

The Russian Drama.

Some Facts and Personalities.

In our note on the Russian Cabinet last issue we made the error of referring to a bourgeois majority in the Russian Ministry. After the resignation of Lvoff and the other bourgeois Ministers the position rather seems to be that the Socialists are in sole possession. The dictatorship of the Council of Workmen has so aroused the misgivings of the bourgeoisie that they have either been forced to resign, or have done so as a move in the game to place the Socialists in the impossible job of administering capitalist society while at the same time retaining their class loyalty.

The Socialists do not want to be responsible for the Political State, especially at a time when that State has piled up overwhelming world wide disasters, until they are in a position to destroy that Political State in step with the world wide movement of the working-class. The Russian workmen are waiting on us!

Capitalist development, that is, the development of the large industry, is backward in Russia. This is the weak point in the Socialist position. But the peasant class have been prepared and enlightened to an extent unknown in any other country. This is the compensating advantage. Whether the large industry will grow by free exchange under the joint political control of Capitalists and Socialists or under the method of State Socialism and Land Co-operatives, the results of the forthcoming general election alone can tell.

Dr. Sarolea of Glasgow University, writing from the bourgeois point of view, marvels at the restraint and magnanimity of the Russian Workmen when they had the power to wreak wholesale revenge on their persecutors, perpetrators of decades of intolerable wrongs. Of the 2,000 casualties in the Revolution, the big majority were of the people. Comparatively few police were killed. Now, however, when the bourgeoisie and their regiments on the Eastern front have it in their power, the "agitators" and Socialist soldiers, are executed and slaughtered down by the hundred, and the Capitalist Press gloats over it. That is why the Socialist movement dare not look back in Russia. As in 1848, as in the Paris Commune of 1871, let the bourgeoisie, its soul athirst for profits, but have one chance, and the blood of the Russian Workmen will flow in torrents such as are unparalleled even by the horrors of this unparalleled war.

And now about the Socialist Ministers. Skobelov we all know. He will meet the devil or his grandmother in order to restore the International. He is in charge of Posts and Telegraphs. Tseretelli, another Minister, has the following words to his credit which

show how he regards his Ministerial function. They were delivered to the Council of Workmen, and much applauded.

"The present Revolution formed a stage towards a Social Revolution, and it was the task of the proletariat to guide it in this direction. The army of Revolutionaries must be able to control the Provisional Government in order that such measures may be enforced as the eight hour day, the redistribution of the land among the peasants, and the constitution of a Representative Assembly, which will declare a democratic Republic and confirm all the conquest of the Revolution."

Then there is Tchernoff. The Cadets and other bourgeois parties are hot after this man's blood. They refuse to have anything to do with the Government until he is out of it. He is Minister of Agriculture. We recognise this comrade as Cernov, described by "Avanti" as leader of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, that is, the party of the revolutionary peasants. Viktor Tchernoff has been "the principal promotor of the most extreme agrarian policy: of the Socialisation of land, the expropriation without indemnity of large or medium-sized properties and the assignment of all cultivated lands to the workers alone." No wonder they want his blood!

Tchernoff, like Skobelov and Tseretelli, is a convinced internationalist, indeed, took part in the Zimmerwald Conference. "Tchernoff believes in the wide education of the masses in city and country on Socialist lines, and he considers that the end of the war must initiate a new era of political and social revolution throughout Europe."

These are the men in control. We can only gather that the wholesale massacre of the revolutionary workmen at the front is the work of the Press Bureau, or will have to be sternly accounted for to the Council of Workmen. What imperishable deeds of working-class heroism must not be written of in Russia when the workers finally triumph.

And what about Lenin, who is depicted as a fugitive from justice, and a pro-German spy. Pass the salt. A Russian Socialist paper in Paris has this about him:—

"He is represented as a new man, suddenly risen to the surface, while in reality he is better known in Russia than Jules Guesde in France. He began his militant life in 1910. . . . He organised the "Union of liberation of the Working Class." It was he who wrote the valuable work, "The Evolution of Capitalism in Russia." From 1903 he was the undisputed leader of that tendency of Russian Marxism known as "bolshevism." Lenin has behind him 25 years of labour, self-denial and struggle against oppression. . . . Lenin is a revolutionary. . . . who goes to the very end and does not stop half way. . . . He has an iron character, and is a born leader of men."