

Arrest and Liberation

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Russian soldiers conducted by one of my friends, all wearing red cockades and red armbands. When they saw me they came in my direction.

"You are Comrade Rakovsky?"

"Yes."

"Comrade, in the name of the Russian Republic, you are free. Come with us."

We all embraced warmly and without returning to my room I followed my liberators toward the door. Passing the agents and policemen who stood there as motionless and impassable as statues. In the street before the house were two automobiles, garlanded with leaves, flowers and red draperies.

"Get in Comrade."

I was helped into the second automobile, trembling with emotion. It all seemed to me a dream. I did not believe my eyes. Before me stretched an unforgettable pageant. The entire street, very wide and sloping gently up, was covered with soldiers ranged by companies and battalions, with their officers on horseback at the head. Above this immense multitude, a forest of red flags and revolutionary inscriptions. All were decorated with the red cockade.

One of the members of the committee began "Comrades, we have just accomplished a revolutionary act. We have torn from the claws of the Russian government a comrade who is connected not only with the Socialist movement in the Balkans, but also with that of all Europe, and particularly of Russia. Until now we have been forced to do business with the false delegates of the Rumanian people; now we have liberated their real representative!" In the midst of enthusiastic acclamation I rose to speak, and leaning on the shoulders of two comrades, I expressed to the soldiers my gratitude and greeted them in Russian and Rumanian.

The demonstration, with the automobiles at the head and preceded by a military band, surged toward the center of the city. The authorities were conspicuous by their complete absence. They were prudent, for if they had attempted to interfere at that moment they would have provoked a bloody conflict, which might have had revolutionary consequences. We were masters of the city. When we approached the center of the town a police inspector approached. Naturally I supposed that he had come to demand my arrest. But no. It was to beg me in a very humble voice to persuade the Russian Committee not to change the route of the march agreed upon by the Committee and the police. Looking at him I recognized the same man who had treated me with brutality two months before.

It was when I was shut up in the barracks of the rural police. I had already passed one night sitting on a chair. It was nine o'clock in the evening; no

one had come to see me. The police seemed to have forgotten me. One of the agents on guard, taking pity on me, telephoned to headquarters for instructions. I took one of the telephone receivers and listened. The one who answered from headquarters was this same inspector.

"Mr. Inspector, what are your instructions about Dr. Rakovsky? Where shall he sleep?"

"Where did he sleep last night?"

"On a chair."

"Well, let him do the same thing tonight."

Finally we arrived at the center of the town, the great Square of the Union near the tall monument of the Prince Ceauza. In a few minutes the whole square was full. The steps and balconies of the Hotel Trajan were black with people, as well as the windows and roofs of the surrounding houses. The demonstration of the Russians, as well as the news of my liberation spread already through the city, brought together an enormous crowd.

A second meeting followed, with speeches in Russian, Rumanian and French, prophesying the Rumanian Republic and the Republic of the Balkans. There was immense enthusiasm. At the end improvised choruses of soldiers accompanied by the military music sang the Funeral March of the Russian Revolutionaries: "Victims they fell in the great struggle, etc." All the throng listened bareheaded. My automobile became the center of a pilgrimage. Known and unknown friends, civilians and soldiers, comrades and men who were simply borne by the current, came to shake my hand.

Before leaving the center of the city we saved from prison a Rumanian comrade, Boujor, former editor of *Lupta*, against whom was a warrant of arrest for a speech at the burial of a comrade military doctor dead of typhus. Mr. Boujor was also a lieutenant in the army.

The same evening, by special train, put at my disposition by the soldiers and officers and accompanied by a guard of honor, we crossed the frontier of the new Russian Republic. Russia, which has filled all the countries of Europe and America with its emigrants, in our persons gave for the first time on its soil hospitality to two Socialists, foreign political emigrants.

Doctor Rakovsky

By John Reed

For two months in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Government at Petrograd I worked side by side with Rakovsky. He was editing a daily paper in Rumanian, *Inainte*, which was distributed not only in the ranks of the Rumanian army, but also to the Transylvanian soldiers of the Austrian army. He made frequent trips to the south of Russia, where he

efforts are being made to reorganise Russia, to build up a new social order on democratic and co-operative lines. . . .

These developments are not noticed in the Press here, which selects all that is sensational, whether accurate or rumour, and ignores the work of reconstruction. I have read papers which in the same article denounced Lenin and Trotzky as paid agents of Germany, and also commented on the disastrous effect of their propaganda on the morals of the German soldiers and workmen. These men could hardly be paid by the German autocracy to undermine its influence over its own people. On the Eastern front Trotzky and Lenin, the men of ideas, won against Hindenburg and Ludendorf, the men with guns. We beg to suspect that the *Daily Mail* for once allowed truth to be printed in its columns when its correspondent in Russia wrote that, strange as it might appear to people in England. Lenin and Trotzky were men of real intellect and probably knew more about international politics than Mr. Arthur Balfour. We can see over the smoke of conflict the scaffolding of the new Russia arising. The conflict over its foundations will pass, but the building will be continued, and the democracies in other countries should see that their Governments allow the Russian people to work out their own destiny. Even those who are enemies of the Revolution have to admit that ninety per cent. of the Russian people are supporters of the present Government. And no League of Nations, however armed with self-righteousness, could have a moral right to overturn the social order in a country which is supported by the people themselves. We do not hear of Russians rising in masses against the rule of the

secretly crossed the Rumanian lines and traveled incognito through his own country, spreading revolutionary doctrine, at the risk of his life.

In December, 1917, when the Soviet Government signed an armistice with Germany and Austria, Rumania refused to participate. The Russian troops on the Rumanian front obeyed orders from Petrograd and entertained at headquarters a German and Austrian delegation. The Rumanian Government arrested this delegation, and upon the protest of the Russians, surrounded them with Rumanian troops and fired on them with artillery. The Russian soldiers had to cut their way by force through the Rumanian lines back to Russia, losing many men.

The consequences were swift. Trotzky ordered the immediate arrest of the Rumanian minister at Petrograd. The next day Allied and neutral ambassadors demanded his liberation. This was granted, but the Soviet Government ordered that the Rumanian diplomatic mission should leave Russia within ten hours.

That afternoon I was in the office of Zalkind, Assistant Commissaire of Foreign Affairs. In one corner were five or six red guards and sailors drinking tea around a battered samovar. At the side of the room Rakovsky sat at a table, writing furiously.

Entered *Arztar* in the old-time resplendent livery of the Czar. He had a card. It read Mr. A—, first secretary of the Rumanian Embassy to Russia.

"Show him in," said Zalkind. There appeared a dapper youth in a frock coat, silk hat, gloves and stick. He surveyed the room with uneasiness mingled with contempt. Zalkind, wearing peasant boots and an old uniform without insignia, came forward to meet him.

"What can I do for you, sir?" he asked courteously.

"This is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?" asked the secretary. "We have received an order emanating from somewhere that the Rumanian Embassy must leave Russia within ten hours. My dear sir, that is impossible. We have much to do. Our officials are scattered over Russia. It will take at least three days—"

Zalkind smiled in the friendliest way. "With that, Mr. Secretary, I have nothing to do. You must address yourself to our Commissaire for Rumania Affairs. Allow me, Comrade Rakovsky."

Rakovsky rose from his seat, dignified and suave. He bowed. The Secretary went pale and and dropped his gloves.

"I am extremely sorry to be unable to accommodate you, Mr. Secretary," said Rakovsky very politely. "The last time I was officially in your country I was compelled to leave in two hours and a half. We give the ambassador ten hours, and by that we recognize that he is four times as important as I. Good afternoon."

Soviets, but of Czecho-Slovaks, Japanese, and other foreigners deputed to punish the Russian people for their crimes against humanity. Their crimes I believe to be twofold. They desired to be at peace when the rest of the world was at war, a very serious offence, as we in Ireland know. They also desired to have economic democracy when the Great Powers had got no further than a desire to make the world safe for political democracy, and were, I believe, even a little dubious about that state of society, though experiment has proved that pure cultures of capitalism can be cultivated in a political democracy and develop there with the rapidity of bacteria in a jug of Dublin milk.

Yours sincerely,

GEO. W. RUSSELL.

The Background of the German Revolution

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ment of a proletarian, Socialist Revolution, still to be accomplished was indicated in a speech by Karl Liebknecht delivered on November 20: "Did the bourgeoisie while in power permit you to have a voice in the government? No! Then the workers must not permit it to have any say now. We need a Government of soldiers and workmen, a government of the proletariat, which will not have to bow down before the Entente. There must be no dickerings with Entente Imperialism. We will dispose of that just as we did with German autocracy. The Revolution is also bound to reach the Entente countries, but we, who made the Russians waste a whole year, are insisting that the Revolution break out in England and France within twenty-four hours." A dictatorship of the proletariat, the definite initiation of Socialism, an alliance with proletarian Soviet Russia, a revolutionary war if necessary and the struggle for the international revolution—these are aspects of the second revolution, indicated by Liebknecht and by life itself.

Concerning the Russian Revolution

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Russia ignorant and they could not be blamed much if they did not act with wisdom. The Russian peasants and workmen were regarded by the ruling classes as little above the brute, and were treated accordingly, and if men are treated as brutes it is too much to expect when aroused they will act with gentleness. The leaders of the Revolution had the heritage of a country desolated by war and wrecked economically by a corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy. Swift action was necessary if worse was not to happen, and I doubt whether any Government—English, French or German—in a similar position, would have dealt more mercifully with minorities which obstructed them. It is said the Revolution is not democratic, that general elections were not held to give moral sanction to the new regime. This is a strange criticism arising in countries like our own where a practical dictatorship has been established since the war began, where the most revolutionary changes were made without any reference to the electorate. When victory is sure our rulers begin to think of elections, and in Russia no revolutionary leader has made any pretence that the existing system of Workers' and Soldiers' Committees could be permanent. When the revolution is safe they will act as our own rulers, who have waited until victory was secured before they spoke of seeking the approval of the country.

We do not know enough yet to praise or blame the leaders of the revolution in respect of their dealing with those who opposed them. But we do know enough from dispassionate observers to see that heroic