

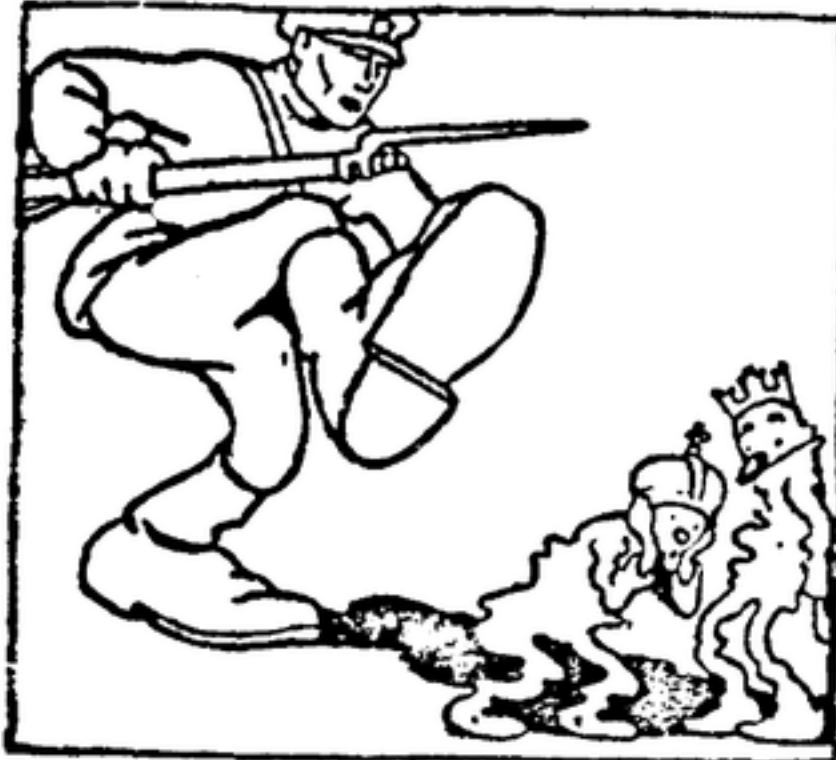
# Soviet Russia's Red Army

An Interview with Sklandsky, Assistant Commissar of War

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KREMLIN, Moscow, February 25th.—Today is a military holiday all over Soviet Russia. It is the first anniversary of the Red Army. Red flags and pennants are waving in the streets and the emblems of the army are shining red over the mighty portals of the Kremlin. Symbolic soldier placards illustrate the year's work accomplished by the "Krasny (Red) Army," from all



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the roofs of the houses, while Red Guard soldiers in grayish-brown uniforms are rattling their collection boxes and pinning the Red Army buttons on the coat lapels of all those who give. In honor of the day, I have interviewed Tavarish Sklandsky, assistant Commissar of War, concerning the results of the "Workers' and Peasants' Red Army" in its work for the past year. The Minister of War, People's Commissar Trotsky, did not reach home after his inspection trip on the Ukrainian front until this evening. Equipped with the necessary propusk (admission card), I made my way past the Guards and machine guns until I reached his representative, who was sitting in the great apartment in which the All Russian Minister of War at present has his headquarters, and studies the latest reports from the fronts. Sklandsky is a man of fully thirty years of age, a physician by profession. During the war he was assigned to the service with the sanitary corps, was elected after the March revolution to various soldiers' councils, and, as early as November 28th, 1917, became the second in seniority in the Commissariat of War (army department). A physician with a quietly, energetic, civilian appearance. "But I have been able to acquire a little of the military trade—for the sake of my comrades. Here every man must do what he can. You can get a better idea of the military situation from the general staff, but I can indicate a few general view-points.

"The greatest accomplishments of the Red Army are the victories which we gained in the Donetz region over the armies of Ataman Krasnov," declared Sklandsky. "This is of great political importance in the first place, since Krasnov and his peasant Cossacks have heretofore been the most powerful factor in the counter-revolutionary movement, and have really been a danger to Soviet Russia. From an economic standpoint this victory means that we have now opened a path to the anthracite fields of Russia in the Donetz basin, and have thus a prospect of once more opening up our industrial activity. We have here gained possession of the best developed railway system, with railway connection to the Caucasus and the considerable contingent of Red groups there, which formerly were obliged to communicate with the main army over territory in which there was not railroad communication. Krasnov's Don Cossacks have been completely disorganized. Whole regiments are deserting to us, led by their company commanders, while the staff officers, knowing very well what punishments await them at our hands, remain with the enemy. As to the size of Krasnov's army? It certainly is not as high as one hundred thousand, which is the figure assigned in foreign countries. At most, several times ten thousand. And the population is complaining that these soldiers are getting drunk and harrying the country. We consider the Cossack something like a man on horseback with a knout. We shall take the knouts from him and cast him literally to the earth," declared Sklandsky, with an ex-

pressive gesture. "On the Ural front also, we have Cossacks. But these Cossacks have no military connection whatever with the Don Cossacks; the connection is at most a 'spiritual' one. With the conquest of Orenburg, the possibility was obtained for establishing connections with Turkestan. The railroad from Orenburg to Tashkent is, however, pretty well torn up, and a number of bands of White Guards are still harrying the line of the road. But we shall restore order there in a few days. The great majority of the Ural Cossacks are disbanding their armies, and seem willing to become decent citizens of Soviet Russia. The remnants of their main force are withdrawing in a westerly direction along the ridge of the Ural towards Ursk, and the days of the latter place are numbered. They are scattered divisions, much weaker in practice than the Don Cossacks. In Turkestan we have millions of poods of cotton, which is the necessary raw material for our principle industry, namely, textile manufactures. But it is not only our White Guards who are looking with greedy eyes toward Turkestan, but also England's imperialistic capitalism. It is not impossible that we shall collide with the English in the search for cotton. The English long ago took possession of Baku on the Caspian Sea with its great naptha and oil wells. It is said that they already have fifty to sixty thousand men there, and that the Turkish troops have there also united with their enemies of the world war."

"Has Soviet Russia any war-ships on the Caspian Sea?"

"Yes, and we have also a firm hold on the seat of Astrakhan, at the mouth of the Volga, which has always been in our possession.

"We now come to our third front, namely the Czechoslovak front. The fact that these Czechoslovaks and Yugo-Slavs from Austria are operating

took the entire district east of the Volga from beyond Perm in the North, all the way down to Samara in the South. They obtained re-inforcements from Kolchak's Siberian divisions, and under Kolchak there prevails a severe Czarist military discipline. His extremely young officers are afraid of being swept down by their own soldiers, and therefore must with "kadaver" discipline seek



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to prevent any understanding of the political situation from reaching the uninformed privates. In addition to money and ammunition, they also received re-inforcements from time to time from France, England and other Entente powers. And these are very much needed, for most of the Czechoslovaks are tired of their own mercenary lackey services, and are already on their way home throughout the length of the Siberian railroad. We have thrown back the Kolchak army all the way from the Ural regions down to the neighborhood of Zlatoust. However, they will hold Perm, which fell through treachery. On the Archangel front, the French, English and Americans, as is well known, have a private front of their own, the object of which is to cut us off from maritime communication by way of the White Sea. Simultaneously, the Entente talks about not desiring to intervene in any way in the affairs of Russia!

"On our fifth front, the Finnish front, Mannerheim is collecting his White Guards for a possible attack on Petrograd, —but he must wait for the signal to be given by his Entente friends. But don't forget that there are also Red Finns.

"In Esthonia, White Guards are in power. In addition to the Esthonians and a few thousand Finns, we here find also a number of Swedes. And behind the front here also is of course the Entente. The situation in Esthonia is not the most favorable for us, but here also the changes that are operating seem to be in our favor. Narva is already within range of our guns. Latvia (Kurland) is entirely in our hands, as is also the greater portion of Lithuania and White Russia. And in the next few days, these two provinces also will be cleared of the boundaries of Poland, and the soviet regime will be re-established. The Entente tried to form a continuous barrier against the Bolshevik bacillus, but I don't think they have succeeded—for we are in communication with Germany through Livonia and Kurland." Tavarish, Sklandsky here lighted a cigarette before proceeding to the favorite subject of all Soviet Russia, namely, the Ukrainian front.

"Ukraine! This is not only the romantic homeland of the Little Russian 'Cossacks,' but it is first and foremost the great granary from which comes our bread. And what word in the Russian language has such a fair sound at this time as the word Khleba—bread. This in truth is the battle cry of the Red Army."

We took an automobile ride with the President of the Moscow Soviet, Kameniev, to a military outpost at eleven o'clock in the morning, in honor of the first anniversary of the Red Army.

"There won't be any parade; the people are so hungry," explained Kameniev on the way. The battle cry of Khleba, is unfortunately only too realistic a background. I was not surprised that Sklandsky had to light not one, but two cigarettes before he got through with the seventh front, the Ukrainian front.

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THE WORD ON THE FLAG IS "COMMUNE" AND THE WORD ON THE WALL IS "CAPITALISM"

along our eastern boundary in Siberia, is as a matter of fact one of the most remarkable accidents of the world war! They came to us as prisoners of war, but in the last few months of Czarism, and particularly under Kerensky, a great number of them were liberated and armed, namely, those who were willing to co-operate with Russia against Austrian and German Imperialism. After the revolution of November, 1917, when the Bolsheviks seized power, our government wanted to ship them home again by way of Siberia and Vladivostok," declared Sklandsky. "The Czechoslovaks now came under the influence of the White Guards and the members of the dissolved Constituent Assembly," continued Sklandsky. "And they got money and weapons from the Entente for their fight against Red Russia. At first they met with great success. They