. They had their eyes on him there. "Unfortunately," writes Ludendorff, "those eyes were blind."

Apart from the activities of the Soviet Embassy and the Independent Socialists, there were two other channels through which the poison of Bolshevism worked back into the body-politic of Germany. Prisoners of war released under the Treaty began slowly to return to the ranks after long leave, bringing with them the infection bred of the revolutionary propaganda to which they had been subjected in Russian prison camps since

38 Degras, op. cit., p. 126.
39 Wheeler-Bennett, op. cit., p. 351.
the October-November Revolution. The views of Bolshevism also infected the German divisions retained on the Eastern Front after the conclusion of peace. The conditions under which they lived rendered them easy prey. Propaganda by leaflet and word of mouth spread quickly among the troops, and the German forces in the East became rotten with Bolshevism. 40

In his War Memoirs of 1917-1918 Lloyd George decided that two of the direct consequences of the World War which exerted palpable influence on the course of human affairs and would continue to do so "more and more as the years roll by" was the establishment of the League of Nations and the Russian Revolution. 41 The League of Nations has long since been by-passed, but the effects of the Russian Revolution still bear witness to Germany's great disaster in the matter of Brest-Litovsk and its aftermath. "England gave China opium," said Ludendorff, "our enemies gave us the revolution, and we accepted the poison and distributed it, as the Chinese distribute opium." 42

The Germans had placed great hopes on the Russian Revolution; they had visualized that a separate peace with Russia would benefit their war effort so greatly that a military victory would eventually be possible. Their conduct throughout the revolutionary period accomplished Brest-Litovsk, but

40 Ibid., p. 352.
41 War Memoirs of David Lloyd George 1917-1918, p. 111.
the victory was a bitter one that resulted in complete confusion and "the few million puds of grain." In the end, Germany was to see the Treaty of Brest repudiated only a short time after the peace negotiations and she herself was to be the victim of such a revolution as she had wished for Russia. The irony of these historic events is that Germany was the casualty of her own activities—that in this case, the deceiver was deceived.
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