

Rheta Childe Dorr

A photograph of a bronze statue of a woman in a long, flowing dress, standing on a dark pedestal. The statue is set against a clear blue sky with some light clouds. In the foreground, there are trees with autumn-colored leaves. The overall scene is outdoors, likely in a park or public square.

*Inside
the Russian
Revolution*

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CHAPTER I TOPSY-TURVY LAND

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Early in May, 1917, I went to Russia, eager to see again, in the hour of her deliverance, a country in whose struggle for freedom I had, for a dozen years, been deeply interested. I went to Russia a socialist by conviction, an ardent sympathizer with revolution, having known personally some of the brave men and women who suffered imprisonment and exile after the failure of the uprising in 1905-6. I returned from Russia with the very clear conviction that the world will have to wait awhile before it can establish any coöperative millenniums, or before it can safely hand over the work of government to the man in the street.

All my life I have been an admiring student of the French revolution, and I have fervently wished that I might have lived in the Paris of that time, to witness, even as a humble spectator, the downfall of autocracy and the birth of a people's liberty. Well—I lived for three months in the capital of revolutionary Russia. I saw a revolution which presents close parallels with the French revolution both in men and events. I saw the downfall of autocracy and the birth of liberty much greater than the French ever aspired to. I saw the fondest dream of the socialists suddenly come true, and the dream turned out to be a nightmare such as I pray that this or any country may forever be spared.

I saw a people delivered from one class tyranny deliberately hasten to establish another, quite as brutal and as unmindful of the common good as the old one. I saw

these people, led out of groaning bondage, use their first liberty to oust the wise and courageous statesmen who had delivered them. I saw a working class which had been oppressed under czarism itself turn oppressor; an army that had been starved and betrayed use its freedom to starve and betray its own people. I saw elected delegates to the people's councils turn into sneak thieves and looters. I saw law and order and decency and all regard for human life or human rights set aside, and I saw responsible statesmen in power allow all this to go on, allow their country to rush toward an abyss of ruin and shame because they were afraid to lose popularity with the mob.

The government was so afraid of losing the support of the mob that it permitted the country to be overrun by German agents posing as socialists. These agents spent fortunes in the separate peace propaganda alone. They demoralized the army, corrupted the workers in field and factories, and put machine guns in the hands of fanatical dreamers, sending them out into the streets to murder their own friends and neighbors. Every one knew who these men were, but the mob liked their "line of talk" and the government was afraid to touch them. After one of the last occasions when, at their behest, the Bolsheviki went out and shot up Petrograd, Lenine, the arch leader, and some of his principal gangsters deemed it the part of discretion to retire from Russia temporarily, and they got to Sweden without the slightest difficulty, no attempt having been made to stop them. Some of the minor employees of the Kaiser were arrested, among them a woman in whose name the bank

account appeared to be. But she too, and probably all the others, were later released.

A government like this could not bring peace and order into a distracted nation. It could not establish a democracy. It could not govern. The sooner the allied countries realize this the better it will be for Russia and for the world that wants peace. It is not because I am unfriendly to Russia that I write thus. It is because I am friendly, because I have faith in the future of the Russian people, because I believe that their experiment in popular government, if it succeeds, will be as inspiring to the rest of the world as our own was in the eighteenth century. I think the most unkind thing any friend of Russia can do is to minimize or conceal the facts about the terrible upheaval going on there at the present time. Russia looks to the American people for help in her troubled hour, and if the American people are to help they will have to understand the situation. No discouragement to the allies, no assistance to the common enemy need result from a plain statement of the facts. The enemy knows all the facts already.

Everything I saw in Russia, in the cities and near the front, convinced me that what is going on there vitally concerns us. Every man, woman and child in the United States must get to work to give the help so sorely needed by the allies. Whatever has failed in Russia, whatever has broken down must never be missed. We must supply these deficiencies. Our business now is to understand, and to hurry, hurry, hurry with our task of getting trained and seasoned men into France. After what I saw in the neighborhood of Vilna, Dvinsk and Jacobstadt, I know what

haste on this side means to the world. There are several reasons why the whole truth has not before been written about the Russian revolution. It could not be written or cabled from Russia. It could not be carried out in the form of notes or photographs. It could not even be discovered by the average person who goes to Russia, because the average visitor lives at the expensive Hotel d'Europe, never goes out except in a droshky, and meets only Russians of social position to whom he has letters of introduction, and who naturally try to give him the impression that the troubled state of affairs is merely temporary. The visitor usually knows no Russian and cannot read the newspapers. There are two good French newspapers published in Petrograd, but the average American traveler is as ignorant of French as of Russian. Even if he could read all the daily papers, however, he would not get very much information. The press censorship is as rigid and as tyrannical to-day as in the heyday of the autocracy, only a different kind of news is suppressed. One of the modest demands put forth by the Tavarishi (comrades) when I was in Petrograd was for a requisition of all the white print paper in the market, the paper to be distributed equally among all newspapers, large and small. The object, candidly stated, was to diminish the size and the circulation of the "bourgeois" papers.

A great deal of news, as we regard news, never gets into the papers at all, or is compressed into very small space. For example there have been a number of terrible railroad accidents on the Russian roads. Most of these one never heard of unless some one he knew happened to be killed or injured. Sometimes a bare announcement of a great fatality

was permitted. Thus an express train between Moscow and Petrograd was wrecked, forty persons being killed and more than seventy injured. This wreck got a whole paragraph in the newspapers, with no list of the dead and injured and no explanation of the cause. The fact is that the railroads are in a condition of complete demoralization and the only wonder is that more wrecks do not occur.

An acquaintance of mine in Moscow, the wife of a colonel in the British army, was anxious to go to Petrograd to meet her husband who was expected there on his way from the front. My friend's father, who is the managing head of a large Moscow business concern, tried to prevail on her to wait for her husband to reach her there, but she was anxious to see him at the earliest moment and insisted on her tickets being purchased. The day after she was to have gone her father called on me and told me of his intense relief at receiving, an hour before train time, a telegram from the colonel saying that he would be in Moscow the next morning.

"And what do you think happened to that train my daughter was to have taken?" he asked. It was the regular night express to Petrograd, corresponding somewhat to the Congressional Limited between New York and Washington. A few miles out of Moscow a difference arose between the engineer and the stoker, and in order to settle it they stopped the train and had a fight. One of the men hit the other on the head with a monkey wrench, injuring him pretty badly. Authority of some kind stepped in and arrested the assailant. The engineer's cab was blood-stained, and some authority unhitched the engine and sent it back to

Moscow as evidence. The train all this time, with its hundreds of passengers, stood on the tracks waiting for a new engine and crew, and if it was not run into and wrecked it was because it was lucky.

About the middle of August an American correspondent traveled on that same express train from Petrograd to Moscow. The night was warm, and as the Russian occupants of his carriage had the usual constitutional objection to raised windows, he insisted on leaving the door of the compartment open. In the middle of the night a band of soldiers boarded the train and went into every one of the unlocked compartments, five in all, neatly and silently looting them of all bags and suitcases. The American correspondent lost everything he possessed—extra clothes, money, passport, papers. There was a Russian staff officer in that compartment and he lost even the clothes he traveled in, and was obliged to descend in his pajamas. The conductor of the train admitted that he saw the robbery committed, that he raised no hand to prevent it, nor even pressed the signal which would have stopped the train. “They would have killed me,” he pleaded in extenuation. “Besides, it happens almost every night on a small or large scale.”

There is only one way of getting at the facts of the Russian situation, and that is by living as the Russians do, associating with Russians, hearing their stories day by day of the tragedy of what has been called the bloodless revolution. This I did, as nearly as it was possible, from the end of May until the 30th of August, in Petrograd, Moscow and behind one of the fighting fronts. In Petrograd I lived in

the Hotel Militaire, formerly the Astoria, the headquarters of Russian officers and of the numerous English, French and Roumanian officers on missions in Russia. This was the hotel where the bitterest fighting took place during the revolutionary days of February, 1917. The outside of the building is literally riddled with bullets, every window had to be replaced, and the work of renovating the interior was still going on when I left. Under the window in my bedroom was a pool of dried blood as big as a saucer, and the carpet was stained with drops leading from the window to the stationary washbowl in the alcove dressing room. Over the bed were two bullet holes.

Since the revolution the Hotel Militaire has been a garrison, soldiers sleeping in several rooms on the ground floor and two sentinels standing day and night at the door and at the gateway leading into the service court. I do not know why, when I asked for a room, the manager gave it to me. Two other women writers had rooms there, but one was in a party which included American officers, and the other was introduced by an English officer attached to the British embassy. However, I took the room and was grateful, because whatever happened in Petrograd was quickly known in the hotel. Also, it faced the square on which was located the Marie Palace, where the provisional government held many of its meetings, and where several important congresses were held. Whenever the Bolsheviki broke loose this square always saw some fighting. It was an excellent place for a correspondent to live.

I spent much of my time in the streets, listening, with the aid of an interpreter, a young university girl, to the

speeches which were continually being made up and down the Nevski Prospect, the Litainy and other principal streets. I talked, through my interpreter, with people who sat beside me on park benches, in trams, railroad trains and other public places. I met all the Russians I could, people of every walk of life, of every political faith. I spent days in factories. I talked with workers and with employers. I even met and talked with adherents of the old régime. I talked for nearly an hour with the last Romanoff left in freedom, the Grand Duchess Serge, sister of the former empress, widow of the emperor's uncle. I went, late at night, to a palace on the Grand Morskaia where in strictest retirement lives the woman who has been charged with being the closest friend and ally of Rasputin, the one who, at his orders, is alleged to have administered poison to the young Czarevitch. I traveled in a troop train two days and nights with a regiment of fighting women—the Botchkareva “Battalion of Death”—and I lived with them in their barrack behind the fighting lines for nine days. I stayed with them until they went into action, I saw them afterward in the hospitals and heard their own stories of the battle into which they led thousands of reluctant men. I talked with many soldiers and officers.

Russia is sick. She is gorged on something she has never known before—freedom: she is sick almost to die with excesses, and the leadership which would bring the panacea is violently thrown aside because suspicion of any authority has bred the worst kind of license. Russia is insane; she is not even morally responsible for what she is doing. Will she

recover? Yes. But, God! what pain must she bear before she gets real freedom!



CHAPTER II “ALL THE POWER TO THE SOVIET”

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About the first thing I saw on the morning of my arrival in Petrograd last spring was a group of young men, about twenty in number, I should think, marching through the street in front of my hotel, carrying a scarlet banner with an inscription in large white letters.

“What does that banner say?” I asked the hotel commissionaire who stood beside me.

“It says ‘All the Power to the Soviet,’” was the answer.

“What is the soviet?” I asked, and he replied briefly:

“It is the only government we have in Russia now.”

And he was right. The soviets, or councils of soldiers’ and workmen’s delegates, which have spread like wildfire throughout the country, are the nearest thing to a government that Russia has known since the very early days of the revolution.

The most striking parallel between the French and the Russian revolutions lies in the facility with which both were snatched away from the sane and intelligent men who began them and placed in the hands of fanatics, who turned them into mad orgies of blood and terror. The first French revolutionists rebelled against the theory of the divine right of kings to govern or misgovern the people. They wanted a constitution and a government by consent of the governed. But the mob came in and took possession of the situation, and the result was the guillotine and the reign of terror. Miliukoff, Rodzianko, Lvoff, and their associates in the

Russian Duma, rebelled against a stupid, cruel autocrat who was doing his best to lose the war and to bring the country to ruin and dishonor. They wanted a constitution for Russia, and, for the time being at least, a figurehead king who would leave government in the hands of responsible ministers. But the Petrograd council of soldiers' and workmen's delegates came in and took possession of the situation, and the result is a country torn with anarchy, brought to the verge of bankruptcy, and ready, unless something happens between now and next spring, to fall into the hands of the Germans.

These councils of workmen are not new. In the upheaval of 1905-06 a man named Khrustaliov, a labor leader, became the head of an organization called the Petrograd Council of Workmen's Deputies. It was made up of elected delegates from all the principal factories in and near the capital, and during the general strike which forced Nicholas to convene the first Duma, the council assumed general control of the whole labor situation, managing matters with rare good sense and firmness. Witte, who became premier in those days, negotiated with Khrustaliov as with an equal. For a time he and his council were a real power in the empire. A dozen cities formed similar organizations. There were councils of workmen's deputies, peasants' deputies, even, in some places, of soldiers' deputies. The reaction which came in July, 1906, swept them all into oblivion, and I never found anybody who knew what became of Khrustaliov. But the tradition of the council of workmen's deputies was unforgotten. Perhaps the council even existed still in secret; I do not know. It was quickly revived in March,

1917, and before the political revolution was fairly accomplished it had added soldiers to its title and had curtly informed the provisional government and the Duma that no laws could be made or enforced without first having received the approval of the working people's representatives. No policy in peace or war could be announced or put into practice; no orders could be given the army; no treaties concluded with the allies; in short, nothing could be done without first consulting the 1,500 men and women—five women—who made up the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates.

If the country had been in a condition of peace instead of war this would not have been at all a bad thing. The working people of Russia, under the electoral system devised by the old régime, had very little representation in the Duma, and they had a perfect right to demand a voice in the organization of the new government. But unfortunately the country was at war; and more unfortunately still, the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates was made up in large part of extreme radicals to whom the war was a matter of entire indifference. The revolution to them meant an opportunity to put into practice new economic theories, the socialistic state. They conceived the vast dream of establishing a new order of society, not only for Russia but for the whole world. They were going to dictate terms of peace, and call on the working people of every country to join them in enforcing that peace. After that they were going to do away with all capitalists, bankers, investors, property owners. Armies and navies were to be scrapped. I don't know what they purposed doing with the constitution of the

United States, but “capitalistic” America was to be made over with the rest of the world.

Many members of this council are well-meaning theorists, dreamers, exactly like thousands in this country who read no books or newspapers except those written by their own kind, who “express themselves” by wearing red ties and long hair, and who exist in a cloudy world of their own. These people are honest and they are capable of being reasoned with. In Russia they are known as Minsheviki, meaning small claims. A noisy and troublesome and growing minority in the council are called Bolsheviki (big claims), because they demand everything and will not even consider compromise. They want a separate peace, entirely favorable to Germany. I talked to a number of these men, but I could never get one of them to explain the reason of this friendship for Germany. Vaguely they seemed to feel that socialism was a German doctrine and, therefore, as soon as Russia put it into practice, the Germans would follow suit. Not all the council members are working people. Some have never done a hand’s turn of manual work in their lives. Many of the soldier members have never seen service and never will. The Jewish membership is very large, and in Russia the Jews have never been allowed any practice of citizenship.

Lastly the council is liberally sprinkled with German spies and agents. Every once in a while one of these men is unmasked and put out. But it is more than likely that his place is quickly filled. It is a most difficult thing to convince the council that any “Tavarish,” which is the Russian word for comrade, can be guilty of double dealing. The council

defended Lenine up to the last moment. Even after he fled the country the Socialist newspapers, *Isvestia*, *Pravda*, and Maxim Gorki's *Nova Jisn*, declared him to be the victim of an odious calumny. It was this Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates that first claimed a consultive position in the government, and within a few months was parading the streets with banners demanding "All the Power to the Soviet."

I cannot say that I unreservedly blame them. They were people who had never known any kind of freedom, they had been poor and oppressed and afraid of their lives. All of a sudden they were freed. And when they went in numbers to the Duma and claimed a right to a voice in their own future, men like Kerensky and others, who are honest dreamers, others plain demagogues and office seekers, came out and lauded them to the skies, told them that the world was theirs, that they alone had brought about the revolution and therefore had a right to take possession of the country. The effect of this on soldiers and on the working people was immediate and disastrous.

If Kerensky was not the author of the famous Order No. 1, which was the cause of most of the riot and bloodshed in the army, he at least signed it and defended it. This order provided for regimental government by committees, the election of officers by the soldiers, the doing away with all saluting of superiors by enlisted men and the abolition of the title "your nobility," which was the form of address used to officers. In place of this form the soldiers were henceforth to address their officers as Gospodeen (meaning mister), captain, colonel, general, as the case might be. Order No. 1

was a plain license to disband the Russian army. Abolishing the custom of saluting may seem a small thing. A member of the Root mission expressed himself thus to me soon after his arrival in Petrograd: "This talk of anarchy is all nonsense," he said. "A lot of peacock officers are sore because the men don't salute them any more. Why should the men salute?"

Perhaps I don't know why they should, but I know that when they don't they speedily lose all their soldierly bearing and slouch like tired subway diggers. They throw courtesy, kindness, consideration to the winds. The soldiers of other countries look on them with disgust and horror. At Tornea, the port of entry into Finland, I got my first glimpse of this "free" Russian soldier. He was handing some papers to a trim British Tommy, who was straight as an arrow, clean cut and soldierly. The Russian slouched up to him, stuck out the papers in a dirty paw and blew a mouthful of cigarette smoke in his face. What the Tommy said to him was in English, and I am afraid was lost on the Russian, who walked off looking quite pleased with himself. In Petrograd I saw two of these "free" soldiers address, without even touching their caps, a French officer who spoke their language. The conversation was repeated to me thus: "Is it true that in your country, which calls itself a democracy, the soldiers have to stand in the presence of officers? Is it true that they ——" The interrogation proceeded no further, for the Frenchman replied quickly: "In the first place French soldiers do not walk up to an officer and begin a conversation uninvited, so I find it impossible to answer your questions."

If he had been a Russian officer he would probably have been murdered on the spot. The death penalty having been abolished, and the police force having been reduced to an absurdity, murder has been made a safe and pleasant diversion. Murder of officers is so common that it is seldom even reported in the newspapers. When the truth is finally and officially published, if it ever is, it will be found that the brutal and horrible butchery of officers exceeds anything the outside world has ever imagined. I met a woman whose daughter went insane after her husband was killed in the fortress of Kronstadt, the port of Petrograd. He with a number of officers was imprisoned there, and some of the women went to the commander and begged permission to see and speak to their men. He grinned at them, and said: "They are just finishing their dinner. In a few minutes you may see them." Shortly afterwards they were summoned to a room where the men sat around a table. They were tied in their chairs, and were all dead, with evidences of having been tortured.

In the beginning of the revolution the soldiers of Kronstadt killed the old officer commandant. They began by gouging out his eyes. When he was quite finished they brought in the second officer in command and his young son, a lieutenant in the navy. "Will you join us, embrace the glorious revolution, or shall we kill you?" they demanded. "My duty is to command this garrison," replied the officer. "If you are going to kill me do it at once." They shot him, and threw his corpse on a pile of others in a ditch. The son they spared, and a few nights later the young man rescued his father's body and brought it home to be buried. This

story was related under oath by him, but in the face of it and hundreds more like it the death penalty was abolished; nor would Kerensky consent to restore it, except for desertion at the front.

At the Moscow congress, held in August, Kerensky said, apologizing for even this small concession: "As minister of justice I did away with the death penalty. As president of the provisional government I have asked for its reinstatement in case of desertion under fire." There was a burst of applause, and Kerensky exclaimed: "Do not applaud. Don't you realize that we lose part of our souls when we consent to the death penalty? But if it is necessary to lose our souls to save Russia we must make the sacrifice."

Petrograd and Moscow are literally running over with idle soldiers, many of whom have never done any fighting, and who loudly declare that they never intend to do any. They are supported by the government, wear the army uniform, claim all the privileges of the soldier and live in complete and blissful idleness. The street cars are crowded with soldiers, who of course pay no fares. It is impossible for a woman to get a seat in a car. She is lucky if the soldiers permit her to stand in the aisle or on a platform. "Get off and walk, you boorzhoi," said a soldier to my interpreter one day when she was hastening to keep an appointment with me. She got off and walked. I heard but one person dispute with a soldier. She was a street car conductor, one of the many women who have taken men's places since the war. She turned on a car full of these idlers riding free and littering the floor with sunflower seeds, which they eat as Americans eat peanuts, and told them exactly what she

thought of them. It must have been extremely unflattering, for the other passengers looked joyful and only one soldier ventured any reply. "Now, comrade," said he, "you must not be hard on wounded men."

"Wounded men!" exclaimed the woman. "If you ever get a wound it will be in the mouth from a broken bottle." There was a burst of laughter, in which even the soldiers joined. But after it subsided one of the men said defiantly: "Just the same, comrades, it was we who sent the Czar packing." This opinion is shared by the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates. They have completely forgotten that the Duma had anything to do with the revolution. At their national congress of Soviets held in July, they solemnly debated whether or not they would permit the Duma to meet again, and it was a very small majority that decided in favor. But only on condition that the national body worked under the direction of the councils.

CHAPTER III THE JULY REVOLUTION

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Every one who has read the old "Arabian Nights" will remember the story of the fisherman who caught a black bottle in one of his nets. When the bottle was uncorked a thin smoke began to curl out of the neck. The smoke thickened into a dense cloud and became a huge genie who made a slave of the fisherman. By the exercise of his wits the fisherman finally succeeded in getting the genie back into the bottle, which he carefully corked and threw back into the sea. Kerensky tried desperately to get the genie back into the bottle, and every one hoped he might succeed. Up to date, however, there is little to indicate that the giant has even begun materially to shrink. Petrograd is not the only city where the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates has assumed control of the destinies of the Russian people. Every town has its council, and there is no question, civil or military, which they do not feel capable of settling.

I have before me a Petrograd newspaper clipping dated June 12. It is a dispatch from the city of Minsk, and states that the local soviet had debated the whole question of the resumption of the offensive, the Bolsheviki claiming that the question was general and that it ought to be left for the men at the front to decide. They themselves were against an offensive, deeming it contrary to the interests of the international movement and profitable only to capitalists, foreign as well as Russian. Workers of all countries ought to struggle against their governments and to break with all

imperialist politics. The army ought to be made more democratic. This view prevailed, says the dispatch, by a vote of 123 against 79.

This is typical. In some cities the extreme socialists are in the majority, in others the milder Minsheviki prevail. In Petrograd it has been a sort of neck and neck between them, with the Minsheviki in greater number. But as the seat of government Petrograd has had a great attraction for the German agents, and they are all Bolsheviki and very energetic. Early in the revolution they established two headquarters, one in the palace of Mme. Kchessinskaia, a dancer, high in favor with some of the grand dukes, and another on the Viborg side, a manufacturing quarter of the city. Here in a big rifle factory and a few miles down the Neva in Kronstadt, they kept a stock of firearms, rifles and machine guns big enough to equip an army division.

The leader of this faction, which was opposed to war against Germany but quite willing to shoot down unarmed citizens, was the notorious Lenine, a proved German agent whose power over the working people was supreme until the uprisings in July, which were put down by the Cossacks. Lenine was at the height of his glory when the Root Commission visited Russia, and the provisional government was so terrorized by him that it hardly dared recognize the envoys from "capitalistic America." Only two members of the mission were ever permitted to appear before the soviet or council. They were Charles Edward Russell and James Duncan, one a socialist and the other a labor representative. Both men made good speeches, but not a line of them, as far as I could discover, ever appeared in a socialist

newspaper. In fact, the visit of the commission was ignored by the radical press, the only press which reaches 75 per cent of the Russian people.

In order to make perfectly clear the situation as it existed during the spring and summer, and as it exists to-day, I am going to describe two events which I witnessed last July. Both of these were attempts of the extreme socialists to bring about a separate peace with Germany, and had they succeeded in their plans would have done so. Moreover, they might easily have resulted in the dismemberment of Russia.

The 18th of June, Russian style, July 1 in our calendar, is a day that stands out vividly in my memory. For some time the Lenine element of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Council had planned to get up a demonstration against the non-socialist members of the provisional government and against the further progress of the war. The Minshevik element of the council, backed by the government, spoiled the plan by voting for a non-political demonstration in which all could take part, and which should be a memorial for the men and women killed in the February revolution, and buried in the Field of Mars, a great open square once used for military reviews. As the plan was finally adopted it provided that every one who wanted to might march in this parade, and no one was to carry arms. Great was the wrath of the Lenineites, but the peaceful demonstration came off, and it must have given the government its first thrill of encouragement, for events that day proved that the Bolsheviki or Lenine followers were cowards at heart and could be handled by any firm and fearless authority.

It was a beautiful Sunday morning, this eighteenth of June, when I walked up the Nevski Prospect, the Fifth avenue of Petrograd, watching the endless procession that filled the street. Two-thirds of the marchers were men, mostly soldiers, but women were present also, and a good many children. Red flags and red banners were plentiful, the Bolshevik banners reading "Down with the Ten Capitalistic Ministers," "Down with the War," "Down with the Duma," "All the Power to the Soviets," and presenting a very belligerent appearance.

With me that day was another woman writer, Miss Beatty of the San Francisco *Bulletin*, and as we walked along we agreed that almost anything could happen, and that we ought not to allow ourselves to get into a crowd. For once the journalistic passion for seeing the whole thing must give place to a decent regard for safety. We had just agreed that if shooting began we would duck into the nearest court or doorway, when something did happen—something so sudden that its very character could not be defined. If it was a shot, as some claimed, we did not hear it. All we heard was a noise something like a sudden wind. That great crowd marching along the broad Nevski simply exploded. There is no other word to express the panic that turned it without any warning into a fleeing, fighting, struggling, terror-stricken mob. The people rushed in every direction, knocking down everything in their track. Miss Beatty went down like a log, but she was up again in a flash, and we flung ourselves against a high iron railing guarding a shop window. Directly beside us lay a soldier who had had his