

# The Lenine-Trotsky Government

## Definite Declarations Concerning It by American and British Ambassadors

### UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR FRANCIS

*David R. Francis, American Ambassador to Russia, was one of the chief witnesses before the United States Senate committee that investigated Bolshevism in February and March, 1919. A considerable portion of his testimony was given in the April issue of CURRENT HISTORY. Additional passages are here presented from the official proofsheets of his exhaustive study of the subject. Mr. Francis's personal estimate of Lenine and Trotsky, as stated in the Senate inquiry, is as follows:*

I THINK that Lenine was a German agent from the beginning. They would never have permitted him to come through Germany if they had not thought or known they could use him. He disbursed money very liberally. Lenine, however, was not so opposed to Germany as he was in favor of promoting a worldwide social revolution. I wired the department that I thought that was his object in the beginning. He would have taken British money, American money, and French money and used it to promote this objective of his. He told a man who asked what he was doing in Russia that he was trying an experiment in Government on the Russian people. He is a sincere man, with sincere convictions, I think. I do not think he is right by a good deal, because later, when his power was tottering and could not be maintained in any other way, he encouraged or permitted the reign of terror that is now prevailing in Russia.

Lenine is the brains of this whole movement. He has a great intellect. He is a fanatic and I think has sincere convictions.

I could not say the same about Trotsky. I think Trotsky is an adventurer. He has great ability. He has more executive ability than Lenine, but when they have differed Lenine has always been able to dominate Trotsky.

#### THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

*Concerning the Soviet Government, Ambassador Francis made the following statements:*

There is as much difference between the Bolshevik revolution and the provisional Government as there was between the provisional Government and the Imperial Government. \* \* \* They suppress all newspapers that oppose their views. \* \* \* I know that any newspaper that had a criticism of the Bolshevik Government, or the Soviet Government, was suppressed immediately after its publication of that criticism. \* \* \* They are there as usurpers. I do not think they represent more than 10 per cent. of the Russians of the whole 180,000,000.

They always hoped to have the recognition of our Government, and I thought that our Government could not recognize them, and so stated to our Government. I have been consistent in that all along, and persistent. I thought that they were against our Government as well as against all organized Governments; that their decrees concerning women, marriage, and divorce, and their land decrees, confiscating all lands and all industries whatever, meant the breaking up of the family and a return to barbarism, and I think so now. They do not merit recognition. They do not merit even business relations, because of their prejudices. They have instituted a reign of terror. They are killing everybody who wears a white collar or who is educated and who is not a Bolshevik.

*Referring to one execution of which he had knowledge, the Ambassador said:*

There was no trial whatever, and no charges preferred. \* \* \* That was

the case in Petrograd. They called No. 2 Garoki, via the morgue. When a man was sent there he bade farewell to hope. A man who had recently been in Moscow stated that he saw human blood flowing out under the gate of the inclosure there, where they had been shooting men charged with counter-revolutionary sentiments. They did not hesitate about shooting people. When the cholera was prevalent in Petrograd, as it was last August and September, Zenoviev, who was then Chief Commissary of the Soviet, made a speech in which he charged the bourgeoisie with being responsible for the cholera, and he said: "If any Red Guard thinks that a physician is not doing his duty, he will shoot him on the spot." That was giving license to the Red Guards to shoot down physicians wherever they saw fit. Oh, it is a disgrace to civilization—not only irreparable injury to Russia, but a disgrace to civilization! \* \* \* It is worse than an anarchistic Government, because anarchists believe only in destroying property, as I understand it, while these people believe in destroying human life as well as property. Lenine, and Trotzky, and Radik, and Tchitcherin, and Zenoviev realize that they have to kill people in order to maintain themselves. The bourgeoisie of that country and the intelligentsia are all cowed. They have no arms. \* \* \* They [the Bolsheviks] went through the houses and took the arms and everything of value, and I have heard of their breaking mirrors and sticking bayonets through works of art.

### GERMAN INFLUENCE

*Regarding German influence in Russia, Mr. Francis said:*

I think Germany has had more control of the industries of Russia since the beginning of the war than she had before, although they have nominally arrested a great many of the officials and interned them. That was done under the Imperial Government, and it was pursued under the Provisional Government; but the German influence is now in every line of human endeavor. They not only own two or three banks in Petrograd, and as many in Moscow, but, as

I stated this morning, they control the manufacture of glass, the manufacture of chemicals, and the sugar interest, and various other industries.

The Germans were buying up the stocks of the banks, and I understood from what I considered reliable authority that the Germans had petitioned the Soviet Government to postpone the denationalizing of the banks in order to enable them to buy up more shares of stock.

Germany has been exploiting Russia for thirty or forty years, and if this Bolshevik Government is left in control, if disorder prevails in Russia, peace will be impossible in Europe. I think Germany will exploit Russia if the disorder is allowed to continue there; so that Germany, instead of having been defeated in this war, will have gained a victory, and will be stronger ten years from now than she was at the beginning of the war.

### NEVER AIDED ALLIES

*Asked if the Lenine-Trotzky Government ever stated to him that they wanted to get into the war to aid the United States and her allies against the Central Powers, the Ambassador replied:*

They never stated it to me. I extended every encouragement I could to them to present an organized front in order to prevent the German divisions that had been on the eastern front from being sent over to the western front, and I told Robins to say to them that I would recommend a *modus vivendi* if they would organize an opposition. They put to him a number of questions, which he transmitted through the War Department code, asking what America and the Allies would do; but they invariably accompanied that by a statement that the great social revolution should not be interfered with.

Colonel Robins stated it to me in this way, that he thought if we recognized them they would present an organized opposition to Germany. I said, "If you will have them make that promise to me, I do not know that I will recommend recognition, but I will recommend the establishment of business relations or a

modus vivendi with them." But I always believed that Lenine and Trotzky were German agents, and consequently I would not have trusted them at any time. I would not have believed them. [Their failure to oppose Germany, said the Ambassador subsequently, confirmed his suspicions.]

They declared an armistice, without consulting any of the Allies. I think that if Russia had stood up to her obligations the war would have been ended a year before it was ended, and millions of lives could have been saved. Russia lost more men in the war than any other country, although she quit the war a year before it ended. I think she lost at least 2,000,000 men, and there were

thousands of Russians imprisoned in German and Austrian prison camps when I arrived at Petrograd in April, 1916.

They treated us [the Americans] better than they treated the British or the French, because they were always hoping for and expecting recognition by our Government; but they declared themselves against all organized Governments, and they called our Government a capitalistic Government, and said that it was oppressing the working classes.

I regard it [the Bolshevik Government] as a menace to the peace of Europe and a menace to the peace of the world. That is my judgment, derived from two years and eight months' residence in Russia.

## Testimony of Sir George Buchanan, British Ambassador

*Sir George Buchanan, who was Ambassador at Petrograd during the war, delivered in London on March 25, 1919, an address entitled "Russia and Great Britain: Their Relations Under the Empire, the Provisional Government, and the Bolsheviks." The portion dealing with the Soviet Government may be summarized as follows:*

Lenine, Sir George said, was a fanatic who had treated Russia as a pawn in his game and had used her as a stepping stone to the realization of his dream of a socialistic millennium and of a universal communistic State. He had been the directing brain of the movement, while Trotzky and the other Commissaries were but its executive officers. Lenine had taken money from Germany and accepted the assistance of German agents to organize his forces, but he had done that for a set purpose, and was not, like many of his followers, a paid German agent.

Sir George spoke of the murder of members of the imperial family, a crime which he could neither palliate nor condone. The Emperor was far from being a bloodthirsty tyrant, as his executioners represented him, and under his rule Russia was a happier and more prosperous country than it would ever be under the merciless tyranny of the present de facto Government. Nor did he or the Empress ever contemplate the betrayal either of their country or of the allied cause, and their murders could not be justified on that account. Had

such crimes as those of which the Bolsheviks had been guilty been committed under the empire a storm of indignation would have swept through Great Britain; but now, even when innocent children like the little Grand Duchesses had been murdered in cold blood, hardly a voice was raised in condemnation of the crime, while in certain quarters one found a latent sympathy with their murderers.

### RUSSIA'S PATHETIC FIGURE

Russia had for the time being ceased to exist as a political entity. Her voice no longer carried weight in the council chambers of Europe. She was, indeed, a tragic and pathetic figure. During the first two years of the war she spent herself in an effort that exhausted her, and she had not strength to endure to the end. Had she not made that stand France would have been crushed before we could have come to her assistance. Germany might have won the war. We should, therefore, remember that, though Russia did not share in our triumph, though the Russian flag with its blood-stained laurels no longer floated side by

side with the standards of her allies, Russia had none the less contributed her share to our final victory.

Was it not then our duty to acquit the debt of honor which we owed her? Was it not right we should try to save her suffering people from the remorseless tyranny under which they were groaning? If we were to be consistent, if we were not to draw a fine distinction between German autocratic militarism and Bolshevist autocratic terrorism, we could not leave Russia to her fate. Lenine, like the German Emperor, aimed at world domination, and openly reigned supreme. Before the conclusion of the armistice Lenine predicted that the Allies would impose such humiliating terms on Germany that the latter would turn Bolshevist, and he expressed the confident hope that the combined forces of Russia and Germany would then be able to continue the struggle against the Allies long enough to provoke revolutionary risings in their countries. He realized that Bolshevism, if confined to Russia, was doomed. He was, therefore, making tremendous efforts to turn Central Europe into one great Bolshevist camp, and he had, it would appear, already succeeded in winning over Hungary to his side.

#### POLICY OF ISOLATION

To prevent the spread of the Bolshevist poison, Sir George Buchanan said it had been proposed to draw a sanitary cordon round Russia, and to isolate her completely. He personally believed that such a policy would in the end cost us more, and be less effective, than were we to strike boldly at the heart of the disease and eradicate the cancer that was sapping Russia's vital energies. Though we could not employ conscripted troops for that purpose, volunteers for service in Russia might be forthcoming when

the men who had been demobilized had had a few months' rest at home. One could never, as had been suggested, hope to save Russia by economic relief alone. Military assistance and economic relief must go hand in hand if we were to help the Russians to free themselves from Bolshevist tyranny. The task was not gigantic as was generally supposed, for the capture of Moscow and Petrograd would suffice to sound the death knell of Bolshevism as a political force. The other alternative open to us, that of withdrawing our troops and leaving Russia to work out her own salvation, would leave an indelible stain on the British name, for it would be tantamount to delivering over to certain death those who, in answer to our summons, had rallied round our flag, while it would inevitably throw Russia sooner or later into the arms of Germany.

There would be no permanent peace in the world if we ever allowed Germany to control Russia's vast man power and untold natural wealth. There was another danger. Lenine was not only inciting fellow-subjects in India to revolt, but was turning his attention to China, in the hope of drawing recruits to maintain himself in power. To leave him time to do so would be a suicidal policy.

The Russian problem was the dominating factor in the European situation, and our interest and our honor both demanded that we should face it with courage and determination. To shrink from doing so was a confession of impotence that would render vain all our sacrifices in the war. God grant that at some no distant time a new, free, and united Russia might once more stretch out the hand of friendship to us and march by our side along the road of peace, progress, and enlightenment.

