

# NEXT COUP D'ETAT MAY BE NOURISHED IN GERMANY

## Radicalism Is Reaction From War

### Lloyd George Fears Democracy Is Threatened by Undercurrent of Dissatisfaction.

### Fire Kindled in Russia

By DAVID LLOYD GEORGE.

London, Sept. 22.—The Spanish coup d'etat is part of the general movement of reaction against democracy which has arisen since the war. It started with the bolshevik revolution; it swept over Italy; it has captured Bulgaria, and its latest phase is the military insurrection in Spain. In fact, one of the most remarkable products of the war has been the initiation and extension of movements throughout Europe bearing the fascist character.

In essence bolshevism and fascism are revolts against parliamentary methods of government—in other words, against the democratic conception of government. In some quarters there is growing discontent with parliamentarism because of its dilatoriness, its confusion of aims, its pettiness, its costly inefficiencies, its constant failure to attain its ideals.

Ardent reformers are always, in the end, disappointed with the percentage of achievement which democracy yields to the tonnage of oratory. Most of them get discouraged altogether and either abandon the vain pursuit or relapse into languid support of conventional programs.

Now and again a man arises who gets angry, and, rudely brushing aside representatives chosen by the people, resorts to direct action. That accounts for Russia. In other quarters there is deepening distrust of democracy because of its menace to existing interests and comforts, its supposed readiness to make unwise concessions to popular clamor, its reluctance to govern firmly when firm government gives temporary offence.

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—because, in fact, it is too anxious to please. That was the complaint in Italy.

#### Cromwell First Fascist.

Signor Mussolini would probably claim Caesar as his prototype, but Cromwell was the first great modern fascist. Carlyle's description of Cromwell's Purge, gives the whole substance of fascism:

"Come, come," exclaimed my lord general in very high key, "we have had enough of this—and, in fact, my lord general, now blazing all up into clear conflagration exclaims 'I will put an end to your prating,' and steps forth on to the floor of the house and, clapping on his hat and occasionally stamping the floor with his feet," begins a discourse which no man can repeat! He says—"Heavens! he is heard saying 'It is not fit that you should sit here any longer. You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing lately. You shall now give place to better men."

"Call them in," adds he briefly to Harrison in words of command, and some 20 or 30 grim musketeers enter with bullets in their snaphances, grimly prompt for orders and stand in some attitude of "array arms" then veteran men of might and men of war, their faces are as the faces of lions and their feet are swift as the roes upon the mountains—not beautiful to the honorable gentleman at this moment."

There you have the whole attitude of the fascist in this historical deed of the greatest modern example of the type—Oliver Cromwell—described sympathetically by the greatest exponent and advocate of the doctrine—Thomas Carlyle.

#### Started in Russia.

The present movement started not in Italy, but in Russia. The first great fascist of today is not Mussolini but Lenin. He was the first to substitute force for popular election in a democratic state. Bolshevism was not a revolt against czarism and Russian grand dukes. It was a revolution aimed at the overthrow of another revolution, which had already overthrown the ancient regime.

Russia was a republic, the czar was a prisoner, the last surviving grand duke was in exile, the land of Russia had been confiscated and distributed amongst the peasants before Lenin took a hand in the government. He rebelled against the new parliamentary regime of which Kerensky, the socialist, was chief. He grew contemptuous of the Volgas of rhetoric which flowed from the first Russian revolution. Endless talk which never froze but which was nevertheless not navigable. It carried nothing, it turned nothing, it was all talk. It could not fight and it would not make peace. It undoubtedly had behind it an overwhelming majority of duly

chosen representatives of the Russian people.

But Lenin had just as great a contempt for the will of the people as Mussolini. He therefore enrolled his followers into an army which swept away the newly created parliamentary system and substituted for it a Cromwellian regime, based on organized force. It was the rule of the armed saints of communism.

The soviet system of election is a farce. No man who is opposed to bolshevism has a chance of appearing at the central assembly. Lenin does not attempt to conceal his opinion that the people are not fit to govern. He does not believe in democracy and he strangled democratic experiment ere it has left its cradle.

#### Bolshevism Teaches Sacrifice

Bolshevism is not a gigantic plundering of propertied classes for the benefit of the impecunious proletariat. That is not an exhaustive, even if it is an accurate definition of its doctrine. It is all that, but it is much more. It teaches the proletariat to sacrifice everything for the bolshevik state and its adherents readily sacrifice life, comfort, liberty, at the behest of the soviet leaders. All the miscalculations with regard to bolshevism have come from the failure to recognize this dominant factor in its composition. It is the spirit that animates fascism in Italy, as long as it continues, bolshevism will rule Russia and fascism will govern Italy.

But they are both fatal to democratic government. Lenin and Mussolini alike despise parliamentarism. The bolshevik attitude towards democratic institutions is stated unequivocally by Trotsky in his famous reply to Kautsky, the champion of democratic socialism:

"The path of socialist ideas, which is visible through all deviations and even betrayals, foreshadows no other of the proletariat at the moment when the latter is strong enough to carry out such a task."

He quotes with approval Paul Lafargue's view of parliamentary government:

"Parliamentarism is a system of government in which the people acquires the illusion that it is controlling the forces of the country itself when, in reality, the actual power is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie, and not even of the whole bourgeoisie but only of certain sections of that class."

After a violent attack on the parliamentary regime as an instrument of the bourgeoisie, the celebrated Russian bolshevik leader goes on: "The soviet regime, which is more closely, straitly, honestly bound up with the tolling majority of the people, does achieve a meaning, not in

statistically reflecting a majority but in dynamically creating it."

We know something of these anti-parliamentary methods of "dynamical creating" a majority—dungeon of Peter and Paul in Russia and castor oil in Italy!

#### Bolshevism and Fascism.

Mussolini does not deny that, although the objects of bolshevism and fascism are different, their methods have much in common. A recent election, based on universal suffrage, gave him 38 followers in a parliament of 400 members. Under the parliamentary system he hardly counted as a force. He was far from being the choice of the democracy. He then struck a Cromwellian attitude and indulged in Cromwellian phraseology.

But for the sacrifice of his followers in the great war, Italy would have been the vessel of the central powers. Their valor preserved Italian liberties, their voices must therefore be paramount in determining how the Italy they had preserved should be governed. They could not any longer permit the country for which they had fought and for which 600,000 of their comrades had lost their lives to be misgoverned by a succession of feeble and incompetent administrations.

If the old-established political machines were too skillfully handled to enable fascism to secure a majority in parliament, so much the worse for parliament. The "prating" must, at any cost, be stopped. Talkers must "make room for better men," so 100,000 armed fascists march on Rome to depose parliamentarism. Mussolini's attitude towards parliament is best given in his own words, as summarized in a reliable report:

"The party was accused of despising parliament. This was not the case. Parliament had nearly ceased to have any importance, owing to the death wound dealt it by syndicalism and journalism. Under the new electoral law which he intended to give the country, parliament would once more become a living body. Fascism was still strong enough by itself and said the prime minister, 'I do not intend to sell my birthright for a mess of pottage—the collaboration of the dregs of Italian political life.' If collaboration was to be offered, it must be wholehearted and unqualified. 'I do not deny the people,' Signor Mussolini concluded, 'their jus murmurandi, but this must not be exaggerated.'"

#### Real Cromwellian Attitude.

There can be no mistaking the meaning of these words. The people may exercise their right to murmur in and through parliament, but that limited right must "not be exaggerated." Fascism was, "strong enough in itself," whatever parliament does to do or not to do. This is the real Cromwellian attitude.

Spain now follows the example of Russia, Italy and Bulgaria. The existing Spanish parliament was only recently elected on a basis of universal suffrage. There was a liberal government in power which, judged according to all constitutional usage, enjoyed the confidence of that parliament. It did not, however, enjoy the confidence of all classes in the country. What party government does? But in this case opposition was powerfully entrenched in the army command. That is also the case in other lands, and that fact, once upon a time, proved to be a serious menace to the life of the third republic in France. It was saved by Clemenceau, Waldeck, Rousseau, Reinach, Zola and many another strong man who believed in liberty.

In Spain the army has successfully arrogated to itself the functions of parliamentary majority. It has now formed a government. The principle of popular sovereignty expressed by parliamentary institutions is set aside in favor of the Cromwellian principle that if major generals are dissatisfied with the working of these institutions they can at any moment step in to regulate them.

Which will be the next country? These coups have been attempted in Germany by communists and reactionaries in their turn, but so far with no success. The enemies of democracy are still on the watch—perhaps on the pounce. If things go badly for Germany they will in all probability spring their conspiracies. Will they prevail? If so, which of them? Much depends on the answer which the coming months will give to these questions.

#### Danger to Democracy.

The spreading reaction against democracy is a serious movement which needs careful watching in all countries. It has the sympathy of extremists on the left as well as on the right. Only a few years ago the British trades unions were temporarily captivated by the idea and called it "direct action." The extreme conservative wing today does not conceal its enthusiasm for Mussolini and his methods. The die-hardism which brought the present government into the world is zealously fascist in sympathy, outlook, and more and more in expression.

Conservatism and constitutionalism were formerly interchangeable terms. But that was in the days when the majority of adults had no voice in the working of the constitution. It is no longer so. An increasing number of conservatives is looking towards unconstitutional methods for security against changes which democracy may soon demand. It is a dangerous hope to cherish. For this weapon is at hand for the communist as well as the conservative to handle. If General Primo de Rivera saved it in Spain, Lenin snatched

it in Russia and his followers are still wielding it with merciless power.

Democracy has its faults. No doubt they were at their worst in Italy when Mussolini rose. But the great lesson of war is that democratic institutions bear a prolonged national strain where autocracy breaks down. The nations that snatched the axle were Russia first, then Bulgaria (a dictatorship born of a coup d'etat), then Turkey, then Austria, then Germany—all of them autocratic governments. They fell according to the degree of their autocracy.

The nations that stood the strain without a break were the democratically governed countries of Britain, France and Italy. The United States of America only came in late and therefore it would be hardly fair to quote them as an example. Democratic institutions are good or bad, according to the quality of the people from

#### Teddy Bear Is Safe

Nome, Sept. 22.—The auxiliary schooner Teddy Bear, for which fears were felt because of a storm that this week raged over Bering sea, is safe at Teller, north of Nome, according to word received here. A United States geological survey party from Point Barrow, which was coming south on the Teddy Bear, was unharmed, it was stated.

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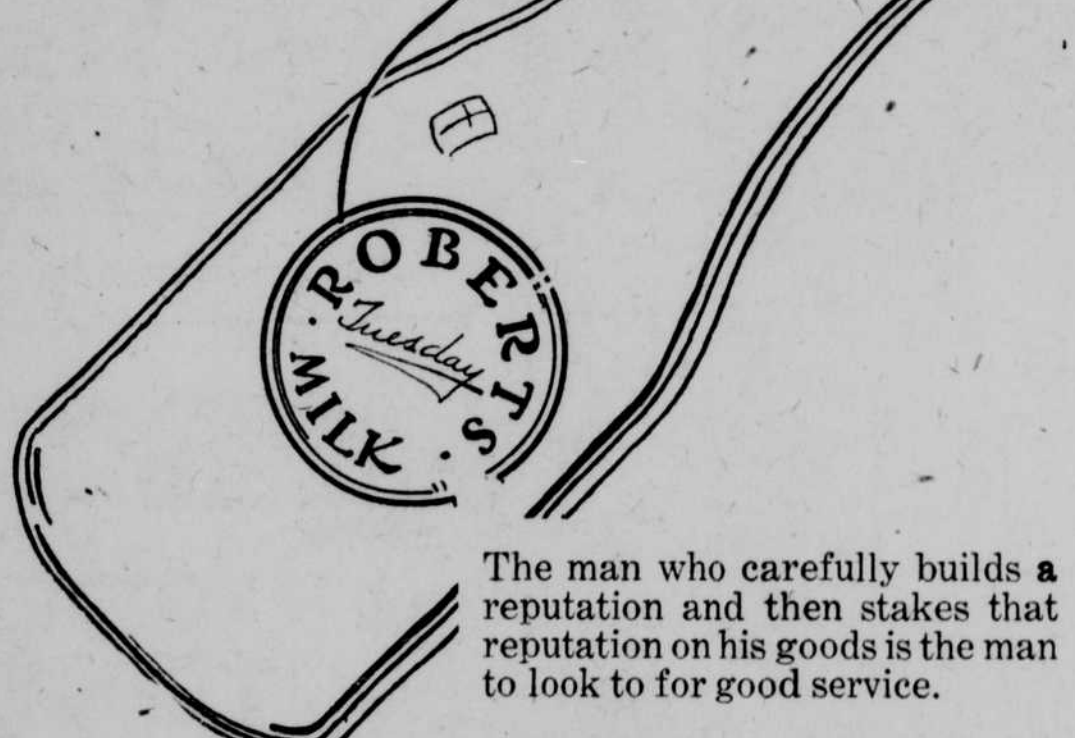
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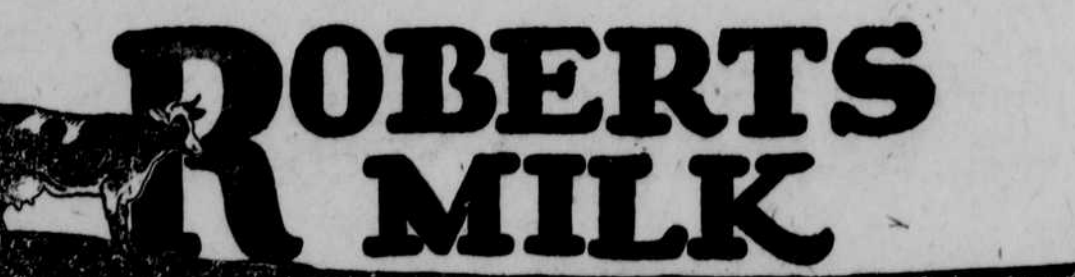


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