

# ONE OF STRANGEST TALES OF WAR IS CRUSADE OF CZECHO-SLOVAKS ACROSS RUSSIA TO LAKE BAIKAL

By HARVEY O'HIGGINS.

One of the strangest and most moving stories of the war has just reached Washington.

It is the official account of how an army of 50,000 men from the Russian front, when Russia had made peace, started to make their way around the world to the fighting line in France, and ended by saving Siberia from the Germans and holding 3,000 miles of Trans-Siberian railroad for the allies against the Germans, the Austrians, and the Russian "Reds" alike.

It is the story of one of those miraculous marches that seem beyond endurance and achieve victories that are beyond belief. And it is the story of the wreck of all German plans in eastern Russia and the probable salvation of the whole Russian situation for the allies.

It has been brought to Washington by the emissaries of that army, the revolutionary army of the Czecho-Slovaks. The leader of their revolution, Prof. Masaryk, has his headquarters in the capital. They have come across the world to report to him.

The Czecho-Slovaks are one of the oppressed races that have been struggling for centuries against Germans and Austrians and Magyars. When this present war broke out, thousands of them escaped across the border into Russia and took service against Austria. Thousands more, drafted into the Austrian armies, deserted across the lines. There were perhaps 100,000 of them in Russia, when the Russian army collapsed. And one army of 50,000 of them under its own leaders still held its lines in the Ukraine after the Ukrainians made peace with Germany.

### Refuse to Treat With Austria.

When the bolshevik government at Moscow also signed the peace of Brest-Litovsk, this army was left to the mercy of the Germans. The Austrian emperor sent them an offer of amnesty if they would return to Austria and a promise of autonomy for their people upon their return. They refused to treat with a government that had betrayed them too often.

They decided to fall back to the Trans-Siberian railway, to negotiate with the bolsheviks for a passage across Siberia to Vladivostok, and there to obtain ships from the allies to carry them to France. They had no sooner come to this decision than they learned that while the Austrians were trying to hold them with offers of amnesty, a German army had been sent to cut them off from the railroad in the rear.

### Look Like An Army of Tramps.

They were well supplied with munitions of war. They had gathered together in their camps the equipment of the Russian armies that had deserted their lines after the revolution. But, like the Russians themselves, they had no food, no shoes, no fodder for their horses, no proper clothing, no camp kitchens. They looked like an army of tramps, in tatters, their feet bound in rags. They were, in fact, an army of intelligent patriots, revolutionary idealists, of whom 80 per cent were university men. Every company carried a library of several hundred volumes. They published every day, even crossing Siberia, a daily newspaper of eight pages.

It was their intelligence that saved them—they outwitted the Germans, the Austrians, the bolsheviks, overcame all their difficulties and ended by dominating the continent through which, at first, they asked only a safe passage.

### Live on Dogs, Cats and Frogs.

Their horses were too weak to pull their wagons. They pulled the wagons themselves and ate the horse meat. They lived on dogs, cats and frogs.

"When we came to a pond," they say, "frogs greeted us with a chorus. When we had passed, there was not a frog to be heard."

They roasted barley to make themselves coffee, and rolled it out with bottles to crush it, and when they had drunk the coffee they ate the grounds. They did not try to loot the peasants. Their intelligence saved them from that disaster.

They knew they could not fight their way through a hostile nation, and when they came to a village and the natives refused them food, they gathered in the market place and stood patiently, in silence, sometimes from morning to nightfall, until the villagers relented and took pity on them. Then they paid for what was brought them and went on with the assurance that their comrades who were following them would receive good treatment. When they could get grain they carried it with them till they came to a windmill, where they ground it.

### Win Battle With Germans.

In that way, they approached the railroad junction only to find a German army between them and any further progress. When their whole force had come up, they attacked. The battle lasted for four days. Then the Germans asked for an armistice to bury their dead. When the armistice expired, they found that the German army had retreated, leaving only a rear guard that fell back before them. They reached the railroad. They advanced along it toward Moscow and opened negotiations with the bolsheviks for a safe passage on the Trans-Siberian railroad to Vladivostok.

It was granted them on condition that they surrender their arms and munitions, which belonged to the Russian government. They had 400 machine guns to each regiment, good rifles, aeroplanes, large supplies of hand grenades, and plenty of ammunition. They gave up everything but their hand grenades and one rifle for every ten men. Then they entrained for the journey across Asia.

### Raiding Under Great Handicaps.

They had difficulties about getting engines and cars. They commandeered these. They had troubles with

the engineers. They put guards on the locomotives with persuasive hand grenades. When everything else failed, they found locomotive engineers in their ranks, ran the trains themselves, and when they needed fuel they stopped the train, cut down trees and filled the tender with wood.

As they got further into Siberia they found that the German and Austrian prisoners of war, quartered in the villages, had taken advantage of the confidence of the peasants. They had obtained places on the local soviets under pretense of being international revolutionists. German and Austrian officers, representing themselves as opposed to militarism and sympathizing with the peasants, had obtained great influence over the unsuspecting natives. They made difficulties for the Czecho-Slovaks. The latter avoided an open conflict until they reached Irkutsk.

### German Officers Are Outwitted.

There, when the first contingent arrived, they were met at the station by 2,000 "red guards" under the leadership of German and Austrian officers in Russian uniforms. They were ordered to surrender their remaining rifles and hand grenades. They refused. The German officers gave their men the order to fire. But in their excitement they gave the order in German. The Russians did not understand it. The Czechs did. They threw themselves on the guards barchanded, with pocket knives, or with stones which they picked up, and in a brief rough-and-tumble struggle they disarmed the guards and killed their German officers. With the rifles and machine guns which they captured, they took possession of the town, disarming the troops of the Central Siberian government and killing the Germans and Austrians to the number of about 800.

On the intervention of the French and American consuls, they sent three of their number to Moscow to negotiate. Trotsky refused to treat with them. The three envoys were arrested and imprisoned. The Czecho-Slovak army thereupon declared war on the bolsheviks and proceeded to clean up the Trans-Siberian railroad and hold it for the allies.

They fought their way across the continent, leaving detachments to guard the railroad behind them, recruiting their numbers from Czech prisoners in Siberian camps and workshops, everywhere disarming the red guards and killing all the Germans and Austrians.

They have now obtained complete possession of the railroad from Vladivostok to the Volga, except for one gap west of Vladivostok, where fighting still continues. They have closed Siberia not only to the Germans, but to the Trotsky government, which can no longer get grain from Siberia.

There are now, with the assistance

## Along the Czecho-Slovak Trail



(Taken from the Literary Digest.)

Eastward along the Trans-Siberian railroad came the Czecho-Slovak army to find ships to take them to the western front. Less than 20,000 reached Vladivostok. Others, held up by the bolsheviks in and around Irkutsk, proceeded to take possession of the railroad between Lake Baikal and the Volga and of towns in the Volga region. Allied forces now hold the White sea and Kola peninsula ports, and from Vladivostok will help the Czecho-Slovaks to secure uninterrupted communications across Siberia.

of the allied contingents in Vladivostok, crushing the last resistance of the army of German and Austrian prisoners, which is fighting in the far east.

The men who have brought the story to Washington are: Captain Hurban and Lieutenant Danilovsky of the Fifth regiment of T. G. Masaryk. Their hardships have left no trace on them.

"Of our first contingent of 15,000 men," the lieutenant says, "only one died of a contagious disease. And no one caught it from him."

They are in high spirits, foreseeing success for their comrades in allied help in Russia and independence for their race in the victories on the western front. Their attitude of mind is best expressed in the words of a banner which the Czecho-Slovaks carried in a Chicago parade. It read: "Cheer up America. We have been fighting them for a thousand years."

His tone was so awed that, at first I thought he meant the guns, which were shaking the ground with their thunders. Then I heard. The birds were waking. It was almost dawn. Just such a twittering and chirping as one would hear in a peaceful glade at home. Evidently the firing did not bother them. One burst into full throated song.

And finally I grew sick to the soul of the insane business.—George Pattullo in Saturday Evening Post.

New Recruit Called Down. The new recruits were keen. One man especially did everything with energy. The order was given to march and the enthusiastic one, who was in the front rank, set off with a will. He strode out, arms swinging, head erect, and eyes strictly "front" and never noticed that he had left his comrades several paces behind. The drill sergeant swallowed hard and then called sweetly: "Say, you'll when you get there send us a picture postcard."—Oakland Enquirer.

## Hot Three-Cornered Fight for Michigan Senatorship



CHASE OSBORN

HENRY FORD



LIEUT.-COMMANDER NEWBERRY

Chase Osborn, Lieutenant-Commander Newberry and Henry Ford, who are engaged in the three-cornered fight for the senatorship of the state of Michigan, the most hotly contested in the political history of the state. The Michigan primary election, which decides the fate of these candidates, is next Tuesday, August 27.

## AIRPLANE RUNNING WILD DOES ALL SORTS DIDOS

Two Skilled French Aviators Set Calmly as Machine Threatens Death

Fort Worth, Tex., Aug. 24.—An airplane running wild in midair and cutting all the daring capers that such a machine is capable of performing, while two skilled French aviators sat calmly in their seats, each believing the other was directing the flight, recently amazed American aviation officers and cadets here who watched its startling gyrations.

Eventually after hair-raising loops, dives and side-slips, in which the airplane almost grazed the earth, it dove nose-first into the ground, driving the engine back through the fuselage up to where one of the aviators sat, but injuring neither of them.



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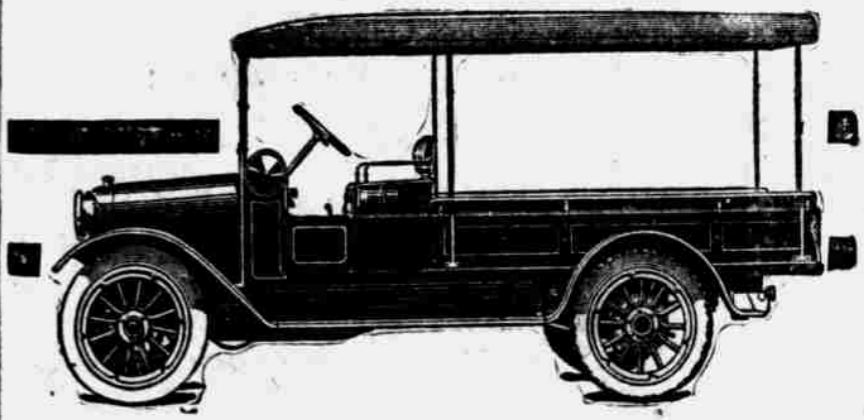
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### Crop of English Slackers

Not as Large as Expected

Correspondence of Associated Press. Dublin, July 30.—The rounding up of the English slackers, who came to Ireland to escape conscription, is proceeding thoroughly, but has not produced anything like the number of men that most people imagined to be available. Estimates running as high as 30,000 were at one time current, but the best opinion now fixes the number at one-fifth of that figure.

The deportation of these people was quite popular. Some of them are supposed to have taken to the hills to avoid arrest, and there are rumors in Dublin that the Dublin and Wicklow mountains are affording them shelter.

### Fifty Cars in Frisco.

In 1900 there were 50 automobiles owned and operated in San Francisco, Cal.

## Leaders of the Czech Crusade



SIBERIAN MILITARY MISSION OFFICERS

From left to right: Private R. Chytil, Lieutenant Dainclorsky and Capt. V. S. Hurban, members of the Siberian military mission, who are visiting the United States as guests of the committee on public information at Washington. The mission is here for the purpose of getting ships to carry the Czecho-Slovak fighting troops to France.