

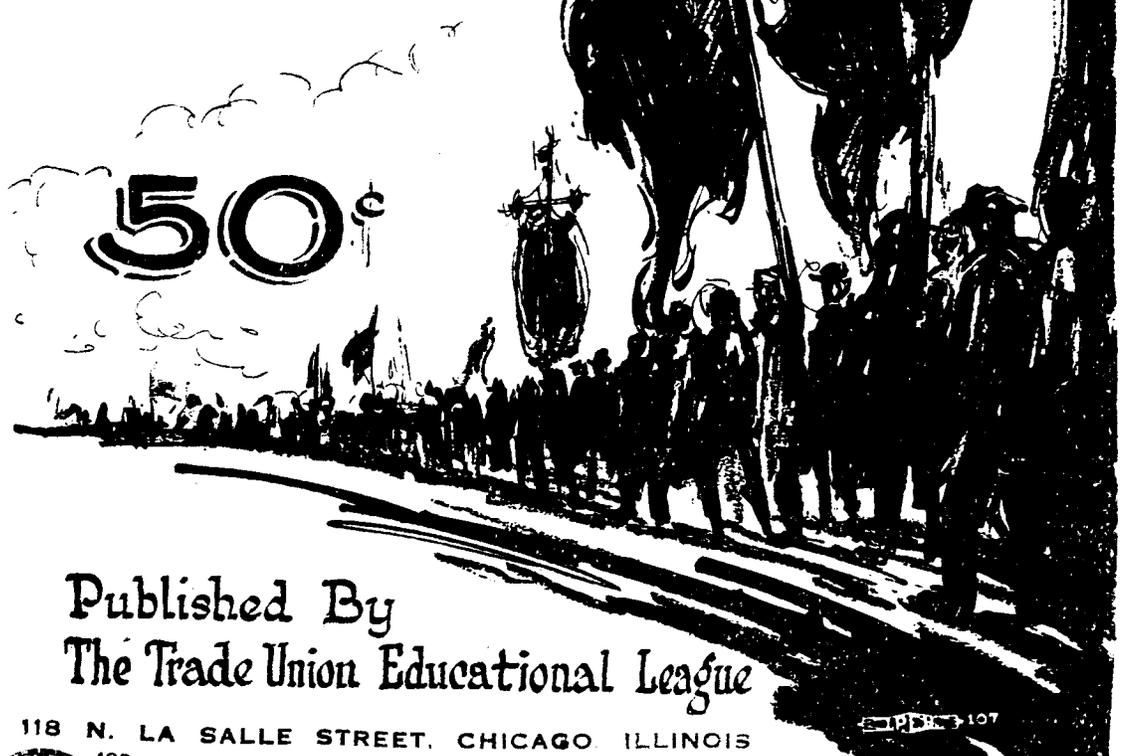
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No. 2

# THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

By  
Wm Z. Foster

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Room 10, 118 N. LaSalle St.

Chicago, Ill.

*This book is affectionately dedicated  
to my wife, Esther*

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By WM. Z. FOSTER

PRICE, \$1.00.

Published by

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Room 10, Oxford Bldg.

118 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, Ill.



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(Thanks is herewith extended to The Federated Press for permission to republish my articles that were run in its service.)

## INTRODUCTION.

This book is a result of a fourteen weeks' stay in Soviet Russia, as a correspondent for the Federated Press, during the Spring and Summer of 1921. It makes no pretensions to being a learned treatise on the Russian revolution: It is merely an effort to give the A. B. C.'s of the situation. What I have tried to do is to portray, simply and in workers' language, the broad outlines of the great upheaval: to answer the many mental queries of the toilers, who have little information on the subject, by describing in a general way the evolution, present status, achievements, and problems of the various important social institutions of the new society, such as the state, the political parties, the trade unions, the industries, the army, etc. It is a brief workers' history of the revolution.

Inasmuch as the social disorganization of Russia is very great and everything is changing with unbelievable rapidity, it is exceedingly difficult for even native investigators to get exact data on the situation. And naturally, for foreigners like myself who do not speak Russian, the difficulty is considerably increased. I was fortunate, however, in being able to talk French and German—after a fashion. This helped me greatly, because the Russians are wonderful linguists, and there are few of them of education who do not speak either or both of these languages in addition to their own. It was seldom that I ran across a leader, a man who was really doing something, with whom I was unable to converse. Many live rank and filers also speak English, French, or German. For contact with the masses and for my extensive reading of Russian revolutionary pamphlets, newspapers, etc., of course, I had to depend upon interpreters.

A favorite argument of counter-revolutionary writers against correspondents who come out of Russia in a friendly or even tolerant mood toward the Soviets is that these correspondents were taken under the wing

of the Government, flattered and made much of, and assigned guides and interpreters who pumped them full of propaganda and were very careful to see to it that they learned nothing of the real conditions of the country. It is a plausible story, but it is ridiculous, as every honest correspondent who has visited Russia will admit. My own experience is typical. The Foreign Office assigned me to lodgings and then left me to my own devices. I went where I pleased and saw whom-ever I wished, without any restrictions that I could discover. I scrambled as best I could for news and information. No regular interpreters were assigned me. I picked up my own as occasion offered. During my stay I had several of them, of every political shade from rigid Communists to avowed counter-revolutionaries. One who went with me a great deal and who was very anxious to give me his ideas (and I was just as eager to get them) was an outspoken Menshevik. Another was an Anarchist. The latter was especially fearful that I was being "stuffed" by the Communists, and he lost no occasion to explain to me the seediest sides of the revolution. From what I could learn, once a correspondent gets into Russia he is free to do pretty much as he pleases, unless he dabbles in politics. The Russian revolution is too busy solving its great problems to pay much attention to his petty activities. The tales of the "stuffing" of foreigners with propaganda is a joke among Russians.

To me the Russian revolution did not seem difficult to understand. It is only our own labor movement carried to its logical conclusion. Our trade unions pit their organized intelligence and power against the employers and wrest from them every concession they are able to take, regardless of how profound they may be. The Russian political and industrial organizations, working upon identical principles, but with infinitely better understanding, determination, discipline and power than our unions as yet possess, have finally and completely defeated their exploiter opponents. Hence, instead of having to content themselves with petty conquests as we now must, they have been able to go the whole way and have made the masters yield all their privileges at one blow. Notwithstanding the disclaimers of our respectable trade union leaders, the Russian and American labor movements are blood brothers in

method and goal. The only differences between them are those of understanding and development.

I am not astonished or discouraged that the workers are making a poor job of establishing the new society in Russia—I have had too much practical experience with the masses to expect anything else. Have I not organized as many as three or four thousand packing house or steel workers in a single local union and then searched in vain among them for even one skilled or adaptable enough to keep the simple financial accounts of the organization or to conduct its meetings? What, then, could I expect from the even less experienced Russian workers with the enormous tasks of the Russian revolution suddenly thrust upon them? Nothing more than the shrieking incompetence and indifference of the masses that I found—with a few live wires doing all the real work. Nor am I appalled at the terrible suffering of the people. I do not attempt to ignore it, but I know very well that it is only through starvation and all-round misery that the workers can make progress. Every great strike teaches that lesson. And the Russian revolution is only a strike raised to the nth degree.

The revolution is a bitter struggle, but I do not despair of the outcome. By their heroic and wonderful achievements in the past the Russian workers breed confidence for their future. Although all the world said it could not be done, they solved the political problem of organizing and controlling the Government in the face of great odds, and they solved the military problem by building a vast army and beating back their many foes. And they will solve the tremendous industrial problem also. In my judgment the Russian revolution will live and accomplish its great task of setting up the world's first free commonwealth.

WM. Z. FOSTER.

Chicago, November 1, 1921.

# I.

## HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTION.

The Russian revolution is one of the very greatest events in all human history. What has happened is that the oppressed masses of Russian workers and peasants have risen against their masters, overthrown them, and destroyed the whole political and industrial structure of the old regime. They have taken control of the land, the industries, and the state, and are operating them in their own interest, paying no tribute to exploiters of any sort. The world has never seen such a profound social upheaval.

To make the kindly, docile, peaceful Russian toilers desperate and to drive them into such a sweeping revolution could only be accomplished by the bitterest hardship and oppression. And this the old ruling class was foolish enough to inflict upon them in boundless measure. The story of pre-revolutionary Russia is one of the darkest in civilization's annals. Liberty was dead and brutal autocracy reigned supreme. Politically and industrially, the workers and peasants were destitute of right and justice. They were mercilessly abused and robbed at the whims of their heartless masters. But the day of reckoning finally came: with a mighty effort the downtrodden slaves turned against their tormentors and finished with them.

Never has human history been made so rapidly as during the tremendous Russian revolutionary drama. Great event has followed great event with bewildering speed. In this brief chapter all I can do is to give the barest indication of their general course. For this purpose it will be convenient to consider the revolution under three of its great historical phases—political, industrial, and military, in the order named:

The first great attempt of the Russian workers to get rid of their masters came in 1905. It is true that long before that time many heroic militants had fought the oppressor with pistol and bomb, and thousands of them died or were exiled in consequence. But the masses never became really aroused until the days of the Russian-Japanese war. The war was going badly for the Czar, and the workers, taking advantage of the

situation, began to organize industrially and politically. But the terrified Government met them with fire and sword. In the famous Bloody Sunday demonstration of January, 1905, hundreds of workers, led by the police spy Father Gapon, were killed in cold blood. This outrage stirred the people as never before. Trade unions multiplied themselves everywhere, and the first Soviet of workers and peasants was organized in October of that year. But the Czar defeated the spreading rebellion by a double policy of conciliation and terrorism. He conceded the Duma to the people, and at the same time shot down the workers en masse. The uprising was drowned in blood: 15,000 workers were executed and 100,000 more exiled. Bitterness sank deep into the hearts of the revolutionary proletariat.

After 1905 there ensued a long period of black reaction, the crowning infamy of which was the forcing of Russia into the world war. The Russian worker and peasant soldiers, practically unarmed, half-starved, and often betrayed by their own officers, were thrown against the splendidly equipped German and Austrian armies and slaughtered by millions—Russia lost more men in the war than all the other powers, allied and enemy, combined. And while the soldiers at the front were being murdered and driven desperate; the people at home, abused and terrorized, were coerced into a like revolutionary frame of mind.

Finally human endurance could stand it no longer and the break came. On February 22, 1917 (old style), the workers in the big Putilof factories in Petrograd demonstrated in protest against the food shortage. The employers retaliated by a lockout. This roused the workers and they declared a strike in other plants. During the next few days the trouble rapidly developed, and food riots and mass strikes spread all over the city. The Government was incapable of handling the situation. Finally the troops joined hands with the people and, together, they smashed the weak resistance of the police and other defenders of the Czar's regime. Shortly after, the terrified Czar, overtaken by his outraged people at last, abdicated, and thus political autocracy came to an end in Russia. This was the "February" revolution; it was virtually bloodless.

Immediately upon the Czar's fall there developed a bitter struggle between the various political groups

over what kind of a society the new Russia should be. Each tried to warp the revolution according to its political interests and conceptions. The Cadets (Constitutional Democrats), a typical capitalist party, wanted a bourgeois democracy. The Mensheviki, moderate, right-wing Socialists, advocated political and industrial reforms for the workers and a share for them in a bourgeois democracy. The Social Revolutionists, a peasants' party, stood for land reform and petty bourgeois Socialism in general. The Bolsheviki, who were Communists, demanded a complete proletarian revolution. The first three parties proposed, in varying degrees, social reform, the collaboration of classes, and the preservation of the democratic state. The last, the Bolsheviki, differing fundamentally from the others, declared for the immediate abolition of capitalism and the democratic state, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the delegation of all power to the Soviets. In practice, however much the first three quarrelled among themselves over details of their programs, they were always united against their arch enemy, the Bolsheviki.

In the political turmoil that followed the February revolution each of the important groups had a taste of power and an opportunity to test out its program. The first were the Cadets. Being the only recognized opposition party under the Czar's regime, they alone had any appreciable organization when the crash came. So, under the leadership of Milyukov, they took command of the political power and set up the Provisional Government. Then, true to their capitalistic interests, they prepared to continue Russia in the world war and to launch her forth in an imperialistic drive to capture Constantinople. But they little recked of the strength and character of the revolution. The people, massed in the Soviets and stirred by the Bolsheviki, demonstrated against them and forced Milyukov and several other ministers to resign. The Bolsheviki demanded the realization of the great slogan of the revolution, "Peace, Bread, and Liberty." The next to come to the political helm was a coalition Government of bourgeois and Socialists. But it fared no better than its predecessor, and had to make way for a new Coalition Gov-

ernment with the Social Revolutionist, Alexander Kerensky, at its head.

Kerensky, a typical right-wing Socialist reformer, played the capitalistic game of his predecessors and disregarded the revolutionary mood of the people. They demanded peace, and he organized a great military offensive against the Central Powers; they demanded bread, and he arrested the peasants who attempted to confiscate the nobles' land, and he helped the employers to defeat the city workers' trade unions; they demanded liberty, and he tried to crush the Soviets, persecuted the Bolsheviki,\* and kept the capitalists in his coalition Government. But the revolution finally overcame him. His military offensive, built out of wind, went to smash, and the Germans poured into the country. The people, enraged by his all-round betrayal of the revolution, stormed against him and his Government; and he, sensing the inevitable collapse, fled from Petrograd on October 24, 1917. The next day the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, controlled by the Bolsheviki, took over the government of the country, with little resistance save in Moscow and one or two other places. This was the "October" revolution. And thus was all power delegated to the Soviets and the present dictatorship of the proletariat inaugurated.

The Bolsheviki, later known as the Communists, are a party of action, and immediately they achieved power they set about satisfying the people. The people demanded peace, and the Bolsheviki at once opened the peace negotiations that ended in the Brest-Litovsk treaty a few months later; the people demanded bread; and the Bolsheviki nationalized the land the very day they took hold of the Government and they nationalized the industries shortly afterward; the people demanded liberty, and the Bolsheviki destroyed every semblance of bourgeois government and gave all power to the proletarian Soviets. It was this speedy and fundamental action of the Bolsheviki that laid the basis of

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\*The world has the notion that Kerensky was overthrown because he soft-heartedly tolerated the Bolsheviki and permitted them to organize against him. Nothing is farther from the truth. He hated them deeply and persecuted them as much as he dared. At one time, in June and July, he had thousands of them in jail, among others Leon Trotzsky. He also demanded that Lenin, Zinoviev, and other radical leaders, then in hiding, give themselves up to "justice."

their future wonderful power. By meeting the great issues of the revolution squarely, they won the hearts of the masses of workers, peasants, and soldiers, and destroyed the foundations of all other important political parties. They had little difficulty later on in consolidating their power by completely capturing the trade unions, the peasants' organizations, the army, etc. When the Constituent Assembly, the cherished hope of the bourgeoisie, met in January, 1918, all the Bolsheviks had to do was to withdraw from it and the whole business collapsed. One lone sailor dispersed the remaining delegates and closed the hall. Thus perished the last remnant of the capitalist government. The Soviets stood supreme.

While these stirring events were happening in the political field the class war reigned also in the realm of industry. The February revolution merely did away with the political autocracy of Czardom. It did not end private property in the industries. On the contrary, the employers thought it was the beginning of a new era of prosperity for them, one in which they could soar to fresh heights of capitalistic exploitation, unhampered by the feudalistic hindrances of Czarism. But they soon saw their mistake: they found themselves confronted by a militant industrial proletariat determined to win economic emancipation.

Before the February revolution the workers had few trade unions (see chapter on Trade Unions for more complete history), but immediately thereafter they began to organize them rapidly. Especially speedy was the development of the shop committees. It was a very simple operation for all the workers in a given plant to meet and pick out their shop committee, which then took up the cudgels for them with the company. Such shop committees took shape in nearly every industrial concern in Russia in the first few weeks of the revolution. The trade unions, being a more elaborate form of organization, grew somewhat slower.

Immediately the workers achieved some degree of organization they went into an offensive against the employers. They demanded the right to organize, the eight-hour day, increases in wages, the right of control over the hiring and discharging of workers, the right of the shop committees to examine the books and general

business affairs of the companies, and various other important measures. The employers, with a strong organization dating from before the revolution, met this attack with desperate resistance. They were an untamed lot, accustomed under Czarism to treat their workers like dogs, and they were resolved not to lose any of their prerogatives. As the Spring and Summer of 1917 wore on the fight grew hotter and hotter. Great strikes raged in all the industrial centers. At first the workers, having a fair field, got the best of it; but about July, the Kerensky Government coming more and more to the assistance of the employers, the tide of battle turned gradually in the latter's favor and they entered into a huge campaign of lockouts and sabotage, calculated to bring the industries to a standstill and to starve the workers into submission.

Driven to extremes by these and other attacks, the workers, through their Soviets, upset the Kerensky Government (the October revolution) and seized political control themselves. Then, patterning after their erstwhile masters, they used the state power in their own behalf. This gave them definite ascendancy over the employers. Lossovsky thus describes the situation:

"The October revolution made the workers the ruling class and the employers the subject class. It reversed the relations between employers and employees, and put the trade unions in the face of new tasks. Immediately after the October Revolution the strikes ceased. Thenceforth, the worker develops his grievances, presents them to the trade union and if it sanctions them they are put into force by the power of the state. In case an employer refuses, the worker has at his service the prison and all the other methods of persuasion prepared by the bourgeoisie. For the first time in the history of humanity the state takes part in strikes for the benefit of the worker, arrests the employer for refusing to grant the demands of the toilers, establishes by decree wage scales fixed by the unions, and confiscates the factories of the recalcitrant employers."\*

Although the workers nationalized the land and turned it over to the peasants the very day they overthrew the Kerensky Government, they intended to proceed only gradually with the nationalization of the complicated industries. To begin with they did nothing more than to install a strong "workers' control." This meant that the employers should still own the plants and also manage them—subject to a stringent super-

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\*"Les Syndicats en Russie Sovietiste," P. 22.

vision by the workers. It was hoped that by this arrangement the actual producers should acquire the technical skill of management indispensable for them when the industries should be taken over by the state later on.

But the employers upset this program. They were careful to see to it that the workers learned none of the precious industrial knowledge from them. They redoubled their efforts to sabotage the industries and to paralyze the economic life of the nation. In this course they were seconded by the intellectuals, office workers, and other "white-collar" elements generally. This forced the workers into still more drastic action. First, the militant shop committees began to drive away the employers and to take charge of their plants. Then, the Government took a hand in the work of confiscation. To begin with it nationalized the banks and other credit institutions, as the heart of capitalism. After that the big basic industries followed in rapid succession, until, finally, about 90 per cent of the modernized industrial mechanism had become the property of the workers' state. The rule of the capitalists was broken in Russian industry.

Driven out of political and industrial control, the capitalists and other reactionaries promptly appealed to armed force. Immediately after the October revolution a series of bitter civil wars began which lasted over three years. The first counter-revolutionary attempt was by Kerensky just after his downfall, but the Red Guard had little trouble in breaking it up. Then began a whole group of uprisings, mostly in the border countries of Siberia, Ukraine, etc., and led by Alexeyev, Kornilov, Krassnov, Doutov and others. These lasted through the Fall and Winter of 1917. Most of them were furthered by the deposed Mensheviki and Social Revolutionists. At one time 50 per cent of the trade union leaders were under arms. The factory workers, in the famous Red Guard, rallied and beat them all down.

In the Spring of 1918 the counter-revolutionary forces returned to the struggle with renewed vigor, this time supported by international capitalism. The German troops captured the Ukraine, the English invaded the North, Krassnov and Doutov raged in the Cossack

countries. The Checho-Slovaks overran large sections of Siberia and the Volga Valley, Kolchak's White Guards occupied enormous stretches of the East. It was indeed a critical period for the Soviet Republic. Its territory was reduced to only one-tenth of pre-war Russia, and even this small area was seething with counter-revolutionary uprisings. The Workers' Government lost control of the great oil, coal, cotton and grain districts. But one thing it retained, even more precious than all these, that was the loyalty and confidence of the Russian people. This is what saved it.

In the crisis of 1918 the Red Army was organized. It was vastly superior in methods and organization to the old Red Guard. Little by little, and in the face of unheard of difficulties, it was built up. As soon as it began to take shape the military situation improved. Everywhere the workers' foes were checked, and, in several instances, routed. Kolchak in Siberia, Krasnov in the South, Petlura and Skoropadsky in the Ukraine—all were defeated before the year was out. Throughout 1919 the war raged on many fronts, at times going very badly for the Soviets and threatening to overwhelm them. But by heroic efforts, by the Communists and other workers recklessly sacrificing themselves, the situation was saved, and the armies of Kolchak, Deneikin, Yudenitch and others were either demolished or driven out of action before the Winter set in. The British and American troops were held in check. The year 1920 was marked by bitter struggles against Poland in the North and West, and Wrangel in the South. The Soviet troops emerged victorious; peace was established with Poland, and Wrangel was smashed completely.

Thus ended, ingloriously, all of international capitalism's military efforts against Soviet Russia. Before the militant proletarian soldiers, the whole capitalist world had to retreat. Today the great Russian country, three times as large as the United States, is entirely free from armed opposition to the workers' republic. The Soviet Government stands firm, the undisputed victor over all its powerful and treacherous enemies. It has gloriously won the right to peaceful development.

## II.

### THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT.

The present Russian Government is revolutionary in aim and effect. It proposes to, and actually is wiping out every semblance of capitalism and exploitation of the workers through the wages system. Its eventual purpose is to set up a purely Communist, or Socialist, commonwealth in which industrial justice shall reign. This is expressed in the following section of the national Constitution:

“The principal object of the Constitution of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic consists of the establishment (by means of a strong Soviet Government) of the dictatorship of the urban and rural workers, combined with the poorer peasantry, to secure the complete destruction of capitalism, the ending of exploitation of man by man, and the bringing about of Socialism, under which class divisions, and the state coercion arising therefrom, will no longer exist.”

Following out these principles, Russia is a real workers' republic. Work is the standard by which it establishes the status of all its people. The nation's official motto, also written into the Constitution, is, “He who does not work, neither shall he eat.” Only the workers—including the peasants and soldiers—who are over the age of eighteen have the right to vote or to hold office. No distinction is made because of sex. Capitalists and others who live by exploiting labor are disfranchised and denied all participation in the Government.

Some American labor leaders affect to be horrified by this latter arrangement. They demand “a square deal” and the right to vote for the capitalists and other social parasites. They conveniently forget that these same exploiters, fully conscious that they are engaged in a fight with the workers, seek everywhere to disfranchise them politically as much they can. And their efforts are thoroughly successful. In all the so-called democratic countries they have, through their control of the press and the schools, and by setting up all sorts of sex, residence, property and other voting qualifications, practically cancelled the working class politically and denied it any real say in its own government. Now

the revolutionary Russian workers have no illusions about these matters. They face the facts squarely, even if some of our American leaders lack the courage or intelligence to do so. They have taken the measure of the capitalists and know them for what they are: greedy exploiters who perform no useful social service, and who will stop at nothing, not even the systematic poisoning of the people's minds and the causing of frightful wars, in their pursuit of limitless gain and power. Hence, they condemn these anti-social elements and outlaw them. For the Russian workers to admit the capitalists to full citizenship in their republic would be just as stupid and illogical as for American workers to accept employers into their trade unions.

The whole Russian governmental system is founded upon the local Soviets. These exist in all the cities, towns, and villages. They are made up of representatives of the three great branches of the Russian working class: industrial workers, peasants, and soldiers. There are no general elections as we understand the term. The workers elect their Soviet representatives directly at their work-places, the peasants theirs in the village meeting halls, and the soldiers theirs in the barracks. Trade unions, co-operatives, and other working class organizations are also allowed a certain representation directly. Officials of and delegates to the Soviets are always on their good behavior and may be recalled at any time by those who elected them.

The work of the local Soviets is to organize and supervise the social, political, and industrial activities of the people within their respective jurisdictions, bearing in mind, of course, the superior authority of higher governmental organs and the functions of technical, military, and other bodies. Their scope of activity ranges from the simple work of a village Soviet to the complex tasks of running a great metropolis. In Moscow, for instance, the Soviet consists of 21 departments, as follows: Justice; Finance; Military; Postal; Industry; Fuel; Food (securing of supplies); Land; Compulsory Labor; Public Service (water, light, street cars, etc.); Education; Labor; Health; Social Welfare; General Management (police, prisons, marriages, births, deaths, etc.); Statistical; Workers' and Peasants' Control (supervisory); Transportation; Building; Food (distribution); Extraordinary Commis-

sion (prevention of counter-revolutionary activities, etc.). All these departments are divided into bureaus which specialize in the thousand and one activities that go to make up the life of a big, modern city.

Above the urban and rural Soviets there is an elaborate governmental structure built upon similar principles which secure organization and homogeneity of the workers and their institutions to correspond with the industrial and political divisions of the country. Thus there are Soviets in the ascending territorial scale of volosts, districts, governments, and provinces: which roughly correspond to our townships, counties, congressional districts and states. Each of these Soviets functions as the Government in its particular sphere, naturally not infringing on the work of the Soviets in the spheres above and below it in authority. In every case the higher Soviet is built up of delegates coming from the lower Soviets in its jurisdiction. Thus a district Soviet consists of representatives of all the volost Soviets in its territory, etc., up to the highest forms. At all stages of the Soviet organization the delegates may be recalled at any time by their constituents.

The general Soviet pyramid comes to its apex in the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. This is the supreme Governmental body of the Russian Republic. It meets approximately every six months. Between its sessions the social control of the country is supervised by the Central Executive Committee. This committee is composed of 200 members, selected from among the assembled delegation of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

Next to the Central Executive Committee, and chosen from its ranks, stands the Council of People's Commissars. This body is really the Cabinet of Russia and actually superintends the carrying out of all important policies. It also has considerable legislative power between Congresses. There are 17 Commissars, one for each of the following Departments: Foreign Affairs; War; Marine; Interior; Justice; Labor; Social Insurance; Education; Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones; Nationality Affairs (Russia being a federation of many nationalities), Finance; Transportation; Agriculture; Food; Workers' and Peasants' Control; Supreme Economic Council; and Public Hygiene. The

work of the Council of Peoples' Commissars is subject to the veto of the Central Executive Committee, and both of these bodies are responsible to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

The law-making of the Soviet Government is direct and final. In Russia one does not see, as in the United States, thousands of legislators solemnly passing laws all over the country and then a handful of old fogies in a Supreme Court calling them unconstitutional. Once the workers' Government has spoken that settles the matter. I say this bearing in mind what I have said in another chapter about the Communist Party. The Communist Party works through the Government, but not instead of it.

There being no other Government built similar to that of Russia, it is difficult, without undue elaboration, to convey an idea of the power and rank of the respective superior Soviets and officials. It may be said, however, that the Central Executive Committee roughly corresponds to a Senate, and its President, Kalenin is often referred to as the President of Russia. And as the Council of Peoples' Commissars may be called the national Cabinet, its chairman, Lenin, is equivalent to Prime Minister. As in France, so in Russia: the Prime Minister being the more closely identified with and responsible for the policies of the Government, his position is a much more important office than that of President.

Many writers have declared that the Soviets are structures peculiarly Russian in character. But this is open to grave doubt. The fact is that there was very little understanding of them or propaganda made for them before they sprang up during the great revolutionary upheaval of 1905. They were natural products of the fierce struggle, even as they were of the revolutions of 1917. For a working class that has broken with capitalism and that finds itself on the road to power, it is perfectly logical, if not inevitable, for it to discard the old state machinery and parasitic social elements, and to select its governmental representatives, Soviet fashion, directly in the workshops, fields, and barracks. Indeed, Soviets are the sign-manual of the revolution. When the great crash comes in any country, the workers are always confronted with the supreme question of whether they shall seize all

political power themselves or call back the bourgeois to share it with them. The first way leads inevitably to Soviets and revolution, and the second to a Constituent Assembly and reform. Even so far back as the Paris Commune traces of Soviets are to be found. And it is significant that the workers of Germany and Hungary turned rapidly to Soviets when their old Governments broke down after the war. If the Russian workers have the Soviet idea stronger than other branches of the world's proletariat, it is merely because they have been confronted with more extreme revolutionary crises.

The Soviets have many admitted faults. But they are peculiarly well-adapted to a revolutionary situation. They give the workers a much more flexible and practical governmental organization than one constructed upon so-called democratic principles. It is safe to prophecy that, the revolution prospering, the Russian workers will not dispense with their Soviets until they are able to develop the non-governmental society towards which they are aiming.

### III.

#### THE RED ARMY.

One of the greatest achievements of the Russian revolution was the creation of the Red Army. This famous organization is the protector of the revolution, which it has successfully shielded from an armed and hostile capitalist world. When at its maximum, during the most critical period of the civil wars, the Red Army numbered 5,300,000 members and was the strongest military organization in the world.

In order to understand the events and forces leading up to the creation of the Red Army we must go back at least as far as the breaking-up of the old Czar's army. Already, even before the February, 1917, or "first" revolution, this enormous military machine was disintegrating. The workers and peasants, weary of the murderous imperialist war and rebellious at the outrageous treatment they got from their officers, were deserting by tens of thousands. When the Czar's Government collapsed this disintegration was greatly hastened. Kerensky tried to hold the old army together and make it fight, but it melted away like snow under a July sun. Millions of soldiers quit it, taking with them whatever equipment they had, and made for their homes in all parts of Russia.

The journey homeward of this multitude of soldiers, and the great armies of munition workers who abandoned the factories at the same time, was one of the most spectacular and tragic events in history. Enormous numbers of them walked as much as four or five thousand miles back to their native villages, living, or dying, on the way; no man knows how. The railroads were choked beyond belief. The trains were literally packed with humanity, inside, outside, top, and bottom; every place where human beings could hang on had its occupants. Large numbers were killed by the over-crowded car roofs falling in and crushing the people below, and by those on top being swept off as the trains went through the tunnels. The whole thing was a horrible nightmare.

With the old army rapidly going to pieces, a pressing need arose for the creation of a defense force to

preserve order and to protect the revolution from the machinations of imperialistic counter-revolutionaries. Consequently the Red Guard was organized. This happened while Kerensky was still in power. The Red Guard, which was an entirely distinct organization from the Red Army, was a loose body, composed for the most part of workers recruited from the various shops and factories in the big industrial centers, together with a few remnants of the old army. Notwithstanding its lack of numbers, organization, equipment, and discipline, it served its purpose well, covering itself with glory in many a hard-fought fight. It was sharply revolutionary in spirit, and it finally went hand in hand with the Bolsheviki in overthrowing the Kerensky Government during the "second," or October revolution.

Hardly was the present Soviet Government in power than it set about remedying the evident inadequacy of the Red Guard. The whole capitalist world was arrayed against Russia; terrific struggles were surely ahead; and in order to survive them a great, powerful, military machine had to be built up. Hence plans were laid for the Red Army and their carrying out entrusted to the remarkably able Peoples' Commissar for War, Leon Trotsky.

Tremendous problems lay in the path of the new Red Army—military experts the world over considered them insoluble and treated the whole project as visionary. One was to convince the people that they should have an army. They had just destroyed their old army, and were utterly sick of war and all forms of militarism. To arouse them to a realization that the revolution had to be defended was a great task, but it was finally accomplished.

Another problem related to the question of compulsory military service. Because of their bitter experiences under Czarism the Russian people, especially the revolutionary elements, had gained a deep hatred of conscription. Hence when they founded the old Red Guard they based it upon the system of volunteer enlistment. But this did not work out well. The mass of the people were war-weary and the burden of the struggle fell upon the best and most militant elements of the city workers. Russia was slaughtering off her most precious mechanics (a loss from which her indus-

tries are still suffering severely), while the slacker elements either stayed aloof from the army altogether; or, having joined it, would soon desert, fed up, with good clothes on their backs, and rifles in their hands.

Under such conditions the building of a real fighting force was out of the question. The Russian leaders did not hesitate before the obvious remedy; they established universal compulsory military service. For this they have been criticised by utopian theorists who see the revolution through the rosy spectacles of a celestial idealism. But the shallowness of such criticism is evident to everyone who has had actual contact with the masses in action and knows their limitations. Even in the trade union movement the principle of compulsion must be applied in many ways. What, for instance, would become of that movement if it depended upon a volunteer system of dues? It would degenerate into chaos in a hurry. Labor unions the world over have found it necessary to adopt stringent regulations, the practical effect of which is to virtually compel the more ignorant and indifferent workers to fight intelligently and vigorously in their own behalf. And so it was in Russia: the leaders had to introduce the discipline of compulsory military service in order to make the backward masses defend the conquests of the revolution. They are not at all sentimental about the thing; they know very well that there is a world of difference between conscription to protect your masters' interests, and conscription to protect your own. They have no apologies to offer.

A series of grave difficulties revolved around the question of army control and command. The first had to do with the general system to be employed. The prevailing opinion among the people was for committees of soldiers to direct all military activities. This was a reaction against the old regime. In the Czar's army great bitterness had existed between the officers and the rank and file. The former were an iron-bound caste of aristocrats who lost no opportunity to tyrannize over the common soldiers. Hence, when the "first" revolution came a natural demand of the rank and file was for the right to elect their own officers. This demand was granted them, and the committee system

introduced into the rapidly decaying imperial army, and later on into the Red Guard.

But the results were fatal to military efficiency. Discipline vanished and the military units degenerated into debating societies. Elections of officers and commanding committees followed one another in rapid succession. There was no head or tail to anything. Orders would be given a regiment to do a certain thing and then, maybe a week later, word would arrive at headquarters that the regiment, after long consideration, had decided that the orders were impractical and should not be obeyed. Consequently the value of the armed forces as a fighting body fell almost to zero.

As usual, the organizers of the Red Army met the issue squarely. They decided that the popular election of officers and commanding committees in the army must go. But it took a lot of work to convince the rank and file. The organizers pointed out that the demand for rank and file control of the officers was a legitimate one under Czarism, but that it was out of place under the Soviet regime, which, being founded upon the interests of the workers, could certainly be trusted to choose the army command. Eventually this view prevailed and, in the name of efficiency, the selection of officers by common soldiers was left out of Red Army practice.

But where could the Government secure the necessary officers? The former ruling class had a monopoly on military knowledge; the workers themselves knowing little or nothing about the complicated business of modern warfare. It so happened, however, that there were a considerable number of ex-Czarist officers at hand, and many of them wanted to join the new army. But because of their previous activities a violent prejudice existed against them. They could not be trusted. Finally, however, many of them were accepted and put at the head of the troops, with the very important provision that side by side with them were placed trusted Soviet Commissars who saw to it that they did not embark upon any counter-revolutionary projects. The authority of the officers was restricted to purely military matters; while the Communist Commissars looked after the political education of the soldiers and made them acquainted with the real meaning of the revolution. They saw that the decrees of the Government were carried out and that the army was not used

against the interests of Soviet Russia. Ill fared the officers, indeed, who ventured to engage in any treasonable activities. The Commissars fixed them.

By means of the Commissar system the ruling class monopoly of military knowledge was definitely broken. Military experts declare that if this had not been done, if no means had been found to exploit the knowledge of the old officers, it would have been practically impossible for the workers to construct an up-to-date army and carry on modern warfare. As it was the workers were enabled to learn the science of war, and it served them in good stead during the long civil wars that were inflicted upon the country by the exploiters seeking to make their way back to power. Nowadays the Red Army has its own officers' schools which turn out large numbers of Communist officers that are aggressively loyal to the revolution.

And thus it was with a whole maze of problems, many of them unique in military experience. The Red Army triumphed over them all: the breakdown of industry, the food shortage, the disruption of transport, the sabotage by counter-revolutionists, and all the rest. In the United States we make much of the hardships and difficulties of the Continental Army, but they were insignificant compared with those that the Red Army underwent. But it won out in spite of everything and overwhelmingly crushed the multitudinous foes of the Russian revolution.

There is a studied effort being made by the enemies of Russia to make it appear that the Red Army is just the same as other armies and has all their failings. But no one who has ever seen it can believe that for a minute. The Red Army is just as different from other armies as the Soviet Government is different from capitalistic governments. It is pervaded throughout with a democratic spirit totally unknown in other military organizations. Between the officers and the soldiers a feeling of brotherhood prevails; they dress just alike and call each other "comrade." The Red Army is a people's army in the true sense of the word. Its function is to defend the workers' rights.

The Red Army is an organized crusade for the revolution. It defeats its foes not only by force, but also by education. So militant and contagious is its proletarian spirit that its leaders can truthfully boast that

European troops cannot be used successfully against it. Once it sets its great propaganda machine in operation, the morale of the opposing army begins to fall. The working-class prisoners that are captured are fed, entertained, and taken about the country to see the proletarian institutions of the new social order. Then they are returned to their own lines to spread the good news. Great quantities of literature are published and distributed to the enemy troops, pointing out how they are the dupes of capitalism and why they have no interest in carrying on the war. Soon the effect is produced; the worker-soldiers lose all taste for the war, and either the army begins to disintegrate or its leaders negotiate peace. Even American soldiers were not immune to Red Army propaganda, as their revolt proved.

All told the Red Army is a remarkable institution. It is the strong right arm of the Russian revolution.

## IV.

### THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY.

The Russian revolution is a standing marvel to the bourgeois world. In the first place, by all the rules of "legitimate" economics, it should not have occurred at all; because, for a country to have such a proletarian revolution it would seem to be absolutely necessary that it possess a highly-developed industrial system and an educated working class; whereas Russia is 85 per cent agricultural and her workers are notoriously lacking in industrial training. But the revolution did occur, nevertheless. And then, in the second place, according to the orthodox economists, seeing that the workers did manage in some way to get control, they should have long since been overthrown by the series of terrible civil wars, armed invasions, plagues, famines, and industrial breakdowns to which their "unscientific" society has been constantly exposed. But the workers were not overthrown. On the contrary, they have already conquered a mountain of difficulties and are going right on extending and consolidating their power in the face of strings of "impossibilities." To the average bourgeois mind the Russian revolution is a sort of social miracle.

But if the revolution is a miracle the miracle-worker is not far to seek: it is the Russian Communist Party. This organization is one of the most remarkable in human annals. Some have called it the brains of the revolution. It is all that and much more: it is the brains and nerves and heart and soul. It is the organized intelligence, driving force, courage, and idealism—the very seat of life of the revolution. Without it the whole movement would have collapsed long, long ago; if, indeed, it had ever taken shape at all.

The Russian Communist Party is more than a political party in the accepted sense of the term. It is really a scientific system of social control: an organization which makes every institution of society function in the spirit of the revolution. It is political, legislative, judicial, military, educational, social, industrial. As Zinoviev has said, "The Communist Party is an

organization dealing with all sides of all questions, without any exception." And if it is omnipresent it is also omnipotent. Although it is entirely unofficial in character, it has the deciding voice in all social questions, no matter of what sort. When the Communist Party speaks everybody in Russia obeys. Even the Soviet Government itself is no exception: the Communist Party maps out its general policies and virtually issues it direct instructions. In practice, as well as in accepted theory, the dictatorship of the proletariat resolves itself into the dictatorship of the Communist Party.

Many writers have marvelled that an organization so small as the Russian Communist Party—the latest official figures give it only 705,245 members—can exert such throughgoing control. This shows that they have failed utterly to grasp the true nature of the Party. It is not a mass organization. Mere numbers mean nothing to it. Quality, not quantity, is its very breath of life. In the ranks of the workers there are a small percentage of keen, brave, intelligent, tireless idealists; who, man for man, when serious work is to be done, are worth a hundred or a thousand ordinary people. It is of these natural leaders of the working class that the Communist Party is composed; all others being rigidly excluded. The masses would only clog up the organization machinery and prevent the smooth working together of these militants. The Communist Party is the distilled essence of working class energy and revolutionary spirit. It is the little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump. Its influence and power is enormously greater than its small numbers would indicate.

The natural power of the Russian Communist Party's militants is multiplied many fold by their scientific system of organization. This is based upon the Communist cell, or "yatchayka." In every institution in Russia where people assemble to work, legislate, fight, educate, or whatnot, the Communists among them always organize themselves into a yatchayka and proceed to influence the general mass about them to the Communist viewpoint. And as the yatchaykas usually contain a monopoly of the brains and idealism of the people in their respective spheres they ordinarily dominate the situation. The Communist Party as a whole is the sum total of thousands of such yatchaykas, all locked together in a general organization. It is the

greatest and most efficient "borer-from-within" known to history; it has the whole Russian society honey-combed with its yatchaykas. And when this vast and complicated mechanism moves, containing as it does almost a monopoly of natural social leadership, its power is irresistible.

A further factor in the wonderful power of the Russian Communist Party is the organization's keen consciousness of its role in the revolution. It fully realizes that it is the thinking and doing part of the proletariat, and it boldly claims the right to direct the ignorant, sluggish masses. It systematically and energetically takes charge of all social institutions, so that it may spur them into revolutionary activity. A resolution of the Eighth Congress of the Party says: "The aim of the Communist Party is to obtain a preponderating influence and complete control of all the workers' organizations, the trade unions, co-operatives, rural communes, etc. The Communist Party strives especially to introduce its program into the actual organizations of State—the Soviets—and to obtain complete control there." When he was in hiding during the Kerensky period, Lenin asked this pertinent question (Galín, P. 15, "Sowjet Russland"): "If under the imperial regime 130,000 nobles could govern Russia, why should not 200,000 organized Bolsheviki be able to do it also?" Experience has proved that they are; and the yatchayka system, with its practical monopoly of working-class intelligence, is the explanation. Contrary to the assertions of critics unfriendly to Soviet Russia, force and terrorism are not the decisive factor in maintaining the supremacy of the Communist Party in Russia.

A cardinal principle of the Communist Party is to place its militants in all the strategic points of the social organism. Naturally the Government is thoroughly occupied by the Communists, and the higher and more important the type of Government institution the more complete this occupation. This is well illustrated by the following tables, taken from the statistical exhibition at the recent Congress of the Third International in Moscow:

Delegates to Government Soviet Congressess.  
(Average for all Russia.)

District Soviets.		State Soviets	
	Per Cent.		Per Cent.
Communists .....	42.6	Communists .....	79.0
Non-Party .....	56.7	Non-Party .....	20.8
Other Parties.....	.7	Other Parties.....	.2
100.		100.	

In the District congresses the percentage of Communists is many times higher than it is among the population in general, and, characteristically, it is much higher in the State congresses than in those of the Districts—the former being the superior type of organization.

Members of Presiding Boards of Government Soviet Congresses. (Average for all Russia.)

District Soviets.		State Soviets.	
	Per Cent.		Per Cent.
Communists .....	80.3	Communists .....	86.1
Non-Party .....	19.4	Non-Party .....	13.9
Other Parties.....	.3	Other Parties.....	.0
100.		100.	

As the presiding boards are very strategic places in the Soviets naturally the Communists, following out their usual policy, always have a very much stronger representation on them than among the rank and file of the delegates. This is the fruit of the excellent Communist organization. And so it goes through the ascending stages of Government institutions; the scale of Communist representation constantly increasing, until we finally arrive at the Council of Peoples' Commissars, which is entirely Communist in its makeup.

The Soviet judicial machinery is completely in the hands of the Communist Party: the powerful Extraordinary Commission, which is used to combat counter-revolution, speculation, etc., is composed altogether of Communists; and there are few, if any, judges in the Revolutionary Tribunals and Peoples' Courts who are not members of the Party. Likewise, the press of the country is taken care of, the editors of all the important papers being tried and trusted Communists. The school system is also held firmly in hand: many of the teachers are Communists, each school has its yatchayka, and

the teaching of Communist principles is always one of the most important items in the curriculum of every educational institution in Russia.

In the Red Army Communist sentiment is strong, well-placed and highly-organized. All the officers are either outspoken Communists or, where they are non-party men, they have given ample evidence of their unwavering loyalty to the revolution. All the new officers, the graduates from the Soviet military schools, are Party members—no others may take the course of instruction. Likewise all the Army Commissars are devoted Communists. It is the important function of these officials, one of whom is attached to each military sub-division, to look after the political education of the soldiers: they check up on the commanding officers and see to it that the Red Army is kept faithful to the revolution. And so far they have accomplished their task wonderfully well. Each military unit has its yatchayka, composed of officers and men, all on an equal footing. At its maximum strength the Red Army numbered 5,300,000 men, five-sixths of them peasants, yet this great mass was like so much putty in the hands of the thin sprinkling of planful, determined, and thoroughly organized Communists. They had no trouble at all in wielding it as a powerful defensive weapon for the revolution.

Naturally, being essentially an industrial movement, the Russian Communist Party exerts a powerful control in the trade unions and co-operatives. Most of these organizations are entirely in the hands of its militants, although one or two national labor unions and here and there a local are still controlled by Menshevik elements. For the various types of labor organization, as indeed for nearly every class of institution, the Communist Party's method of control is indirect. It merely maps out its programs and then instructs its members to put them into effect in their respective organizations. This they proceeded to do in a thorough manner. Before all labor meetings, congresses and deliberative assemblies of every sort the Communist delegations always caucus and decide upon their plans of action. That usually settles the matter. Grace to their splendid organization, discipline, and well-thought-out programs, the Communists ordinarily have but

little difficulty in winning the general bodies around to their point of view.

In the industries Communist organization is no less thorough than elsewhere. Every mine, mill, shop, factory, and office has its yatchayka, or organized Communist group. Usually these yatchaykas have regularly established headquarters and assembly halls right in their respective industries. They carry on a multitude of educational activities, all calculated to make clear to the workers the meaning of the revolution and to spur them into meeting its demands. Often they publish plant papers of their own as propaganda organs. The yatchaykas are the life cores of the Soviet industry and, considering their great power, it is remarkable how small they often are. I have in mind a Moscow factory that I visited recently. There were about 700 workers employed, nearly all of them women. Only 22 belonged to the Communist Party yatchayka. But these, because of their ability, energy and organization, were in strong control of the situation. The workers in general naturally looked to them for guidance. They were the spontaneous leaders of the shop. They filled the positions of managers, foremen, skilled workers, and all-round live wires. Four of them made up a majority on the factory committee of seven. Others were similarly situated strategically, not by means of mere machine control, but primarily because of their natural fitness for leadership of the masses. When one becomes acquainted with the high-grade workers enrolled in the industrial yatchaykas he must admit, if he is honest, that the roots of the Communist Party are sunk deep in the richest soil of the working class; that it is really what it claims to be, the vanguard of the proletariat.

One of the great forces giving life and power to the Communist Party's elaborate organization is the marvelous discipline of the membership. This is of a strictness absolutely unknown among other classes of revolutionists. "Party discipline" is a term to conjure with in Russia. When the Party is considering a measure of importance the members discuss it pro and con with the utmost freedom. But once a decision is arrived at all discussion ceases immediately, the opposition subsides, differences of opinion are forgotten or laid aside, and concerted action is the order of the day.

The expressed will of the organization becomes the supreme law of the membership, and like a smoothly running machine the hundreds of thousands of Communists, in their political, industrial, military, trade union, and other yatchaykas, set themselves vigorously and unitedly in motion to enforce it. The result is irresistible power; the wonderful party discipline carries the organization on to another victory.

An important phase of this discipline is the draft, or "mobilization" as it is called, to which the members are subject. Not even the highest officials are exempt. Constantly the papers contain long lists of the names of members sent to all parts of the country to perform every sort of task. Only recently the Petrograd Communist Party mobilized 300 of its members, serving in high Government offices, and sent them into the factories for three months, so that they could refresh their proletarian spirit. Indeed, in many other respects besides its draft, the Russian Communist Party has the characteristics of a military organization. Its members all have the right to bear arms, and most of them do. They drill regularly once or twice a week in their yatchaykas. During the critical periods of the civil wars the entire Party was under arms.

Despite its semi-military character and its high discipline, the Russian Communist Party remains a voluntary organization. Its members do not absolutely have to follow out its commands. Save in extreme military cases, they may refuse to do so, without fear of physical punishments. But the Party finds ways to square accounts with them nevertheless. And it makes no difference how big their reputation may be nor how irksome or dangerous the mandates that were given them, they must pay the reckoning. It is just a few weeks since Tomskey, who held the very important position of President of the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions, was forced to resign from his office because he declined to carry out vital Party instructions. If the offense is of great importance the offender is expelled from the Party. Thereafter he is a marked man; he has been weighed and found wanting; and he can hold no important post of any kind in Russia.

The Russian Communist Party is a stern, Spartan organization, and its membership requirements are high. Those wishing to join it must come thoroughly

recommended for brains, energy, and integrity. Then they must serve a probationary period of one year before they can become full-fledged members. Notwithstanding these strict conditions, however, many careerists and other riff-raff work their way into the Party. Such elements constitute at once one of the greatest dangers and problems of the organization. Indifferent, incompetent, dishonest, and sometimes even counter-revolutionary, they tend to bureaucratize the Party, lower its moral standard, and discredit it in the eyes of the masses. The militant Communists look upon them as a menace and wage ceaseless war against them. They periodically weed them out, and the means to this end is called re-registration.

The Party re-registration is a drastic affair. It takes place once a year, when every member is called before the local boards and made to give an account of his membership. Those who can not show records of real service are dropped forwith. Often the general public, non-party members and all, are invited to come before the boards to give voice to any complaints they may have against Communist officials, so that the Party can locate the unworthy and clean them out. Ordinarily such re-registrations eliminate thousands of "dead-ones." The living revolutionary body of the organization is stripped of the encumbering useless tissue. Last year, in 22 states, the Party membership was cut by the re-registration from 191,687 to 131,085; a reduction of 60,602, or about 32 per cent. The following table indicates how sharply the process operated in the big industrial districts:

	Before	After
Perm,	14,145	9,773
Petrograd,	26,159	21,613
Ekaterinburg	26,432	18,044
Moscow,	43,389	36,407
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals	110,125	85,837

But despite such drastic pruning and the heavy mortality among its members, the size of the Party constantly increases. The figures below (also taken from the statistical exhibition of the III International) indicate the numerical strength of the Russian Communist movement at the periods of its congresses:

1903	Bolshevik faction of Russ. Soc. Dem. Party.	825
1905	“ “ “ “ “ “ “	5,150
1906	“ “ “ “ “ “ “	13,800
1907	“ “ “ “ “ “ “	46,146
1917	Russian Communist Party.....	172,625
1918	“ “ “ “ .....	*148,000
1919	“ “ “ “ .....	313,766
1920	“ “ “ “ .....	611,978
1921	“ “ “ “ .....	705,245

In addition to the Communist Party itself there is the organization of the Communist youth. It is now about 400,000 strong and is growing rapidly. It is a feeder for the Party, and the great crop of militants it is now producing will some day play an important part in the history of Russia.

The Russian Communist Party insists that its members conduct themselves as model revolutionists under any and all circumstances. Whatever the task in hand, they must set the pace and inspire the masses by their example. The greatest dangers, the severest hardships, and the heaviest burdens fall naturally to their lot. In the industries it is the Communists who must do the hardest and meanest work; upon them falls the weight of all the drives for more efficient production. They are the good and tireless workers, the mainstays of the shops. In times of food shortage they must not only bear their own reduced rations bravely, but also inspire the great rank and file to do the same. And when any Communists go wrong, when they are found guilty of theft or other serious crimes against the revolution, they are always punished with extraordinary severity. They are made an example of. Many a one of them has been shot for offenses that would have brought only mild prison terms to non-party men. Such punishments are always, of course, meted out by the regularly constituted authorities, not by the Party itself.

In the Red Army the Communists are famed as brave and dogged fighters. Their posts are always where the battle is hottest. It was they—a body of student officers—who, by desperate courage in a critical moment, dealt Yudenitch a mortal blow before

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\*The severe war conditions prevailing in 1918 prevented a full party representation at the Congress.

Petrograd, thus saving that city, and probably with it the revolution itself. When the Red Army, disorganized and demoralized, was flying before Wrangel's victorious soldiers, thousands of special Communist shock troops were thrown into the fray. They not only stopped Wrangel, but sent him reeling back to final defeat. And during the recent Kronstadt revolt the burden of the struggle fell upon the Communists. Large numbers of them perished in the terrible battle to reduce the great rebellious fortress. The Communist Party congress was in session at the time; it mobilized some 300 of its members and sent them to the front. Half of them never came back. And so it has gone all through the revolutionary period: the Communists have sacrificed themselves without stint or limit. It is said that of the total number of Communists in Russia when the revolution began, not more than 20 per cent are now alive. The gaps in the revolutionary ranks have been filled from the growing generation of militants.

The Communists are not among "those pastors who point out to others the steep and thorny path to Heaven, while they themselves the primrose path of dalliance tread." They work harder and live simpler than anyone else in Russia. The opposition, usually masked under the title of non-party, try to make out that they are a favored class who get the best of everything. But the Party's heroic record of self-sacrifice eloquently refutes that. And then the fact that the organization remains so small proves that the heavy duties attaching to membership greatly outweigh any alleged privileges that may come from it. If this were not so the Party would be many times as large as it is now.

The Communists are guided by a great ideal and they are altogether unsparing of themselves in seeking its realization. Moreover, their very lives are at stake. Whenever the counter-revolutionary generals captured a body of soldiers or a town during the civil wars they always killed every Communist they found. With these examples in mind—not to speak of what happened in Finland, Hungary, and elsewhere—the Russian revolutionists are convinced that the fall of the Soviet Government would be the signal for a gigantic massacre of Communists from which probably but few would

escape. But they are determined that such a massacre shall not take place. They may be depended upon never to yield their control save after one of the most desperate struggles in history.

Such, in brief, are a few of the broad characteristics of the wonderful Communist Party.

## V.

### THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT.

The present Government of Russia is what the Communists term a dictatorship of the proletariat. This means that the workers have become the ruling class in Russian society, and the intention is that they shall remain such until, through the operation of the new Communistic institutions, social class lines are wiped out by all the people physically fit becoming actual producers. The era of working class predominance, or dictatorship, is the period of transition from capitalism to Communism. That is what Russia is now passing through.

Hypocritical capitalistic writers profess to be shocked at the idea of social dictatorship by a single class. But they conveniently forget that in every country except Russia their own capitalist class, by its iron-bound control of the industries, the state, the press, the schools, etc., exercises the most rigid kind of a dictatorship. One difference between the system in Russia and those in other countries, however, is that the Communists, with their customary frankness, call theirs what it really is, a dictatorship; whereas the capitalists, with characteristic deceit, camouflage theirs under the high-sounding title of democracy. But the great difference is that the dictatorship of the proletariat is carried out for the purposes of lifting a great class out of slavery and to establish a free society, while the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is always created and used to degrade and exploit the masses of the people for the benefit of a few social parasites.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a militant defense of the workers' interests by the Communist Party. It is likewise a suppression of counter-revolutionary tendencies wherever they manifest themselves, whether through the malignant activities of avowed reactionaries or through the stupidities of a working class just freeing itself from its capitalistic training. The capitalists, aristocrats, and their many hangers-on who exploited the workers in pre-revolutionary days are frankly considered enemies of the new society and a menace to the people generally. When they lost the

industries and the control of the state they also lost the right to vote. They are not allowed to organize or to issue journals. Their principal political parties, the Cadets and the Right Social Revolutionists, are outlaws. For the benefit of these people there was created the famous Extraordinary Commission for fighting counter-revolution. Toward them the dictatorship is a drastic thing. But toward counter-revolutionary tendencies among the masses or proletarian parties it is much milder. Thus the Left Social Revolutionists and Mensheviks, even though their program calls for the end of working class predominance and stands for calling back the capitalists to act as co-directors, politically and industrially, in the new society, are tolerated as political parties. But their right of assembly has been clipped somewhat and they are not permitted to publish journals.\* The same is true of the Anarchists, whose program, if put into practice, would destroy what little organization the revolutionists have been able to build and thus throw the country helpless before the first band of organized reactionaries that came along.

No one deploras more than the Communists this rigid suppression of the opposition, especially the honest working class opposition. But it is a supreme necessity of the revolution, something without which the latter could not survive. The Russian working-class is in a great fight, the most tremendous in the world's history. Its multitudinous enemies swarm within and without the country; incredible industrial problems are shrieking for solution. In such a crisis discipline and unity of action are absolutely essential. To allow the counter-revolutionary idea to sprout, no matter under what guise, would be folly. The situation is comparable to a great strike. In strikes, free speech,

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\*An important factor in limiting the freedom of the press is the acute paper shortage. Before the war a large percentage of Russia's paper supply was imported. The blockade cut that off. Then, with the collapse of industry generally, domestic production of paper fell to less than 20 per cent of normal. The consequence was a great dearth. The elaborate school program of the Government is sadly crippled for want of books and writing paper; and the newspapers can issue only a fraction of what they should. In such circumstances, with the Government possessing only a tithe of what it needs, naturally the opposition's chances of getting some of the precious paper are very slim.

as it is commonly practiced in trade unions, virtually disappears and an iron discipline takes its place. Workers who venture to start movements among the striking rank and file which tend to destroy the strikes, and that is what the Menshevik and other programs mentioned do to the Russian revolution, soon find themselves in trouble. The difference being that in Russia the fight is incomparably greater and the need for discipline correspondingly keener than in any strike ever waged.

The rigors of the dictatorship have been grossly exaggerated. The fact is that there probably never has been so mild a government during a revolutionary crisis as the one now in control of Russia. It is true that many people have been executed—the Extraordinary Commission accounts for 10,000—but by far the most of them were spies, military deserters, speculators, bandits, and other types of common criminals—few were capitalists or nobles, the two deposed classes. Compared with the wholesale slaughter of workers by capitalists during periods of severe reaction—consider Finland, Hungary, and the Paris Commune—such a total is very small. As for the leaders of the opposition parties, the Mensheviks, Social Revolutionists, and Anarchists, they have come to grief only when they have taken rifles in their hands to assert their principles, or have encouraged others to do so. And then, as a rule, the worst punishment meted out to them was prison sentences. In different parts of the country the Menshevik party waged open war against the Soviet Government, yet its leaders admit that only eleven of their active workers have been executed since the beginning of the revolution.\* The Bolsheviks deny having killed even one of them. In the Russian revolution the war parties has been much less bitter than it was during the French revolution.

Although the restrictions of free speech are very severe, as all agree, yet they are by no means as strict as we have been told. Organized opposition to the Government is forbidden, but individuals talk as freely as in any country in the world. A typical case in point: One day a group of us in Moscow were taking a trip

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\*Henry Noel Brailsford, "The Russian Workers' Republic," P. 142.

on a street car when a fine looking fellow entered and spotted us as foreigners. He at once launched into an attack on the Soviet Government in Russian, which was duly translated to us. He was a technician and bitterly opposed to the whole new scheme of things. He had just got his ration for the week, and he unrolled it before us with the most sneering remarks about its black bread and horsemeat sausags, and the system of society that could not furnish the people better food. Some buildings along the street that had been stripped of their fittings for fuel the winter before furnished further grounds for attacks upon the Communist Party and the Government. We estimated that in the United States similar remarks about the American Government, no matter what the provocation, would have netted the speaker at least half a dozen years in jail. Yet all that happened to this fellow in Russia was that after he had raged on for some time a Communist worker in the rear of the car remonstrated with him and tried to explain the cause of the food and fuel shortages. Merely a wordy war developed. In Russia I heard people criticise their Government more freely than in any country I have ever been in.

Two more typical incidents from important congresses: The first from the recent congress in Moscow of the Moscow State Soviet, the largest in Russia. No sooner had this body gone into session than six Menshevik, Anarchist, and Social Revolutionist delegates, one after the other, mounted the platform and denounced the Government for its alleged harsh treatment of their party comrades taken prisoner during the Kronstad rebellion shortly before. I expected to see these protestors squelched immediately. But this did not happen. Although the arrested men had been caught with arms in their hands, and in many other countries under similar circumstances would have been shot forthwith, still the protest was taken seriously and a committee appointed, containing several of the protestors, to investigate the prisons complained of and to submit a full report back to the body as quickly as possible. I could not help but compare this fair recognition of the rebels with the brutal steamrolling outlaw strikers and other unwelcome minorities usually get in American trade union conventions. The second incident occurred at the congress of the Red Trade

Union International, just passed. A foment was going on among the delegates about a number of Anarchists being in prison, and Bukharin made an explanation of the matter on behalf of the Government. During his talk he stated that the Government did not want to make an issue of the thing, and he requested several times that the congress pass on to the next order of business at the close of his speech. But no sooner had he finished than an Anarchist delegate heatedly demanded the floor to present his side of the question. And notwithstanding the contrary request of the Government and the fact that there were at least ten Communists to each Anarchist in the congress, the floor was granted him and the Soviet Government thereby virtually placed on trial. It seemed to me that in this instance, as in very many more, the dictatorship did not "dictate" very much.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, as expressed by the small, strongly organized Community Party, came into existence because of the general unripeness of the masses. Since the various social institutions, made up in the main of these unknowing elements, could not function spontaneously in a revolutionary manner, the Communist minorities in them were compelled to find a way, through organization, discipline, and militancy, to make them do so. The inevitable result of the situation was the Communist Party, with its elaborate system of control. Unquestionably any other class of revolutionaries than Communists trying to put through a profound revolutionary program under the circumstances, would have had to form an organization similar to the Communist Party, no matter what name they might have given it.

The Red Army furnishes a typical instance of the need for the dictatorship. The enormous mass of the soldiers were ignorant and non-revolutionary, and most of the officers were straightout counter-revolutionary. Such an institution, if left to its own devices, could not possibly function in the sense of the revolution. It would be bound to flounder around in a morass of stupidity and eventually become used against the revolution. It simply had to be controlled, and the Communists did the job through their yatchaykas and military Commissars. And what was true of the Red Army was true, for equally valid reasons, of all the

other social institutions. Even the purely working class bodies such as the trade unions, being made up of ignorant workers still thinking largely in terms of their capitalistic training, were in the same need for control. The initiative of the masses was not sufficient; it was the task of the revolutionary elements among them to take the lead and to blaze the way.

By the same token, if ignorance and general social backwardness was the cause of the dictatorship, education will be its cure. In the measure that the masses are progressively educated, through the reorganization of society, propaganda, etc., to the point where they function naturally along revolutionary lines so must the dictatorship gradually disappear. We see this working out in the Red Army, as well as everywhere else. To begin with its officers were counter-revolutionary and had to be watched; the Commissar system was a life and death necessity for the revolution. But now most of the officers are Communists and consequently the Commissar system is fast becoming obsolete: for there is no sense or utility in keeping one set of Communist officials to watch over another set. With similar "Communization" taking place in all the institutions the Party's watchfulness over them is bound to relax, whether it wills it or not. Little by little these institutions, as they begin to function automatically in a Communist sense, will take on more and more autonomy. By the tremendous campaign of social education and re-organization now being carried on in Russia, which will fit the masses for the new society, the dictatorship of the proletariat will be gradually dissolved and the ultimate Communist goal of a non-government society arrived at.

## VI.

### THE TRADE UNIONS.

Of all the lies told about Russia none is more unjustifiable or has been circulated more persistently than the assertion that under the Soviet system the trade unions have been robbed of their importance and are now negligible in power and influence. This falsehood is constantly repeated by American labor leaders. Now the fact is just the contrary: the trade unions are of prime consequence in Russia, and are so recognized by everybody there. Lossovsky, President of the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions has declared that there have been no major policies of any kind entered upon in Soviet Russia without the consent of the trade union movement being first secured. He has also said: "Without the trade unions the Soviet Government could not exist: the unions are the foundation and main working apparatus of the Soviets."

The Russian trade unions are throbbing with life. This was strikingly evident at their recent fourth national congress, which I had the good fortune to attend. The gathering occupied itself with the most weighty social, industrial, and political problems now confronting Russia. So important were its sessions considered that many of the country's greatest men, including Lenin, Gorky, Rykov, Bukharin, etc., attended them and participated in the debates. The congress was held in a great theatre. Public interest was intense. It was almost impossible to get a ticket of admission. The place was constantly jammed with spectators and delegates, there were 3,105 of the latter representing 7,000,000 organized workers. In front of the building was stretched a cordon of Red Army soldiers to hold back the crowds seeking entry. The demand for tickets was so great that some of the delegates began bunching their cards and sending them out so that their friends could come in. To stop this packing process the chair announced that all persons in the delegate section of

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\*"British Delegates in Petrograd," P. 11.

the hall would have to show their cards upon leaving, and that those who had none would be arrested.

Compare this surging Russian trade union congress, handling the nation's most vital problems and spectators braving jail to attend it; with our American Federation of Labor lack-lustre affairs, mustering only a baker's dozen or two of visitors, and wasting their time squabbling over ridiculous jurisdictional quarrels and passing resolutions which the powers-that-be do not care a snap about, and one gets a fair idea of the vitality of the two movements and their comparative importance in their respective countries. Of the world's labor leaders, those in America have least right to throw mud at the Russian trade union movement.

Although the Russian trade unions have a record of experience and achievement without a parallel in labor history they are for the most part of very recent origin; in fact the movement is hardly more than four years old. It dates back only to the February, 1917, revolution. It is true that there were unions before that date, but they had by then almost all disappeared.

The first traces of unionism in Russia began to develop toward the end of the Nineteenth Century. A few workers' benefit societies sneaked into life and led an unostentatious and precarious existence. Occasionally these primitive organizations ventured into strikes, but in such events the Czar's agents inflicted frightful persecutions upon them, often shooting the strikers and exiling their leaders wholesale. Under such hard conditions the movement naturally made little headway. It struggled along more dead than alive until the great revolutionary attempt of 1905. This uprising produced a tremendous development of trade union sentiment. Labor organizations sprang up like mushrooms all over Russia. But the revolution failed, and its failure brought with it bitter hardships for the workers. The Government outlawed their unions, and waged such war against them that within a couple of years the movement had practically disappeared. During the industrial boom of 1912-13 a trade union revival took place. Considerable headway was being made, but the world war came on and wiped out the organizations again.

All through the war the workers remained almost entirely destitute of organization and at the mercy of

the exploiters—it is said that at the beginning of 1917 there were in all Russia but three trade unions, with a combined membership of only 1385. But with the downfall of the Czar's Government in February of that year a remarkable trade union renaissance took place at once. Millions of workers streamed into the organizations. The modern Russian trade union movement was born. The following table shows its progress up till now, when it encompasses practically the entire industrial working class:

January, 1917.....	1,385
June, 1917.....	1,475,429
January, 1918.....	2,532,000
January, 1919.....	3,638,812
April, 1920.....	4,262,000
May, 1921.....	7,000,000

At present the Communists are in overwhelming control of the trade unions. But it was not always so. When the movement first took shape after the February revolution it was manned throughout by Menshevik elements, and it was only with great difficulty that the Bolsheviks broke their power and came to the head of the organizations. Before the October revolution they had won control in most industries, although there are still one or two of them in the hands of the Mensheviks.

The Communists' method is that of working from the inside. They know the power of the militant among the mass and realize that if he is properly organized and of a determined spirit nothing can stop his march to control. They have no patience with those who advocate, as so often is done in America, that the revolutionaries quit the old unions and start new unions. Says Lossovsky, who voices the general Russian opinion on the subject:

"The tactic of quitting the trade unions, which is preached by certain of our ultra-revolutionary left-wing comrades, is a tactic of getting the revolutionary elements out of the labor movement in general. It is most dangerous and reactionary and should be rejected categorically."\*

In the days of 1906-7, as a measure to fight the real labor movement, the Czar's police started fake unions. The Bolsheviks entered these, captured them, and made them into genuine fighting bodies. During the struggles many years later with the Menshevik labor leaders

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\*"Les Syndicats en Russie Sovietiste," P. 53.

the same general methods were followed, with the same results. In one case, that of the Treasury Workers, the Communist minority, impatient at its lack of success working within the old union, split off and tried to form a new organization. Although the Communists were in complete control of the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions, not to speak of the Government itself, they refused to recognize the rival union and forced the seceders to go back to the old organization. On the industrial field they are bitter foes of all forms of dualism. The success of their tactics is evidenced by the following table, indicating their strength at the various general assemblies of the All-Russian unions:

	Total No. of Delegates.	Bolsheviks and Sympathizers.	Per Cent.
III Conference, 1917.....	22	8	36.4
I Congress, 1918.....	416	273	65.0
II Congress, 1921.....	748	494	60.0
III Congress, 1920.....	1229	940	78.1

The Russian labor movement is based upon industrial unionism. All the workers engaged in a given enterprise, from the highest officials to the unskilled laborers, belong to one organization. There are no craft unions. For example, the steam engineers working in the iron and steel mills, instead of belonging to a craft union of engineers, as with us, would be part of the industrial union of metal workers. Likewise, the electrical workers employed in the textile industry would not belong to an electrical workers' union, but to the industrial union of textile workers. The same principle obtains throughout the entire trade union structure. Craft unionism, which American labor leaders cherish so much, is regarded by the Russians, and rightly, as an antediluvian type of organization unfitted for modern industrial conditions.

At present the Russian movement consists of twenty-three industrial unions, as follows: Transport Workers, Miners, Wood Workers, Agricultural and Forest Workers, Theatrical Employees, Provisioning and Housing Workers, Leather Workers, Metal Workers, Municipal Employees, Educational Workers, Telegraph, Telephone & Postal Workers; Food Workers, Building Trades, Sugar Workers, Printing Trades, Paper Makers, Employees of Soviet Stores & Co-operatives, Tobacco Workers, Textile Workers, Chemical Workers,

Clothing Trades, Treasury Workers, Medical & Sanitary Workers. The structural backwardness of our trade union movement, as compared with the Russian, may be seen from the fact that the American Federation of Labor, with only half as many members as the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions has them divided into five times as many separate national unions.

The industrial structure of the Russian trade union movement was not brought about by the sudden realization of a beautiful scheme worked out in the seclusion of some intellectual's study chamber—as American industrial unionists hope to accomplish the job here. It is the fruit of a gradual evolution, of a constant changing of the organizations to conform to the everyday needs and experiences of the workers. In the beginning the Russian movement developed the usual craft union types and weaknesses, although, of course, they were not so marked as in western countries. But the militants, working within the primitive unions, soon cleaned up the situation. They swept aside the reactionary officialdom and hammered the many craft union fragments into industrial unions, even as it is being done elsewhere in Europe at the present time. During the congress of 1920 a whole series of amalgamations were ordered, and the number of national industrial unions reduced from thirty-two to twenty-three. Nor is the evolution yet complete. It is planned to bring about still further amalgamations, to cut the number of unions to eighteen or fifteen, so that the workers can develop the greatest possible unity.

The organic bases of Russian trade unionism are the shop organizations. There are no local unions as we understand the term. The workers of each shop simply meet and transact what business they have, picking out a committee to represent them with the management and to carry on the union's continuous activities. These are the famous shop committees, which have played such a prominent part in the revolution. From them come the delegates that make up the various local, district, state, and national committees and congresses of the trade unions.

The advantage of the shop organizations, with their elaborate shop committees, over the old-fashioned local unions comes from the fact that they are composed of the workers of only one plant and function right on

the job, while the latter are usually outside miscellaneous groupings. All over Europe the trade unions are tending in the direction of shop organizations and shop committees. In this country the highest developed union in this respect is the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. With it the local unions have become greatly atrophied in function, and the shop organizations and chairmen have taken on corresponding importance. In Russia the local unions have been abolished altogether.

Although the trade union movement works in close co-operation with the Soviets, the Supreme Economic Council, the Labor Department, etc., it is not an organic part of the Government. It preserves its independence, electing its own officers, mapping out its own policies, etc. Membership in the organizations is not compulsory; but they have such a strong grip on the economic and social life of the country that a worker would find it about impossible to work, eat, or find a place to live in, unless he belonged to a union. In Soviet offices all workers are discharged who are not members of their respective unions. As a rule the dues are collected by a sort of check-off on the workers' pay, arranged between the unions and the management of the various industries and other enterprises.

The Russian trade unions perform a great variety of functions. They participate immediately in the Government through direct representation in the Soviets. They dominate the Department of Labor, and carry on all sorts of health, welfare, educational, and disciplinary work in the mines, mills and factories. They also have an important share in the management of industry. There are no policies of weight settled in Russia but what the trade unions have an active say in the matter.

With respect to the regulation of wages, hours, and working conditions they are supreme. Utterly unlike the labor organizations of other countries, those of Russia do not have to submit their demands to the employers. They submit them to themselves as the responsible controllers of this phase of industry. That is to say, they constantly survey the industrial situation and see to it that the workers enjoy the best conditions possible under the circumstances. What they decide upon is rubber-stamped by the Department of

Labor and goes into effect at once. The following is an extract from a Governmental decree of December 12, 1918:

"The scales of the All-Russian unions, approved by the Central Council of those organizations, and the Department of Labor, are universally obligatory in all parts of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic."

In the official report on the proceedings of the III congress of the All-Russian Trade Unions occurs the following passage, page 15:

"Russia is the only country in the world where the wages are fixed exclusively by the trade unions. The decision of the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions with regard to the fixing of wages is automatically confirmed by the Department of Labor. No institution in Soviet Russia can fix or change the rate of pay without the sanction of the unions. THE STATE REGULATION OF WAGES IS THE MONOPOLY OF THE RUSSIAN TRADE UNIONS."

These are large powers, and in view of them it seems ridiculous for American labor leaders, with their own organizations fighting desperately against injunctions, open shop campaigns, organized wholesale scabbery, etc., and fruitlessly demanding even the slightest legislative consideration from a hostile Government, to sneer at the alleged weakness of the Russian trade unions.

The trade unions' part in the technical side of industry, is of two general kinds, (1) development of the organization, skill and discipline of labor; (2) participation in the actual management of industry. In both spheres the unions play an important role. We shall consider them separately:

With respect to the first: The revolution and the civil wars and blockade that attended it absolutely shattered the old-time industrial system, together with all its social and political backgrounds. The whole thing has been reduced to ruins. An altogether new and different economic system must be built from the ground up and infused with the spirit of Communism. This involves the most prodigious task of education that any nation was ever confronted with, especially in view of the fact that the old slave-driving methods in industry have been abolished and the only way to get the new industries and discipline created is to convince the great masses of their necessity and to induce them to put them into effect. Upon the trade unions falls the burden of this enormous work of education.

They are the only mass organizations of the workers actually functioning in industry, and the Government is entirely dependent upon them to popularize its revolutionary industrial policies and to see to it that they are applied.

A goodly part of trade union effort is put into this work of education and industrial reorganization. In an official history of their union the officials of the Telegraph, Telephone & Postal Workers' organization say: "During three years we have organized three institutes of communication (high schools), 184 professional technical schools, created 240 libraries, opened 20 clubs and several sanatoriums. Illiteracy is almost wiped out from our ranks. Besides these institutions, the union is in possession of a number of other enterprises, of which ten are agricultural, covering 300,000 acres and all worked by the organization." All the national unions are divided into departments to carry on the various phases of their educational and organizational work.

Not only do the unions turn out thousands of educated, skilled workers, but they also take part in the re-organization of industry. An official report of the Clothing Workers' Union, shows what that organization is accomplishing. It says:

"As a result of the two years' revolutionary creative work of the working masses, we have secured 270 factories with a total of about 40,000 workers. In the new factories, which are worked by electric motors, there is a highly developed system of the division of labor. About 75 per cent of unskilled workers are employed. Thus, for instance, an overcoat, a coat, a pair of trousers, a hunting coat, formerly would be made by one man, whilst now the work is divided in 109 parts for an overcoat, 94 for a coat, 43 for a pair of trousers, 90 for a hunting coat, etc. The concentration of the clothing industry has also been brought about to a great extent. In certain towns from 50 to 100 per cent of the total production is centralized in factories. Instead of the 5000 small shops that worked in Petrograd before the revolution we now have ten large state factories with electric motors and a system of work distribution which embraces the whole clothing industry."

The Building Trades Union, in a similar official history, says:

"The chief attention of the union is devoted to the questions relating to the organization of production. Following the trustification of industry by the Soviet Government, the union put forward a scheme for the organization within the Supreme Economic Council of special sections devoted to the organization of the building industry, which was in a chaotic state under

capitalism. Such an organ was formed in May, 1918, under the name of the Committee of Public Construction of the Supreme Economic Council, with corresponding local and provincial sections. Their task consists in re-organizing the whole building industry in all its branches. The union gives its best members to these committees."

In Russia the workers have no parasitic class to support. They get the full product of their labor. Hence, their eagerness to take advantage of every scientific means of saving labor, such as the specialization of labor, concentration of the industries, etc. That their participation in the working out of such measures is fully appreciated may be judged by the following statement from the Chemical Workers:

"We may say without exaggeration that not one branch of our industry, including the Chemical Section of the Supreme Economic Council, has been organized without being acknowledged and approved by the Central Committee of the National Union of Chemical Workers."\*

The local activities of the trade unions' industrial educational work is carried on by the shop committees. These bodies, besides seeing to it that all labor laws and agreed upon conditions are lived up to, operate a whole series of educational and welfare institutions such as the trade unions in other countries hardly dream of yet. Every large factory has its technical school, library, art and music school, theatre, etc.

With regard to the second general phase of the unions' share in the technical side of of industry; viz., participation in the actual management of the plants, a long and interesting evolution has taken place. In the fierce industrial struggles during the Kerensky regime the principal weapons of the workers were the shop committees. They sprang up everywhere in the heat of the battle. Most of them were independent organizations, as the national trade unions developed somewhat later. Being extremely militant, the shop committees became the cutting edge of the industrial revolution. Even before the October uprising they had wrested from the employers a large share of control over the labor and business side of industry, and as that upheaval proceeded they became a potent means

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\*The booklets from which this and the three preceding quotations are made were written by the heads of the respective organizations and published by the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions in 1920.

for the workers to confiscate the factories. Often they simply drove off the capitalists (who were busily doing their best to sabotage and ruin the industries) and took charge themselves.

Naturally enough the shop committees, once in control of the industries, tried to operate them. But in this they failed. Although they were good fighting organizations they could not manage industry. One of their principal faults was that they were essentially local in character while the industries, considering their markets, sources of supply for raw materials, etc., were distinctly national and international. Much confusion resulted from the industrial efforts of the shop committees, so the national trade unions, then rapidly coming to the front, had to step in and take charge of the situation to prevent entire industrial demoralization. They amalgamated the shop committees into their own official machinery and restricted their activities to the control over local labor which they now exercise.

But the national trade unions were only a degree better in managing industry than the shop committees had been. Quite evidently what was necessary was a purely technical organization, and thus, the Supreme Economic Council, came into existence. Its given function was to supervise and organize the operation of industry generally. The workers, however, full of revolutionary militancy, were not inclined to yield their industrial control altogether to the doubtful engineers and specialists of the Supreme Economic Council; hence they insisted upon the rights of nominating all the heads of that body, and, also of sending their representatives directly in all factory managements. This developed the "collegium" system, under which the committees heading the different sections of the Supreme Economic Council and individual industries were composed partly of industrial experts and partly of representatives of the national unions.

This system is still largely in effect, but there is a strong tendency toward the development of one-man management. The Communist Party, the Government, and the unions have gone on record in favor of it. The idea is to center the responsibility upon single individuals, who must be experts, and then hold them responsible for results. Too much friction and too much scattering of authority are produced by the collegium sys-

tem. The one-man management program, now being gradually introduced, is for efficiency's sake.

Upon this proposition, however, there is not unanimity in the workers' ranks. There is a well-developed minority, called "The Workers' Opposition" and of which Mme. Kollontai is a leader, that flatly opposes any curtailing of the unions' participation in actual industrial management. Preserving the fighting traditions of the movement, this faction look with undisguised suspicion upon the experts of the Supreme Economic Council and believe that to grant them authority will result in their erecting themselves into a privileged class. The advocates of one-man management, besides their efficiency argument, urge that with the workers controlling all the state apparatus they need have no fear of such a caste springing up, especially in view of the fact that the trade union schools are turning out thousands of experts who, along with their industrial education, have absorbed the principles of Communism. They declare that these revolutionary engineers may be depended upon to break any monopoly that the present class, who have not yet overcome their bourgeois training, may attempt to create even as the Communist Commissars in the Red Army broke the monopoly that the ex-czarist officers had on military knowledge.

To decide just exactly what share of industrial management shall rest with the technical organizations and what with the trade unions is one of the big problems of the Russian revolutionary forces. But there is one thing everybody is agreed upon, and that is that the trade unions are destined to play an increasingly important role in the national life, in accordance as the rising intellectual level of their members fits them for greater and greater tasks.

## VII.

### LABOR LAWS AND WORKING CONDITIONS.

In no other place on the face of the earth do the workers enjoy so many rights in industry as they do in Russia. This is perfectly natural, because all other countries are ruled by a few capitalists who own the industries and crush down the workers in order to grind out the utmost profit for themselves; whereas Russia is controlled throughout by the workers themselves, who utilize the industries for the use and benefit of the whole people.

The universal eight-hour workday (seven-hour night shift) for adults, and the six hour day for persons under twenty years of age; the freeing of women from industry, with full pay, for eight weeks before and after childbirth; the compulsory weekly rest time of at least 42 consecutive hours for all workers; the legal limitation of overtime; the granting of two weeks' vacation, with full pay, for each six months of continuous labor; the universal and complete recognition of trade unionism; and dozens of other important measures in force in Russia making for the improvement of the workers' conditions, would be considered great achievements in capitalistic countries, where the powerful trade unions, in spite of long and bitter struggles, have not been able to win even an approach to them. But in Russia they are only minor details of a great social program aimed to lift the workers from their present low estate to the greatest possible heights of civilization.

Something much more fundamental than all of them put together is the right to work, which means the right to live, that is guaranteed by the Soviet Republic to all its citizens. This means that every Russian worker has the right to employment in the industries at the prevailing union scales and conditions, and if no work is to be had, then he must be paid full wages as long as he is out of work. On the same principle, if an individual is incapacitated for work because of youth, old-age, sickness, or any other legitimate reason, he is given a decent standard of living, not as a matter of charity, but because of his right as a citizen of the

workers' republic. Russia recognizes the right of the workers to live, and also their right to freely use the industries in order to earn that living. The dread horrors of unemployment have been eliminated from that country.

Compare this situation with conditions prevailing in capitalist countries. There the industries are in the hands of a few exploiters. If they find it profitable to operate their mills and factories they do so, and the workers may be able to beg employment from them. But if the capitalists do not see fit to run their industries, then the workers and their families are left to starve in unemployment, as millions of them are doing all over the world at this very hour. Under capitalism machinery and work animals, because they are property and cost money, are well taken care of in good times or bad; but workmen, because they are not property and cost the employer nothing, are thrown upon the streets in periods of industrial depression and left to degenerate in poverty and despair. In Russia alone alone are they guaranteed the right to work and live.

Without duties there can be no rights; hence with the Russians' right to work goes the legal obligation that they do so. The Soviet Republic takes the stand that no one has the right to live in Russia without working for his daily bread. The national constitution declares: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat." The law specifically requires that every able-bodied citizen do his share in producing the necessities of life. Exploiters of labor, those who parasitically live from work of others, are classed as a species of dangerous criminal.

Thus we come to one of the "horrors" of Sovietism. People actually compelled to earn their living, instead of being permitted to whip it out of the hides of others. It is an outrage. No wonder the various brands of reactionaries (most of whom never did a useful thing in their whole lives except to leave Russia) consider the compulsory labor laws a dreadful tyranny and are making the welkin ring with their howlings.

But their complaints are lost on the Russian labor militants now in charge of the country. The latter are working for the establishment of a Communist Society in which compulsion of any sort will be unnecessary; where the multitudes of the people will freely perform,

of their own volition, their full industrial and political duties toward themselves and each other. But they know that the time is not yet here for the full realization of that program. This is the transition stage from capitalism to communism. The people are still afflicted with the ignorance, selfishness, and short-sightedness of the old dog-eat-dog competitive system. Discipline is still necessary. Only a minority are intellectually prepared for the new society. And it falls as naturally to this intelligent minority to set up the essential discipline in Russian industry as it does to the corresponding minority in American trade unions to create the discipline absolutely necessary to make the masses function in those bodies. At this stage of social development proletarian organizations without a strong discipline are impossible. Compulsory labor is only a temporary measure in Russia. It is a reaction from the ignorance and stupidity of capitalism, and will disappear as the effects of this capitalistic training are eliminated from the workers' minds by proletarian education.

Far more important even than legal right to work is the Russian workers' recognized right to the full product of their labor. In other countries the cream of industry's products flow into the maw of the exploiters; the benefits of invention and intensified production are absorbed by social parasites; the drones idle in luxury; while the workers drudge in poverty and deprivation. But how different in Russia: there there are no exploiters. The workers have to pay no tribute to a ruling class. They get all they produce, after deducting, of course, the expenses of running the Government. That is the meaning of the arrangement, which we have noted in the previous chapter, whereby the trade unions have a monopoly on setting wage scales in Russia. The right of the workers to the full product of their labor is the foundation of the Soviet Government and all its institutions. It is the very heart of the revolution itself.

The revolution, bringing as it did many new rights and duties for the workers, has changed their viewpoint in many fundamental matters. One instance relates to the question of strikes. In all capitalistic countries the right to strike is jealously guarded and fought for by the best and most militant elements of the working class. They consider it one of the very best means for advancing their cause and seek to en-

courage the masses to use it. But just the reverse prevails in Russia. Although the workers have the full legal right to strike the labor movement is decidedly against using it save under extreme circumstances. It is exactly the most intelligent and militant elements who are most against strikes.

The reason for this is that the Russian trade unions have finally and definitely defeated their old-time enemies, the capitalists, and in so doing they have passed from the era of industrial war into that of industrial peace. This has revolutionized their functions. From fighting organizations they have been turned into producing organizations. Henceforth, their supreme task is to assist in the re-construction and operation of industry along Communist lines. To do this, considering the broken-down state of industry, will require the utmost co-operation from every part of the labor movement. Strikes can only hinder the program. They cannot improve the conditions of the workers; they merely make things worse. Moreover, they are unnecessary, as the workers have all the industrial and political machinery of the country in their hands and can adjust whatever grievances they may have without recourse to striking. |

Strikes in Russia are so much scabbing on the revolution. They are about on a par with the movements of bodies of workers in capitalist countries who break ranks during strikes and go back to work. Practically all the strikes that have occurred so far under the Soviet regime have been the work of the more ignorant toilers blindly rebelling against unavoidable cuts in food rations, or of counter-revolutionary plotters seeking to defeat the organized workers' supreme task of getting industry going. The militants have been dead against them. They are for fighting the thing through to the finish. And that can be done, not by striking, but by sticking on the job and solving the economic crisis.

So far the Russian workers have not reaped any great prosperity from their newly-born right to work and to the full product of their labor. They are still in want. But this is because the industry of the country has been ruined by seven long years of imperialist and civil war. Production is far below the actual needs of the people. When the unions come together to work out their wage scales they find but little social product

on hand to be divided. So, naturally, they cannot share out a prosperity that does not exist. But the economic crisis will eventually be solved and the period of deprivation ended. Then the Russian workers, freed from the 57 varieties of social parasites that afflict capitalism, and with their destiny in their own hands, will develop a standard of life and well-being absolutely unknown and impossible in capitalist countries.

## VIII.

### THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT.

The Russian co-operative movement is comparatively new, but its history, especially since the revolution, has been a very stormy one. In its earlier days, under the Czars, the movement grew very slowly in the face of strong governmental opposition. By the beginning of 1914, however, it had expanded to about 10,000 societies with a total membership of 1,500,000. The war was a period of rapid growth, because the increasing cost of living turned the workers and peasants toward co-operative effort in a mighty stream, and the economic collapse of the old regime compelled the Czar's Government to turn over to the vigorous co-operatives much of the business of handling the retail food trade, etc. The revolution gave the movement another great impulse, so that by January 1, 1918, it had grown to the figure of 25,000 societies with about 9,000,000 members. Its activities covered a wide scope, including buying, selling, manufacturing, credit, etc. The following table, stated in rubles, indicates the increase in the volume of business transacted:

	Capital Invested.	Sales.
1899.....	800	31,340
1909.....	47,822	1,278,511
1913.....	225,413	7,985,234
1917.....	10,269,757	212,000,000

With the advent of the Communists to power a series of adventures began for the co-operatives. The movement had always been of a pronouncedly reformist character. It had given whole-hearted support to the Kerensky Government and its leaders denounced the Communists, then struggling for power, as "criminal adventurers and enemies of the people." Nor did its hostile attitude change when the latter seized the Government, except perhaps to become one of even more determined opposition. The co-operative movement turned its whole enormous educational, political, and economic force against the new Government. It supported every counter-revolutionary attempt; in later

stages even helping to fit out the armies fighting the Communists.

Previous to the revolution and for some time afterward, the Communists paid but little attention to the co-operative movement. They looked upon it as petty bourgeois institution of no great consequence in the revolution, and concentrated their attention upon the fighting organs of the proletariat: the political parties and the trade unions. In the general movement to nationalize the industries the properties of the co-operatives were exempted. But once in power, the Communists soon learned that they had to give the co-operative movement serious consideration: first, because it was a stronghold of reaction which could not be tolerated, and second, because they needed its elaborate economic machinery.

To begin with the Communists met the reformist co-operators and tried to get them to turn their movement to the advantage of the new order. But the latter were flinty in their opposition, refusing to allow their stores to function in the general scheme of things and forcing the Government to organize a rival distributive system. Finally tiring of this hostility, the Communists took the situation firmly in hand. They declared open war upon the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionists controlling the co-operative movement, and proceeded to break their power, so that that great organization could be utilized for the revolution.

For this purpose a variety of means were used. For one thing the Communists fought the reformistic co-operators in all the organizations, gradually weakening their influence and eventually ousting them from leadership. In addition to this interior fight, the Government ordered a number of structural and functional changes in the co-operatives, all calculated to adapt them to the Communist social organization. The first of the more important of these came in April, 1918, when by a decree all the citizens of Russia were made members of the co-operatives. As an inducement to join they were exempted from the tax of five per cent which was levied upon all purchases made from private merchants. The system of holding stock in the co-operatives was abolished, the former shareholders being reimbursed by the Government for their shares. Also, from time to time orders were issued amalga-

mating the various existing independent co-operative societies into the Central Union, which for a long time has been the general national organization of the co-operative movement. The Peoples' Bank was nationalized. The old bureaucratic reactionaries objected strenuously to these measures and large numbers of them resigned their posts in protest. But in vain; in spite of their sabotage and opposition the whole co-operative movement eventually was unified under one national head.

Along with this broadening, unification, and centralization of the co-operative movement went important functional changes. In the matter of the manufacture, collection, and distribution of non-monopoly articles (a minor factor in the prevailing economy) the co-operatives preserved their independence and went along much as before; but in the vital matter of monopoly articles, especially with regard to the collection and distribution of foodstuffs they were subjected to a rigid state control. The national body, the Central Union, was brought into direct relationship with the Supreme Economic Council, the Food, Labor, Educational, Agricultural, and other Government departments. It had representatives upon the local and national boards of these departments and worked in close co-operation with them. In fact the co-operative movement operated to a great extent under the supervision of the Government. Also, in many cases, to avoid duplication of effort, the co-operatives were actually amalgamated into the Government's productive and distributive machinery. The co-operative movement elected its own officials and in many other ways exhibited a nominal independence; but in reality it had become virtually a department of the state.

Recently, however, a new turn has taken place in the evolution of the co-operative movement. The tendency now is rather to reverse the policy of centralization and strict government control by detaching the co-operatives from the state and giving them wide independence and more elaborate functions than ever. The immediate cause of this change of policy was the establishment of free trade in Russia. To help solve the general economic crisis the Government has raised its iron-clad monopoly on industry and is seeking by all practical means to encourage production by individual

effort. In order to prevent this bringing about a renaissance of capitalism, however, it is planned to organize the newly-created private industries into the co-operative movement. The aim is to make that movement a tremendous machine for the manufacture, collection, and distribution of products among city and country workers, thus relieving the strain upon the new, state organization. It is felt that the co-operative movement, with its many devices for encouraging individual production, can be of great service in this direction. In addition to this direct economic reason for reviving the co-operatives, may be added the fact that as the military crisis is now passed and the bourgeoisie thoroughly smashed, the general tendency in Russia is to grant greater freedom of action all around, both for individuals and institutions.

Although the Communists at the head of the Russian Government have conceded the co-operative movement this new freedom of action they labor under no illusions about it. They realize that it encourages all sorts of primitive small-scale production—with a resultant narrowly selfish, petty bourgeois point of view. They pin their faith to large-scale production, as the only type that can at once properly meet the people's needs and develop a true revolutionary psychology. But they are sure they can control the co-operatives and use them advantageously during this crisis. The whole movement has been purified and strengthened. It went into the revolutionary wringer purely petty-bourgeois in character and loaded down with reactionary leaders; it came out with a proletarian viewpoint and manned with revolutionists. The cleansing process was a severe, one but had to be gone through with. The Communists believe that the movement will now stand the revolutionary test. But the situation is full of uncertainties and unknown quantities. What the renaissance of the Russian co-operatives will finally lead to few venture to prophecy.

## IX.

### THE AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION.

Of the two great branches of Russia's toiling millions, industrial workers and peasants, the latter have, so far at least, reaped the most material advantages from the revolution. This is true inasmuch as while the industrial workers are still struggling in the face of severe trials to bring about the re-organization of industry which for them will mean emancipation, the peasants have actually come into possession of that dear mother earth which they have longed for, dreamed of, and sung about for generations past. This condition has led many observers to conclude that really, after all, the Russian revolution is at heart a peasants' movement.

The peasants got possession of the land almost immediately after the October, 1917, revolution. It was turned over to them by the Communist Government, which then, as now, was composed principally of representatives of the city workers. On October 26th, right in the white heat of the upheaval, the revolutionary Land Decree was promulgated. Its most important section runs as follows: "Private property in land is forever abolished; land may not be bought, sold, rented, mortgaged, or disposed of in any other way. The land as a whole—state, crown, church, private, public, and peasant-owned—is confiscated without remuneration and herewith becomes the property of the entire people and is turned over to the use of the actual workers of it." By this law, one of the most far-reaching in history, at least 500,000,000 acres of land was taken out of the hands of parasitic idlers and given to useful workers.

The first application of this drastic measure was left practically to the peasants themselves—the Government reasoning that they, if given a free hand, would probably make a better and fairer job of it than the multitude of city officials who otherwise would have had to undertake the work. Besides, the vast expanse of country, the general turmoil, and the urgency of the moment had to be considered. So the peasants were

left pretty much to their own devices. The division of the land was carried out by the village committees. It was one of the roughest and most violent phases of the revolution. Many a noble landowner came to grief in the storm. The village committees had many difficulties to contend with, such as the opposition of the old-time owners, the greed of certain elements in their own ranks, the varying amounts and quality of the land to be divided, etc. But finally the job was done after a fashion, and a reasonably fair and equal distribution of the land arrived at.

As the situation now stands the peasants do not actually own the land: it all belongs to the State. Their rights are those of cultivators only. Periodically they re-divide the arable land among themselves, giving each family a share in accordance with the number of its members. The laws of inheritance are annulled, and land may not be handed down from father to son. Men and women alike have equal rights to the soil. In some districts and under certain circumstances, a few of the more crafty peasants succeed in evading these principles and setting up practical ownership of their land, but in the main the situation is as above described.

The Communists look upon the present agricultural arrangement as a temporary make-shift, having nothing in common with their ultimate goal. They are willing to concede that it is a vast improvement over the old system, by which a few parasites monopolized the land. But they also know that no civilization worth while could be constructed upon such a basis. Were the peasants to continue their present small-scale, individualistic, competitive methods of production they could not develop into anything better than a vast class of petty bourgeois afflicted with all the contemptible ignorance and short-sightedness inseparable from this type. The Communists are well aware that only through a large-scale system of production can the workers, city and country, acquire, the breadth of vision and understanding that is absolutely necessary to real social progress. Hence, they propose to industrialize agriculture: to apply to it the same principles that they are now applying to the great national industries of transportation, mining, etc. They will abolish small-scale individualistic farming, and replace it by large-scale, co-operative agricultural production. This is a

big job and will take many years to complete. But already the agricultural communes, the beginnings of the new system, dot the wide expanse of Russia. Their number is rapidly increasing. Within a few years, if peace prevails and the Soviet society has a reasonable chance to develop, it is hoped that they will be numerous enough to dominate the farming situation and to bring the agricultural proletariat into line with modern thought and development.

To superintend the farming industry in general a special branch of the Government, the Department of Agriculture, has been created. This is a structure of the usual Soviet pyramid type, the higher bodies always being formed of delegates from those on the next lower stages. At the base stand the volost (county) land committees. These supervise agriculture in a local way, stabilize wages, etc. They are composed of one delegate from each 500 people—the surrounding volost committees also send delegates so that the whole scheme may dovetail together. Above the volost committees and superior to them are the district land committees. These bodies attend to more general agricultural questions in their respective jurisdictions, allot pasture land, etc. They are built of delegates from the volost land committees and the district Soviets of workers, peasants, and soldiers. Over the district land committees stand the state land committees, similarly constructed; and above these the Chief Land Committee. The latter is a national body, consisting of representatives of the state land committees, the All-Russian Workers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Soviet, several national governmental departments, various scientific societies, etc. At its head is the Peoples' Commissar for Agriculture. All land used for farming, the forests, the lakes, etc., are placed under the Chief Land Committee as the general land fund of the whole people. All agricultural questions of prime importance come before this committee for settlement.

Many writers have sought to convey the impression that the peasants are actively hostile toward the Soviet Government. But if this were true they, being in such overwhelming majority, would have long since found means to overthrow it. It is a fact that as independent producers they are not attracted by the principles of Communism, but they have learned that the Soviet Gov-

ernment is their friend. It gave them the land, and they know that so long as it stays in power their control of the land is safe. In the early part of the civil wars they were inclined to slack it. But Kolchak, Deneikin, Wrangel, and the other counter-revolutionary generals soon taught them a lesson: as fast as they captured fresh territory they took the confiscated land away from the peasants and returned it to the former owners. This rallied the peasants en masse to the Soviet Government and was the decisive factor in smashing all the great counter-revolutionary invasions. The peasants may not be particularly enthusiastic over the Soviet Government—in fact they positively dislike all governments—but they can be always depended upon to come to its support in time of crisis, and especially in the case of counter-revolutionary attempts.

## X.

### MONEY, PRICES AND WAGES.

As a part of its general plan for Communism, the Soviet Government aims ultimately to abolish money entirely. But so far this has not been done. On the contrary, Russia is now being flooded with an unheard volume of paper money. So great is this that the manufacture of such money has become an important industry, employing 13,000 persons. Last year 3000 tons of rags were consumed for paper money making; and every month from 60 to 70 freight car loads of new paper rubles left Moscow for various parts of the Soviet Republic. It is a literal deluge of money.

In his splendid book, "Social Revolution and Finances," Preobrazhensky, Peoples' Commissar for Finance, cites the following figures to show the totals of money production, year by year, since the outbreak of the world war. From them the monster increase in the volume of money is strikingly apparent:

1915.....	2,611,200,000	rubles
1916.....	3,379,200,000	"
1917.....	18,091,200,000	"
1918.....	33,951,600,000	"
1919.....	163,750,800,000	"
1920.....	943,581,600,000	"
1921 (4 months).....	754,000,000,000	"

The Soviet Government is the first institution to operate financially upon the basis of trillions. And at the rate its money output is increasing soon its totals will take on true astronomical proportions.

The persistence and vigor of the monetary system in revolutionary Russia is explained very simply. It is because it is really a form of tax upon the large body of independent producers in non-nationalized industries—chiefly the peasants, who make up 85 per cent of the whole population. These petty bourgeois elements, besides really believing in the institution of money, have an actual need for a medium of exchange. Hence the Government issues them enormous quantities of paper rubles adorned with bright revolutionary mot-

toes, and gets in exchange large quantities of grain, cattle, and other commodities vitally needed by the army, the city dwellers, etc. The essence of the exchange is that the Government puts in a little printed matter and takes out great masses of substantial products.

Last year this process netted the Soviet Government 250,000,000 gold rubles' worth of commodities. And thus, in fact, the deficits in the national budget have been made up every year since the revolution. What the Government has been unable to realize from the output of its nationalized industries and from direct levies in kind upon the independent producers it has always made up by the "sale" of its paper money. Through the medium of the monetary system it has been able to extract indirectly from the money-loving petty bourgeois elements large amounts of supplies which, with all its armed power, it could hardly take from them directly by taxes.

Of course, the peasants and other independent producers object to the flood of paper money and at each fresh torrent of it they hastily raise prices accordingly. But they are always too late. The scientific Socialists at the head of the Soviet Government understand the laws of economics far better than they and are always able to take from the "money market" the tax so necessary to the country's maintenance. Because of this fact, because it is a very potent means of making the non-revolutionary elements contribute taxes, Communist financial experts consider the issuance of paper money as a most important revolutionary weapon, especially in agricultural countries. Indeed, without it, the Soviet Government would probably have collapsed long ago.

Naturally the phenomenal increase in the volume of money in circulation has brought about an enormous depreciation in the value of the ruble. Before the war two rubles were worth an American dollar; now it takes 30,000 rubles to buy one. In other words, the ruble has fallen 15,000 times in value. In capitalist countries such an abysmal depreciation of the currency would completely destroy the financial system and paralyze everything. But in Russia, where most of the industries are nationalized and thus freed from the influence of financial control, no such effect is produced.

The principal result is a constant depreciation which seems to have no limit. But the Government feels no great alarm about this. So long as its printing presses are in working order and the supply of rags holds out it will "get by" and make its necessary "profits" from the money market. As fast as the money falls in value it simply increases the number and denomination of the notes printed.

Discussing this phase of the financial situation, the Peoples' Commissar for Finance says, in the work above cited: "In 1917 a kopeck was still a reality, it was still possible to buy something for 50 kopecks. In 1918 the ruble plays the part of the kopeck. In 1919 not only is the word "kopeck" forgotten, but the word "ruble" as a real unit of calculation is replaced by 10 rubles. In 1920 the real unit of calculation is the hundred and the thousand: the ones and the tens disappeared. In 1921 the actual unit is the thousand and the five thousand. But when will all this come to an end? When will our paper currency fail? It is obvious that the failure cannot be brought about solely through the increase of naughts on our paper money notes. Here the difficulties are purely technical, not more. For lessening the number of naughts the three naughts in 1000 can be substituted by the letter "T" (thousand), and we can print paper money notes in 10T, 100T, 1000T, and so on. Further, we can replace the naughts in the "T" series by the letter "M" (million) and print 1M, 10M, 100M, etc. For the lifetime of our currency the existing mathematical denotations of ciphers will suffice, and should they not be sufficient others can be invented."

The enormous depreciation of the ruble has naturally sent prices skyrocketing in the realm of competitive products.\* The following, now prevailing in the

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\*Besides the open market prices there are also "Soviet" prices. These apply to government manufactured or controlled products, and apply to the transactions between the various industries and to independent purchasers. They are established by the price committees of the Supreme Economic Council. The original plan was to have the articles in the Soviet retail depots priced (at much lower rates than prevailed on the open market) so that the workers might spend the money part of their wages there. But in practice these retail price lists are held in abeyance. Virtually all the retail products which the Government has at its disposal are distributed free to the workers.

“free” retail markets of Moscow, are typical:

Butter, per pound.....	29,000	rubles
Sugar, per pound.....	35,000	“
Potatoes, per pound.....	1,000	“
Flour, per pound.....	3,725	“
Rice, per pound.....	15,000	“
Beef, per pound.....	10,000	“
Pork, per pound.....	15,000	“
Tea, per pound.....	80,000	“
Bread, per pound.....	3,000	“
Eggs, each.....	1,200	“
Herring, each.....	1,800	“
Hairpins, each.....	1,000	“
Common pins, each.....	200	“
Shoes, pair.....	450,000	“
Clothes, suit.....	1,000,000	“
Thread, spool.....	6,000	“
Soap, toilet.....	20,000	“
Soap, laundry.....	15,000	“

Translated into terms of American money (upon the basis of 30,000 rubles to one dollar) many of these prices are very high. This is because of the severe shortage of commodities that has been brought about by the crisis in production. Thus butter in Moscow costs 97 cents per pound; sugar, \$1.16; tea, \$2.67; rice, 50 cents, etc. On the other hand, some of the staples are comparatively cheap; flour retailing at 13 cents per pound; bread, 10 cents; beef, 40 cents, and pork, 50 cents. In 1914 bread cost less than three kopecks per pound. Its rate of increase in price is approximately 1,000,000 per cent. This is considerably less than for commodities generally.

A pronounced effect of these continuous and constantly soaring prices has been to practically wipe out the money wages of the workers. It has been found impossible to keep changing these in accordance with the rapidly changing prices. In order to understand the situation, however, it must be always borne in mind that the Russian industrial workers at the present time get rent, clothes, food, and other necessities free from the Government. The money wages they receive are merely for them to help out the Government rations by buying wherever they can in the open market. These money wages range from 4000 to 20,000 rubles per month. The Communist Party has a standing rule that

none of its members may receive more than 13,500 rubles per month, which limits the Peoples' Commissars (the Cabinet of Russia) to that insignificant sum—now worth about 45 cents. Some non-party industrial experts, however, are paid as much as 750,000 rubles per month.

From the price list submitted above it is at once evident that wages of even 20,000 rubles per month have a negligible purchasing power, and as it has been out of the question to keep the schedules adjusted to the varying price rates, the Government has adopted a new policy of paying the workers their wages (in addition to their regular supplies) in the articles they produce, so far as the nature and condition of industry will permit. These products the workers then trade off through the co-operatives, either to the peasants for foodstuffs, or to other groups of workers for clothes, shoes, etc. Thus, so far as possible, they are protected from the wild price fluctuations in the "free" markets, and yet enabled to take advantage of whatever commodities these markets have to offer.

Although Russian revolutionists often smile at the antics of their money system and the way it yields them so much support, still they understand very well the disadvantages of inflating the currency. They know that a tremendous amount of Russian production (mostly agricultural) is still carried on upon a competitive, independent basis, and that for this to take place to the best advantage a stable monetary system is absolutely necessary. If they have weakened the medium of exchange it has been under the pressure of extreme revolutionary necessity.

Already the keen economists at the head of the Soviet Government have plans to re-habilitate the currency. But this can probably never be accomplished fully until the industrial crisis is solved; until the workers in the nationalized industries have great surpluses of goods on hand to trade off with the independent producers—the peasants principally. When that time comes, and come it will in the near future, the question of a medium of exchange, whether money, labor checks, or what not, will be a mere detail to be worked out at leisure.

## XI.

### FOOD, CLOTHING AND SHELTER.

As all the world knows, the food situation in Russia at present is exceedingly bad. A great famine has come upon the country. Throughout the Volga Valley, ordinarily one of the banner grain growing sections, the crops have failed almost completely. The unprecedented drought literally burned them up. And what little the dry weather did not ruin were devoured by the myriads of locusts that descended upon the land. The district affected stretches almost from the Caucasus to the Ural mountains and encompasses a territory about as large as France, Germany, and Spain put together.

At least 20,000,000 people are faced by actual starvation. Great armies of them are wandering away from their homes to more favored localities, often dying by the road. Multitudes are living upon roots, herbs, and all sorts of impossible things containing even a trace of nourishment. Where the peasants have not eaten their work animals they are feeding them the straw from the thatched roofs of their houses in a desperate effort to save them. Thousands of parents have abandoned their children to the Government in the belief that it will find food for them somehow, while they themselves wander off to they know not what fate. Grim cholera is raising its head and wiping out great numbers of the famine-stricken. Altogether it is a desperate situation and one which Russia cannot conquer alone. The assistance of the civilized world is necessary. If it is not forthcoming the famine will surely develop into one of the greatest calamities of modern times. Plagues, always the companion of famine, will sweep over Europe, probably destroying millions.

An unfortunate feature of the situation is that the food question in Russia was already acute before this famine developed. There were little or no food reserves on hand to meet such a crisis. This shortage was caused by the general breakdown of industry, which reacted unfavorably upon agriculture, and especially because of

the crop failure last year. It is said that every thirty years or so Russia experiences a series of consecutive drought years. The present is one of such periods. I remember the last one vividly through seeing, when a bit of a boy, the flag-bedecked wheat ships steaming down the Delaware River bearing America's gifts to starving Russia. Two years ago the harvest was a bountiful one, but it was practically destroyed by the white-guard invaders of Kolchak and others, and no reserves were left over from it.

So serious was the crop failure last year that Bal-lod, an eminent German economist, declared it to be many times worse than during the famine period of the early '90s, above referred to. He prophesied that millions would die from starvation and that the Soviet Government probably would not survive the winter. But these dark forebodings did not come true. Had there been in force the usual capitalistic grab-all-he-who-can system, with some getting too much to eat and others too little, no doubt great numbers would have actually perished from hunger. But with the prevailing rigid method of food rationing the crisis was safely gotten over: famine was averted and the Soviet Government did not fall. Nor is it likely to fall in the present critical period; the same rationing system that pulled it through before will do so again.

In apportioning out the food supply to the people in the cities several classes of rations, or "puyoks," are used. These are calculated according to the needs of respective industrial and social groups receiving them. There are rations for children, the aged, the sick, manual laborers, brain workers, diplomats, etc. The children, the manual laborers, and the diplomats get the most of the best food: the children because they need it to build their bodies and to lay the foundation for future rugged constitutions; the manual laborers because they burn up more food fuel in their work than do people in other walks of life; and the diplomats, which include foreign delegates to the congresses, etc., because they are physically and psychologically unable to subsist upon the slim fare on which the gallant Russian working class are fighting their way to freedom. Everyone adds as best he can to his Government rations

by buying food in the open markets or from the peasants in the country.

The following is the regular monthly "puyok" for manual workers, scaled according to the kind of work they do, and stated decimally in pounds:

	Normal.	No. 1	Extra No. 2	Strong. No. 3
Bread .....	30.	45.	60.	60.
Meat and fish.....	4.	7.50	7.50	15.
Fats .....	.50	.75	1.	.75
Sugar .....	.50	.50	1.	1.50
Vegetables .....	20.	20.	30.	30.
Salt .....	1.	1.	1.	1.
Coffee .....	.25	.25	.25	.25

Just now, because of the severe food shortage, the workers are receiving considerably less food from the Government than even this modest scale calls for. It is marvelous, nevertheless, how healthful the people keep. For this much credit is due, no doubt, to the black bread which is the foundation of the national diet. If the Russians were eating the denatured white bread that Americans poison themselves with, they would have died out long ago. The women seem to prosper even better than the men upon the restricted diet. They look wonderfully rugged and rosy-cheeked, whereas the men seem rather thin and pale. During my four months' stay I did not see one Russian who might be considered even moderately stout. To be fat in Russia during these days of food shortage is to openly bear a badge of unsocial hoggishness. Once I saw this spirit neatly expressed: a robust foreign delegate was making a speech about unemployment and stated that in his country women and children were starving. "No wonder," piped up a Russian kid used to the rationing system, "with fat guys like you eating up everything in sight."

One thing that strikes the foreign visitor in Russian cities is the comparatively well-dressed appearance of the people. As a rule their shoes are sound, and their clothes clean, neat, and trim looking. How this can be in the face of the practical stoppage of the garment industries, at least so far as the making of civilian clothes is concerned, is a mystery to all newcomers. A manager of a big garment shop told me that last

year 95 per cent of the whole nation's clothing industries went to fit out the Red Army. And since 1914 the condition has been the same, there being few clothes left over for the mass of the people after the needs of the military were met. Yet the dwellers in the big towns remain fairly well dressed—though, of course, the peasants do not cut quite so slick a figure.

Various factors contribute to the explanation of this standing riddle. Part of it is due to the remnants left over from the great stores of clothes it was customary for Russian families to keep on hand before the world war; part of it to the very good quality of these clothes; and part to the marvellous care the people are taking of what few clothes they have. Americans, accustomed as they are to all sorts of rotten shoddy goods, can hardly conceive of anyone wearing a pair of shoes three or four years and a suit of clothes six, and still have them looking well at the end of such long periods. But this is what is being done in Russia. I met some people there who had not replenished their wardrobe by a single garment since before the revolution. On Moscow's streets one can still pick out members of the ex-bourgeoisie, especially the women, by means of their faultless raiment, made up of left-overs from old-time stacks of clothes. The Russian women's hats are wonderful works of art. Feathers, beads, artificial flowers, and the other usual trimming materials are not to be had, because the blockade prevents their importation; but resourceful woman has been able to find substitutes in all sorts of strange cloth combinations. Some of the hats thus trimmed are beautiful enough to pass muster even on critical Fifth Avenue. With the easing of the military situation there is a great falling off in the demand for Army garments, and it is hoped that at least some of the urgent needs of the people for clothes may be satisfied soon.

Rent is one thing that Russian workers do not have to worry about. In the big cities they pay none at all. The Government owns all the houses and furnishes them to the people free of charge. The distribution of rooms, apartments, and houses is carried out by special committees attached to the local Soviets. Nearly everywhere, and especially in Moscow, a severe housing shortage exists. In this situation the prevailing method

of parcelling out the habitations has at least one virtue: it solves the vexatious problem of house-hunting. All one has to do is to go to the housing committee, make his application, and then, if he is lucky—take what he gets. It is very simple.

The nobility and bourgeoisie have been long since chased out of their palaces, mansions, villas, club-rooms, hotels, and apartments. These have all been turned to practical uses. For the most part the Government is using the great palaces for museums, special assembly halls, and offices. Thus the magnificent Kremlin, with its dozens of palaces and churches, is being preserved just as it was under the Czars, as a sort of gigantic national monument of the old regime. The Czar's palace itself was used by the III International to hold its recent congress. The same organization makes its headquarters in the former German Embassy, which still bears the marks of the bomb that killed Mirbach. In Petrograd the unions have their home in a magnificent palace, while those in Moscow occupy what was formerly a gorgeous club-room for the nobility. The Red Trade Union International has its main office in the former swell Elite Hotel.

Thousands of splendid country villas, scattered around the various cities have been turned into summer colonies for children and rest homes for industrial workers. Great numbers of town mansions have been changed to schools and hospitals; while others are used to house visiting foreigners—for three months I lived in a magnificent mansion formerly owned by a rich sugar king. The big former hotels are devoted chiefly to Government offices of various sorts, although three or four of the best of them were used to accommodate the crowds of delegates during the recent world congresses. As for the many fancy apartment houses, they have fallen to the lot of the workers, furniture and all. Many of them are occupied by the employees of single large factories and are run upon a communal basis by committee systems.

## XII.

### THE ORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRY.

Being in a state of profound and constant transition, Russian industry is extremely complicated in structure. It varies all the way from the near-feudalistic to the near-communistic. Milyutin, one of Russia's foremost industrial experts, says there are now five distinct economic systems in operation, viz.: (1) Patriarchic—the greater part of primitive peasant forms, (2) small industrial production, (2) private capitalism, (4) state capitalism, (5) socialism. Here we will deal only with the nationalized industries of the latter two categories, which comprise about 90 per cent of Russia's means of social production and distribution, exclusive of agriculture. They are reasonably regular in form and represent the broad stream of industrial development brought about by the revolution.

The highest and most authoritative industrial body in Russia is the National Council for Labor and Defense. It is composed of the heads of all the Government departments (the Peoples' Commissars) and representatives of the labor unions and industrial, agricultural, and scientific societies. Lenin is the chairman, and Rykov, a prominent economist, the next in authority. The National Council for Labor and Defense is a sort of political-economic cabinet, the chief function of which is to work out and supervise the application of broad industrial and agricultural policies. Every other branch of the social organization for production and distribution stands subordinate to it. It is an outgrowth of the civil war crisis and is taking on more and more importance with the passage of time. It will probably develop into the future economic parliament of Russia.

Next in the scale of industrial organizations and inferior to the National Council for Labor and Defense, stand the several national governmental departments devoted to production and distribution, viz.: Food, Agriculture, Posts, Telephones and Telegraphs, Transportation, and the Supreme Economic Council. They co-operate closely together, sending delegates to each

other's national and local councils and presiding boards wherever the proper functioning of industry requires joint action. The first four of these departments are comparatively restricted in scope, limiting themselves to the activities described by their respective names. The Supreme Economic Council is a much broader type of organization; it covers the whole remaining body of production and distribution. Its method of organization is typical, and we will deal with it only.

Corresponding to the needs of the work it is doing, the Supreme Economic Council specializes itself by industry and locality. The specialization by industry is of two general kinds: First, the national board of the S. E. C. is divided into five sections to meet the requirements of all industry considered as one body, viz.: (a) Production, (b) Distribution, (c) Finance and Accounts, (d) Factory and Workshop Statistics, (e) Local Affairs. Second, the S. E. C. is divided into sub-departments, one of each "trust" or industry. Thus there are national organizations for Metals, Soap, Timber, Flax, etc. All of these are headed by boards of experts entrusted with the carrying on of industry in their respective spheres.

The specialization of the Supreme Economic Council by locality starts at the body of experts forming the general presiding board of the S. E. C. and runs down through all the political and industrial subdivisions of the country until it reaches the managers of individual plants. There are provincial, state, district, local, and plant councils of the S. E. C. Such branches serve to link all the industries together in given areas and thus to make the industrial mechanism a unified, co-ordinated whole.

The local and other territorial councils of the S. E. C. are patterned after the parent national organization. Each has its board of experts and a specialization to correspond with the type of industry within its jurisdiction. These local councils, like the S. E. C. itself, are always connected with the Government Soviets of the corresponding geographical areas. Thus the whole political and economic structure is knitted together. Every year the Supreme Economic Council holds a national congress, at which representatives of all the

locality and industrial councils assemble to review and organize the work of the whole mechanism.

An important factor in the organization of Russian industry is the national Department of Workers' and Peasants' Control. This is a sort of national audit committee and, like many other institutions in present-day Russia, it has no parallel anywhere else in the world. In capitalist countries the checking-up of the financial and efficiency sides of industry and society in general is done by a multitude of auditors and experts attached to the various institutions and working more or less independently of each other. In Russia all this checking-up force is organized and combined in one body, the Workers' and Peasants' Control. It is a very large organization with ramifications everywhere. It is constructed according to the usual Soviet pattern through a series of ever-higher-rising delegate bodies, beginning with the rank and file in the shops and fields and running up to the top of the national department. The general function of the Workers' and Peasants' Control is to look after all social institutions—political, industrial, educational, etc.—and to see to it that they are operated efficiently and honestly. The hand of the Workers' and Peasants' Control is everywhere in all shops and factories. Although the recommendations of its agents lack actual legislative force, they are given much consideration and form a powerful directive force in the management of Russian industry.

Theoretically at least, the industries are still run upon a monetary basis. Their financing is attended to by the Department of Finance. This body also conducts the national treasury and issues the currency.

On the human side of industry, that is the part dealing with the rights and relationships of the workers therein, several departments and independent organizations come into play. At this place the most important for us are the Department of Labor, the trade unions and the Communist Party—the co-operatives playing but a minor part in the nationalized type of industry which we are considering.

The Russian Department of Labor is what its name signifies: an institution to function in the interests of the toilers. Unlike the fake labor departments of other countries, it is a vigorous organization striving

to make industry a fit place for human beings to work in. It is controlled from top to bottom by the trade unions. They select its officers.

The Department of Labor's activities may be summed up under the following general heads: (1) Registration and distribution of labor; (2) regulation of wages, hours, and working conditions; (3) health protection and accident prevention in industry; (4) labor and industrial statistics.

Under the first head is comprised the employment service of Soviet Russia. All the people out of work are registered with the special local employment sections of the Labor Department and from there distributed to the various industries wherever there may be need for workers. This is done in close co-operation with the trade unions concerned. Under the second head is comprised the working-out of the trade union scales and agreements. As we have seen in a previous chapter, about all the Department of Labor has to do in this matter is to rubber-stamp what the trade unions have decided upon. It is the direct representative of the general Government in all the latter's negotiations with the unions over changes in industrial working conditions. In the matter of health and accidents in industry, the Department is very active. It maintains a large corps of inspectors, most of whom come directly from the unions, to see that the best possible conditions are secured and kept up. The statistics it gathers are of real value to the people. A special function of the Department of Labor is to enforce all the laws and trade union agreements relating to industry.

In a preceding chapter we have shown in detail the part played by the trade unions in industry. They have a practical monopoly in the establishment of the wages and working conditions of the toilers. They are also a most important factor in educating the great masses to the new discipline and industrial re-organization made necessary by the revolution. And, finally, they have an important share in the actual management of industry through their direct participation in the many local and national boards of the Supreme Economic Council and the other industrial departments of the Government.

The Communist Party, bearing on its shoulders the main burden of the revolution, watches closely over

every phase of industry and seeks constantly to inspire the whole thing with its own militant spirit and policies. Its national executive committee has the final word in the settlement of every important industrial question, even as it has upon all social matters. We have, likewise, described it in a previous chapter. When it has decided upon a major economic policy, its thousands of yatchaykas carry the burning message of Communist organization and ideals into every shop, trade union, Government office, and all other institutions in any way connected with industry and make them function according to the policy agreed upon. The Communist Party is the brain and soul of Russian industry.

### XIII.

#### WHAT AILS INDUSTRY.

One of the most pronounced features of the revolution is the industrial collapse which is accompanying that great movement. This collapse is profound, far-reaching, and persistent. To remedy it is the supreme problem of the revolution. But it is stubbornly resistant to all treatment: despite heroic measures for many months past the productivity of the basic industries still remains at only 3 to 25 per cent of normal. The consequence is that the Russian people have been forced into such an acute shortage of life necessities as to menace the existence of the revolution itself.

Many factors have combined to bring about this industrial crisis, but here I can touch upon only a few. The first in importance is the blockade, to which Russia has been subjected almost uninterruptedly since 1914, to begin with by the Central Powers during the great war, and then by the whole capitalist world since the revolution. This infamous measure has literally strangled Russian industry.

Russia is not a complete, self-sustaining economic unit. At the outbreak of the world war her industry was still in a primitive state of development. The country produced and exported great quantities of raw and semi-finished materials, such as grain, flax, lumber, leather, textiles, oils, etc. In return it imported enormous amounts of machinery, chemicals, etc., which were either not produced in Russia at all, or to only a limited extent, but which were absolutely indispensable to her industrial life. Much, if not most of Russian industrial equipment was of foreign make. The general condition was well instanced by a power plant I visited not far from Moscow. There were four engines in it: two from Germany, one from England and, one of Russian make. The Russian capitalists drew upon the whole world for their machinery. When the blockade began in 1914 the importation of the many vital industrial necessities stopped short, and as the country was not equipped to produce them itself, industry immediately commenced to suffer. During the great

war disintegration started to manifest itself, and as time went on and the industries were subjected to intense strain, the situation progressively got worse, until a condition of almost complete collapse resulted. The blockade pulled the very keystone out of the Russian industrial arch.

Let one example suffice to illustrate the ruinous effects of the blockade. Take the commodity wire rope, for instance. That is absolutely indispensable to the operation of the coal mines. Before the war it was all imported, none being made in Russia. And naturally, during the revolutionary crises the beleaguered Russian workers were unable to set up the great specialized steel plants necessary for its manufacture. The result was that, with no new supply available, as fast as the wire hoisting cables wore out the mines had to shut down, thus spreading industrial paralysis all about them. In hundreds, if not thousands of instances similar disruption was caused in the industries for want of "key" products, unprocurable because of the blockade.

Pennsylvania is a great industrial state, and her mills and factories operate at wonderful efficiency. But cut them off from the support of related industries in other states, and powerful though they may be they would soon wither and die. That is what was done to Russia's industries by the blockade. Their very roots were cut off. The world's capitalists have shed many crocodile tears over the handful of exploiters who were killed in the revolution, but their own terrible blockade, by ruining Russian industry and starving the people, has cost a hundred times more lives than were lost in the revolutionary riots and executions.

To the disastrous effects of the long blockade have been added the incalculable ruin wrought by the bitter civil wars that followed in the wake of the revolution. The counter-revolutionary armies overran huge sections of the country, thereby sadly disrupting the industries. They captured the coal mines of the Donetz basin and the oil wells of Baku. This cut off the supply of fuel to industry and stopped it almost dead, until, after a terrific effort, the thousands of locomotives and other fuel burners had been re-equipped to burn wood, and a vast organization created to furnish them with sufficient quantities of it. They captured Turkestan,

thus cutting off Russia's supply of cotton and ruining the textile industry. They captured the Ukraine and other rich grain-growing districts, leaving to the Soviets the tremendous problem of feeding a country that had never produced enough to feed itself. And when the workers succeeded in driving the counter-revolutionary armies out of these districts the latter systematically crippled the industries as they retreated. They dumped locomotives into rivers and lakes, burned freight cars, dynamited 1600 railroad bridges, flooded coal mines, ruined oil wells. With diabolical cunning their engineers, bearing in mind the blockade, robbed the factory machinery of "key" parts without which it could not be operated, and which could not be made in Russia. They devastated industry generally.

But even worse than the open vandalism of Kolchak, Denekin, Yudenitch, Wrangel, and other counter-revolutionaries was the unparalleled campaign of secret sabotage carried on by the anti-Soviet elements behind the Bolshevik lines: the engineers and other bourgeois sympathizers who did not leave Russia. This sabotage began at the very outbreak of the revolution, when the employers, seeing that they could no longer hold the industries themselves, set out to ruin them. And it has continued ever since. The counter-revolutionists within Russia know to a man that the fate of the revolution turns on the industrial situation, and their universal plan is to worm themselves into strategic positions in the industries and then to use their power to demoralize the productive organization. The amount of damage that has thus been done is incalculably enormous. Considering their bitter experiences in this respect, it is no wonder that the Communists so sweepingly condemn sabotage as a dangerous weapon of the exploiting class and will have none of it practiced by the workers neither before nor after the revolution.

Another great factor in breaking down Russian industry was the vast loss of skilled labor—managerial, technical, and manual—occasioned by the revolution. It seems almost as if industrial skill has flown from Russia. Before October, 1917, many of the industries were owned outright by foreigners and directed mainly by foreign staffs. Thus the American plants were operated chiefly by American engineers according to American efficiency systems; the German plants by German

engineers with German methods; the French plants with French management, etc., and nearly all of them imported their machinery from their own countries. There was no standardization anywhere. When the revolution came nearly all these foreign experts went home. For the inexperienced Russian workers, who are only a degree removed from peasantry, the deserted plants, destitute of skilled management, complicated by widely-differing operating systems, and with machinery coming from all over the world, were but little better than so much junk for a long time. Many Russian engineers and industrial experts followed the example of their foreigner associates and emigrated. And the majority of those who stayed behind might as well have gone also, because they either went on permanent strike or developed into inveterate saboteurs.

This general defection of the experts and technicians was a grave calamity for industry, and the situation was much worsened by the fact that the revolution literally devoured the skilled mechanics, the only elements who could possibly take the place of the runaway engineers. These skilled workers, because of their intelligence and superior militancy, had to bear the burden of the early revolutionary struggles. Thousands of them perished in the various civil wars, and other thousands were taken from industry altogether and placed in the new Government, political, industrial, and military administration, which was shrieking for help. Other multitudes of them were lost by their wandering off to settle in the country during the periods of extreme economic dislocation.

Consequent upon the loss of so many experts and skilled workers, Russian industry has been decapitated, so to speak. To a very large extent its fate now rests in the hands of the least experienced elements of a particularly inexperienced working class, although desperate efforts are being made to produce, in the trade union and other technical schools, a new crop of skilled workers and industrial experts. This factor alone—the loss of so much industrial skill—would have prevented any real efficiency in the mills, mines, and factories.

Added to the foregoing factors tending to check industrial production was another of prime importance. This was the profound change wrought in labor dis-

cipline by the revolution. When capitalism prevailed the employers used the customary methods of the wages system, brutally driving the workers to their tasks and making them produce enormous quantities of commodities. But with the revolution this external compulsion was abolished and the workers had to discipline themselves in industry; they had to secure quantity production practically upon a voluntary basis. This has proved one of the very greatest problems of the revolution, because masses of the workers, densely ignorant in consequence of a thousand years of working class slavery and accustomed to forced labor, had hardly an inkling of what the social upheaval was all about. They thought that the revolution meant that they did not have to work any more, or at best, only at such odd times and in such haphazard fashion as they saw fit. They were unable to discipline themselves. If they went to the plants at all it was only to idle and fool about. They had next to no understanding of the needs of industry. The general consequence was a serious drop in production, and the inauguration of a great educational campaign by the militants to show these ignorant masses that only when they keep society supplied with a plentitude of products can they hope to enjoy a high standard of living. Unfortunately this simple lesson has not been driven entirely home. Russian industry is still afflicted with large numbers of slacker workers who as yet are intellectually unable to rise to the heights of the new revolutionary system of voluntary labor discipline. It is for them that the compulsory labor laws had to be promulgated.

The industrial collapse was further hastened by the food shortage which has existed for many months. This shortage was caused in the first place largely by the industrial breakdown, which it in turn reacts against and tends to make worse. Let us examine briefly the cause and effects of the food shortage:

The end of the world war found Russian agriculture in a badly run-down state. Millions of the peasants had been killed and other millions hopelessly mutilated, thus making labor scarce. Likewise great numbers of draft animals perished in the war and the plagues that accompanied it, making that type of labor scarce also. Farm machinery was worn out, and the land impoverished for want of fertilizers. All these things seriously

reduced the production of food and the cities began to feel the pinch of hunger. Then came the revolution. This intensified the industrial crisis and made matters worse. Production of the commodities needed by the peasants fell off, and for the vast quantities of food required by the city population and the army, the Government had practically nothing to offer the peasants except taxation and depreciated paper money. Neither was popular with them. They lost the incentive to produce. Then the Government, under the stern necessity caused by the civil wars, adopted the grain levy, by which the peasants had to give up all the foodstuffs they produced above the minimum required to keep them and their families. Result, a further decrease in production: for the peasants, who altogether lack political vision and idealism, reasoned that if they had to turn over everything to the Government except enough to live on there was no use to produce more than the latter amount. And that became the decided tendency, with the natural consequence that food became constantly more scarce in the cities and the workers were eventually forced down to a diet so meagre that they were no longer able to work efficiently. Industrial production fell sharply because of this, and it may be said that one of the basic causes of the low output in general is simply that the workers do not get enough meat. The whole thing has resolved itself into a baffling vicious circle: The workers cannot work because they have insufficient nourishment, and the peasants will not produce foodstuffs for them because they have no manufactured products—agricultural machinery, fertilizers, shoes, etc.—to give them in exchange. And now this food shortage, created principally by the industrial deadlock between city and country, has been made incomparably worse by the terrible drought which has burned up the crops in the Volga district and with which a shocked world is familiar.

The foregoing are some of the principal factors entering into the collapse of Russian industry. Briefly resumed, they are as follows: (a) The blockade, which prevented the importation of vitally necessary machinery and other products not made in Russia and thus starved and disrupted the industrial mechanism; (b) the civil wars, which entirely cut off many industries

from their raw material supplies and ruined them, and which brought about wholesale destruction of mines, mills, and factories by the retreating counter-revolutionary armies; (c) the deadly sabotage practiced by the counter-revolutionaries in Soviet Russia, which poisoned industry at its heart; (d) the fatal loss of skilled labor by the defection of the industrial experts, the death of thousands of the best mechanics in the revolutionary struggles and the unavoidable removal of many thousands more from industry to fill positions in the new Soviet Government institutions; (e) the great loss in efficiency caused by the revolutionary change in labor discipline from the old basis of capitalistic slave driving to the new system of industrial self-control by the workers; (f) the food shortage, which, originating to a great extent from the industrial breakdown, reacted to make that breakdown still worse by forcing the workers down to such an inadequate diet that their productive power has been seriously impaired.

Taken altogether these factors, and many others of lesser importance, have resulted in a general industrial crisis so intense and disastrous as to constitute probably the very greatest economic problem that any nation has ever been confronted with. The fate of the revolution depends upon its outcome. If it is solved and the industries are got to working again, then the revolution will be safe and the Russian people will march rapidly forward to the development of the greatest civilization the world has ever known. But if the industrial crisis is not solved, sooner or later the revolution will go down with a crash and the whole nation will be plunged into the deepest chasms of reaction. That is what is at stake in the breakdown of Russian industry.

## XIV.

### THE NEW ECONOMIC PROGRAM.

When they carried out their uprising in 1917 the Russian Communists had been long convinced that in order for a proletarian revolution to be successful it would almost necessarily have to extend over several big countries simultaneously.\* They realized that industry is international in scope; that all the nations are economically dependent upon each other, and that the possibility of a working class republic maintaining itself in one country, while the rest remained capitalist, was almost negligible. Hence, immediately they came into power they set about encouraging the indispensable revolutions in the great states of Western Europe. But their efforts failed: in each case the workers, ignorant and led by timid and treacherous leaders, were unable to rise to the heights of real proletarian revolution. In consequence, the Russians finally found themselves alone, with the admittedly next to impossible task on their hands of making their country a Communist society against the united opposition of the capitalist world.

With this superhuman problem on their hands, the Russian militants have struggled on since the revolution. Always hoping for supporting revolutions to develop in other countries, they have done their utmost to solve the baffling industrial problem with their own means; they rebuilt as best they could the railroad equipment and industrial plants destroyed in the civil wars; they tried to overcome the shortage of skilled labor by creating thousands of technical and vocational schools; they repressed sabotage with an iron hand, not hesitating to even use the firing squad when necessary; they carried on a great campaign to educate the

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\*Once when talking with a very prominent Russian Communist, and after we had reviewed the many industrial wants of the country, he expressed a widely-held opinion when he said, "After all, the only thing that Russia really needs is a revolution in Germany." The thought being that with the workers of Germany and Russia united in revolution; the ones possessing a magnificent industrial equipment and the others boundless natural resources, a proletarian economic block would be created that could sustain itself against the capitalist world.

masses to the meaning of the new voluntary labor discipline; they fought the food shortage by rationing systems and all sorts of drives for industrial efficiency.

But with the counter-revolutionary forces raging on many fronts about the best they could do was to partially check the degeneration of industry. Little attention could be given the problem. The supreme energies of the people were devoted to beating back the invaders. The slogan was, "Everything for the Red Army." But now the war is over, and for the first time the revolutionists are really able to take the industrial situation seriously in hand. They are attacking it with the same feverish energy that they did the earlier military problems. The rehabilitation of industry has now become the first order of business for Russia's best brains and idealism.

The first fruits of this concentrated attention upon the industrial problem is what is called the new economic program, the announcement of which recently caused world-wide comment. This program consists of several measures, the most important of which are: (1), intensified efforts to break the blockade by setting up trade relations with capitalist nations; (2), granting of concessions in Russia to foreign capital; (3), lifting of the strict Government industrial monopoly and the establishment of free trade; (4), abolition of the grain levy and adoption of the grain tax.

These policies were heralded all over the world by counter-revolutionaries as marking the definite end of Communism in Russia and the rebirth of capitalism there. The defenders of private property in social necessities were everywhere highly elated and the radical friends of Soviet Russia correspondingly depressed; because, lacking exact information as to what these policies actually involve and judging them from their face value, the latter were inclined to fear that there might be good grounds for the capitalistic rejoicing. In this chapter I shall try to point out what the new measures are intended to accomplish and whether or not they are liable to bring about a recurrence of capitalism in Russia.

In the preceding chapter we have seen that Russia is suffering from a sort of economic vicious circle, the low production of manufactured articles preventing a sufficient production of foodstuffs, and vice versa. The

new economic program is an attempt to hack a way directly out of this vicious circle. It attacks the problem in both its phases, industrial and agricultural, simultaneously. The general plan of it is, on the one hand, to run beyond the poor industrial productive apparatus of Russia and quickly secure an abundant supply of manufactured articles especially to satisfy the needs of the peasants; and on the other hand, to get the peasants to produce a plentitude of food for the city workers in anticipation of receiving such articles in return for it.

The first three measures deal primarily with the industrial phase of the problem. (1), With trade relations established generally, Russia will be able to export the raw and semi-finished materials which she can easily produce in quantity, and to get in exchange the locomotives and other essentials which she needs so badly to put the industries on their feet again. Thus will be avoided the many years' struggle which otherwise would be required to build the equipment necessary to produce all these vital commodities in Russia; (2), by means of foreign concessions large quantities of products, taken in payment for rent and leases, will be thrown into the general stream of commodities in the country and thus serve to diminish the industrial crisis. Kamenev recently declared that the concessions can further the economic emancipation of Russia by assisting materially in the electrification of her industries. This great project can be completed in two general ways: Russia may either struggle along for many years with her impoverished equipment trying to bring it about; or she may buy the materials, etc., from the capitalist countries. In the latter event she would have to pay world capitalism a tribute of twelve billion dollars, the cost of the electrification work, for her industrial independence. Kamenev urged the concessions as one way in which this tribute might be paid (3), Through the establishment of free trade individual initiative is stimulated. Small industry is invigorated and made to produce a large amount of commodities, which help materially to tide over the crisis until large-scale industry can be organized. Besides large stores of goods, hidden by their owners at the outbreak of the

revolution, are drawn from their hiding places and thrown on the hungry market.

The last measure deals with the agricultural phase. (4), By the substitution of the grain tax for the grain levy the peasants are encouraged to produce more food-stuffs. Under the grain levy everything was taken from them except barely enough for them to live on; whereas under the grain tax they have to give up only a certain percentage of their crops. The rest is left for them to dispose of as they see fit. The more they raise the more they have. This is an incentive to production, so direct that even the dull-witted peasants can comprehend it.

The additional mass of machinery and other commodities secured through foreign trade, concessions, and small free-trade industry will be used to rehabilitate the industries generally and to satisfy burning needs of the workers and peasants. And the large surpluses of grain originating as a result of the new tax system will serve to relieve the food shortage in the cities and also as an important basis for foreign trade. Just as decreasing production in the two spheres of industry and agriculture reacted unfavorably upon each other constantly, and finally developed the vicious circle above-described, so it is calculated that the gradually increasing production in these two spheres will influence one another favorably until finally the vicious circle is broken altogether, and Russia, with great reserves in her control, is able to march rapidly forward to abounding prosperity. That is the purpose of the new economic policies of Soviet Russia.

The new economic program is essentially capitalistic: it is an attempt to use some of capitalism's own weapons temporarily against itself. That there is danger in this for the revolution cannot be denied, but it is a peril that must be run because the workers in other countries have failed to support Russia by dethroning their masters. The world's capitalists hope and believe that the danger will be fatal, and many revolutionaries dread that they may be right. But the Russian Communists, keen realists and with all the facts in their hands, are sure that they can offset it and achieve the end they have in mind. Let us examine for a minute

just what this danger is and what means will be used to combat it:

International trading, as proposed, is not a serious menace. It will be closely controlled by the Government and can hardly furnish vantage ground for a new capitalism to take root. Nor will the concessions present grave difficulties. The foreign exploiters going in will insist upon and no doubt get ample guarantees of protection, but their projects will be hedged around with legal restrictions isolating them and limiting their baneful political influence. Moreover, and this is the decisive factor, the Communists will arrange matters so that the capitalists must produce their own social antitoxin. That is, as fast as the concessionaries build plants and fill them with workers, the Communists, by organizing the latter industrially and politically, will give them a power sufficient not only to overcome that of the employers involved, but also to lend considerable support to the general proletarian social structure. Hence, we get the interesting result that the more capitalists go into Russia, and the larger they swell the ranks of the working class, the stronger will become the workers' republic. There is little to fear from the concessionaries. Speaking of them recently, Kamenev said: "Capital in Russia will dig its own grave with every extra shovelful of coal and with every bucketful of petroleum that we obtain by its help."

But if international, trade and concessions do not constitute real dangers, the establishment of free trade and its helpmeet, the grain tax, certainly do. They give private individuals the right again to manufacture and deal in social necessities. They will result in a great growth of small-scale production and the strengthening of petty-bourgeois sentiment. They are equivalent to injecting the worst kind of capitalist poison straight into the body of proletarian Russia. But the revolutionary tacticians are sure that the latter is strong enough to withstand the nauseous dose. Everything will be done to prevent contagion, and to make only good come from the vaccination. The luxuriant crop of small producers and dealers, both industrial and agricultural, will be organized into co-operatives, and thus their activities will be kept largely within proletarian bounds. The great basic

industries will be free of the infection. They will remain in the hands of the Government, and will be developed along purely Communist lines.

In view of the circumstances, with the workers, retaining absolute control of the Government, the Army, the great industries, the press, the schools, etc., it is very unlikely that any dangerous capitalist class can grow in Russia from the workings of the new economic program. Granted that these measures are a risky experiment, and one that would not be undertaken unless the need were so great; but the Russian Communist leaders know what they are about. Consider their solution of the officer problem in the Red Army: When they put the ex-czarist officers in command, as they were compelled to do because the workers knew nothing of military science, a loud howl went up that this was wildest folly; that the old imperialists, again in charge of the armed forces, would soon turn them against the revolution and defeat it. Yet this calamity did not occur—the Communist military commissars prevented it. Nor will the much-feared and much-hoped-for collapse of the Soviet regime come about as a result of the economic policies. All that will happen is that Russia will get the additional volume of production upon which she is counting, and upon which the fate of the revolution depends. The Communist Party will take care of whatever capitalist class there may develop.

There are critics of Soviet Russia, however, who will disagree violently with this conclusion. They maintain that even under the rigid industrial control existing until the adoption of the new economic program a large body of rich speculators, the widely-advertised new Russian bourgeoisie, have been able to develop, and that now the lid is lifted and trading made legal, this sprouting capitalist class will flourish like weeds and soon choke out the few remaining delicate tendrils of Communism.

While in Russia I made a special effort to locate this famous new bourgeoisie. But it proved too elusive for me. In fact, I am prepared to say that it does not exist, and for two very good reasons. The first is that in present-day Russia there is at hand no privately-owned industrial or commercial mechanism sufficiently extensive to sustain such a class—90 per cent of the

industries being owned by the Government, and most of the remaining 10 per cent consisting of workers' co-operatives. And secondly, there is no way to store up accumulated wealth in substantial amounts—it cannot be invested in stocks and bonds, for there is none of either; nor in land, buildings, and industries, for these are not on sale; nor in money, for this has already depreciated 15,000 times and is constantly falling faster. How, then, can there be a capitalist class—with no means to “earn” its wealth and no way to keep it after it gets it? The whole thing is impossible. That many crafty individuals have been able to take advantage of the social upheaval by speculating and stealing and have amassed a store of gold, jewels, and other valuables, is undeniable. But to dignify them with the name of the new bourgeoisie is ridiculous. There is no real capitalist class in Russia now, nor is there liable to be one there in the future.

So far, the new economic program has been successful in accomplishing the things expected of it. The blockade is being broken; international trade is developing; streams of machinery and manufactured products are flowing to Russia's impoverished industries and people—in the six weeks just preceding my departure from Russia 58 ships, loaded with vital necessities, arrived in Petrograd from abroad. Several concessions of timber and other raw material supplies have already been leased out, and many more are under negotiation. Small-scale industries are springing up all over the country and sending a fresh flood of products into the needy market. But most important of all is the effect produced upon the peasants. Unquestionably they have been tremendously stimulated by the substitution of the grain tax for the grain levy. This Spring they put in an exceptionally large acreage of crops, and worked diligently to produce a harvest which, to begin with, promised to be large enough to solve half of Russia's tremendous difficulties. But the drought came on and ruined it. This has dealt a deadly blow to the success of the new program. It means that the food shortage must continue for an indefinite time, and with it the inseparably connected industrial crisis. It is a great calamity. Had there but been a good crop this year the backbone of the industrial problem would have

been broken and the revolution placed out of all danger.

But the Russian workers are not discouraged; they are fighting doggedly on in the face of the new difficulties. They are fired with a boundless confidence in themselves, kindled by the accomplishment of many "impossibilities." When they took hold of the Government the world said they could not maintain it for three weeks; yet here they are now, four years later, stronger politically than every. When they were destitute of organized armed forces and surrounded by a multitude of enemies the world said that they could not defend themselves and would be crushed; but they built up the Red Army and drove back all their foes. And thus it will be with their present overwhelming industrial problem: the world, always a pessimist, says it is insoluble and will ruin the revolution; but even as the Russian workers achieved the political and military "impossibilities," and made everyone admit it, so they will one day accomplish the industrial "impossibility" and make everyone admit that also. In my judgment the famine has not defeated the Russian revolution; it has merely delayed for a while its final, full realization.

## XV.

### THE PRESS.

Like every other institution in Russia, the press has been profoundly affected by the revolution. Before the great upheaval there were practically no labor papers, now there are hardly any others. About the only journals existing at the present time are those of the Communist Party, the Government, the trade unions, the co-operatives, and other institutions friendly to, or at least tolerant of, the Communist revolution. There is no important oppositional press. By the hard logic of circumstances virtually all of it, imperialist, capitalist, clerical, liberal, and pseudo-socialist, was destroyed in the bitter revolutionary struggles.

From the beginning of the revolution the workers realized that one of the greatest dangers they had to combat was the poisoning of the people's mind by the enemy press. Hence, making no bones about the matter, they took the situation seriously in hand, set up the Revolutionary Press Tribunal, and declared war on the journalistic hangers-on of the exploiting class. As fast as these were caught in counter-revolutionary activities their journals were put out of business. "Reactionary," "liberal," and "radical" papers alike went down in the struggle, until finally the purely working-class press remained practically alone in the field.

Much adverse criticism has been expressed over the suppression of the so-called liberal and radical press, but it was an imperative necessity of the revolution. In the crisis it proved a buttress for the capitalist system and it had to go. The working-class, beset by a multitude of dangers, was fighting its way out of Czarism and toward liberty. Within the country the whole capitalist and intellectual classes were sabotaging the industries and bringing the people to ruin; while on its borders raged the armies of the whole capitalist world. Defeat for the workers meant the triumph of black reaction and the inauguration of the most terrible massacres in the history of civilization.

In such a desperate situation there could be only two sides to the struggle: that of the workers, and that

of the exploiters. There was no middle ground. One had to get upon one side or the other of the barricade. This supreme test showed the press in question, mostly pseudo-socialist, to be capitalistic at heart. Its general position was that the raw and undeveloped workers were incapable of operating the complex society alone, and that they should accept the leadership of the capitalist class for an indefinite period. Its practice was to flatly oppose the proletarian Government and to generally play the game of counter-revolution. So it perished at the hands of the hostile workers. They were not deceived by its fair-sounding words; they properly understood that in the name of petty bourgeois ideals and conceptions it was knifing the working-class revolution.

Most of the non-proletarian papers collapsed in the early stages of the revolution, and have not been resurrected. At present no encouragement is given to such an oppositional press. When the revolution has passed the danger point and is safe, then the utmost freedom for the press will be established. But that time is not yet come; the Russian revolution is still fighting for its existence and it cannot afford to have an organized, poisonous opposition gnawing at its vitals.

The Russian press of the present day is highly specialized. There are no general newspapers, according to our understanding of the term. Each publication represents some particular institution and deals chiefly with matters relating to it. Thus duplication of work is largely avoided. The leading national dailies are "Pravda" (Communist Party), "Isvestia" (All-Russian Soviets), "Labor" (All-Russian Trade Unions), "Economic Life" (Supreme Economic Council), and "Poverty" (a peasant paper). These journals are circulated all over Russia. Besides them there are dailies in many of the larger towns and cities. Usually these are published by the Communist Party, the local Soviets and the trade unions, either separately or in combination with each other.

The National Union of Transport Workers, the largest labor union in Russia, issues a daily for its membership. Occasionally large local labor unions, as for instance the Baku oil workers, also have dailies of their own. The other national labor unions get out either weekly or monthly publications. Likewise, the various

national departments of the Government issue journals covering their respective activities. Often, also, the workers in large factories publish their own bulletins and educational sheets. So far as I could learn there is no underground press.

Many of the Russian labor journals are veterans in the social war. The most battle-scarred among them is the Petrograd "Pravda." Recently, upon the ninth anniversary of its foundation, this paper published a statement of its early difficulties, from which the following is quoted:

"During a period of two years the "Pravda" had to change its name eight times: 'Pravda,' 'Rabotchaya Pravda,' 'Severnaya Pravda,' 'Pravda Truda,' 'Za Pravda,' 'Proletarskaya Pravda,' 'Putok Pravda,' and 'Peredovaya Pravda.'" In the first year of its existence out of 295 issues of the 'Pravda,' 41 were confiscated, fines were imposed 16 times, and the editor was arrested for three issues without bail. During its first two years, until April 5, 1914, of 565 issues of the 'Pravda,' 134 were confiscated, 31 people fined 14,450 rubles, with the choice of being arrested and kept for 87 months, and besides the editors were sentenced to nine months imprisonment without the option of a fine. Thus, in two years' time, the editors served 96 months, or eight years in jail. All sorts of hindrances were thrown in the paper's way, its circulation was blocked, the newsdealers were persecuted and forbidden to sell the paper, the landlords were forced to refuse quarters to the editorial staff, etc. On July 7, 1914, the last 'Pravda' of the period, the 'Peredovaya Pravda' was finally destroyed."

The Russians properly look upon the press as a means for educating the people and they have vested its general supervision and control in the Department of Education. This body also controls the supply of paper and shares it out to the various journals in proportion to their value and needs. As there is now a severe shortage of paper, the chances are slim for any but really revolutionary publications to get supplies. A determined effort is constantly kept up to develop the papers into genuinely educational organs. Hence, the sensational murder trials, scandals, and other trash that goes so largely to make up American newspapers find no place in the Russian press. The latter confines itself to the more important and serious phases of life. It carries no paid advertising matter.

The prevailing paper shortage tends sharply to reduce the size of the Russian papers, most of them being of only four pages. Their contents are boiled down to the last degree. The paper shortage has also cut their circulation to a fraction of what it should be.

Rigid economy and many unusual devices are used to make the limited number of papers go as far as possible. A favorite method is to post up copies of them on the kiosks and in other public places, where crowds may be seen standing around all day reading them. Likewise, instead of each person getting a separate copy, a number are sent to the factory libraries, where all the workers may read them. In spite of the paper shortage, a number of the journals have a large circulation. The national "Pravda" has 200,000 daily, the "Izvestia" 350,000, while "Poverty" is credited with 700,000.

Even in these revolutionary times the workers permit much freedom of expression in their press. They draw a sharp distinction between the honest, constructive criticism in their own journals and the destructive propaganda of the counter-revolutionary press. Indeed, so startlingly frank are the various papers in criticising the new order that they have been accused of over-doing the thing, of painting the evils too black so that the workers may be frightened into taking the proper corrective measures. No better proof of the freedom of the revolutionary press is needed than the well-known fact that counter-revolutionary writers in other countries depend upon this press to furnish them with at least 95 per cent of the critical and statistical matter which they are using against Soviet Russia. Care is taken by the workers, however, to see that the freedom of their press is not abused. A typical case was that of a prominent editor, who, during the recent Polish war, wrote an editorial attempting to stir up nationalistic hatred against the Polish people. Within an hour after his paper appeared on the streets he had lost his job. He was replaced by a man who would more faithfully represent the international point of view of the Communists.

The Russian workers are keenly aware that the success of the revolution depends very largely upon the extent and quality of their press. They also know that at present it is very inadequate for its great work of education and they are doing all possible to improve it. It is safe to say that within a few years, when the paper shortage has been overcome and the general economic crisis solved, the workers of Russia will have a system of newspapers which will be unequalled anywhere.

## XVI.

### REVOLUTIONARY COURTS AND JUSTICE.

As with everything else in Russia, the system of measuring out justice has been revolutionized from top to bottom. The Russian people, with very good cause, bitterly hated the Czarist courts, and no sooner was the old regime overturned than they began to radically reform them. The changes started under the Kerensky Government, when, as a first stroke, the old-time judges were removed and judicial committees, usually consisting of a workman and a soldier for each court, were put in their places. This was a step in the right direction but much remained yet to be done. Many of the new judges were illiterate, and the reactionary lawyers, who were still allowed to practice, were able to twist them around their fingers and to degenerate the courts into hotbeds of counter-revolution.

Only with the October, or Bolshevik, revolution was the situation seriously taken in hand. Almost at a blow, the Communists wiped out every remnant of the old system: military, marine, civil, and criminal courts, penal code, lawyers, and all. Then, with many complications and gradual evolutionary advances, they proceeded to build up a new system of courts and justice to take the place of the old one. The new revolutionary system divides itself into three general sections; viz, the Extraordinary Commission, the Revolutionary Tribunal's, and the Peoples' Courts. The whole organization finds a central point in the national Department of Justice.

The Extraordinary Commission and the Revolutionary Tribunals are special, temporary bodies designed to ease the revolution over its early, critical stages. Eventually they will be abolished and the entire business of administering justice handed over to the Peoples' Courts.

The Extraordinary Commission, popularly known as the "Tsche ka" specializes in the more serious political offenses, such as counter-revolutionary attempts, speculation in life necessities, attacks upon Soviet officials, etc. It is a national organization, with branches

in all the principal cities and towns. It has a large staff of investigators and special detachments of soldiers to carry on its work. With its semi-secret method of operation and its militant defense of the revolution, the Extraordinary Commission is the terror of the counter-revolutionists. During the heated period of the revolution, when the Soviet Government was besieged by a swarm of internal foes, it was very active; but now that these foes are about crushed its functions less and less.

The Revolutionary Tribunals stand next to the Extraordinary Commission in precedence and authority. They deal with political crimes of lesser importance, such as sabotage, stealing from Soviet industries, etc. They, too, are a national organization, with local sections in the chief centers. They are still active, but are slated to disappear when the revolutionary crisis is over.

The Peoples' Courts are the future judicial system of Soviet Russia. At present they occupy themselves mainly with equity and criminal cases of minor importance; but eventually, when the new regime is fully established, they are to take over the administration of justice in all its branches. They will be the sole court system in Russia.

The Peoples' Courts consist of one judge each, and from one to six jurors, according to the type of the case being tried. The judges, who are often women, are elected directly by the local Soviets from selected lists of candidates submitted by the executive committees of these Soviets. They are subject to recall at all times. They have a penal code to go by, but when this does not fit the case in hand the judges are, in the language of the law, "to be guided by their socialistic sense of justice." References by them to the principles and precedents of the laws of the overthrown autocracy are strictly forbidden. The jury lists are made up by the labor unions and the lesser Soviets, and are confirmed by the executive committees of the district or municipal Soviets.

In the Peoples' Courts the so-called legal profession is not recognized. Attached to each Soviet having in its jurisdiction a Peoples' Court is a board of public prosecutors and defenders for criminal cases, and of representatives for civil cases. These officials are

chosen by the executive committees of the Soviets in question. In all serious cases the accused is furnished without cost a defender selected by the judge; in minor cases the judge decides whether or not there shall be a defender used. In any case, however, where a prosecutor is employed there must also be a defender assigned to the person on trial. Counsel in civil suits is delegated or refused directly by the board of prosecutors, defenders and representatives itself. Besides the members of these boards, there may also appear in court as attorneys, near relatives of the litigants, and representatives of Soviet institutions who have been authorized to so act by the management of such institutions. Professional private lawyers are expressly banned.

In Russian court practice "the law's delay" is virtually eliminated. The verdicts and decisions of the Peoples' Judges go into effect almost immediately. Only a short respite is allowed in which to file appeals. Such appeals may be made to the Councils of Peoples' Judges, one of which exists in each district. Their action is final. All the judges belong to the Councils in their respective districts, and, turn by turn, sit on the presiding boards which carry on most of the Councils' activities. The members of these presiding boards may be recalled at any time by action of the corresponding district Soviets.

In all great social upheavals severe measures are found necessary to hold in check the forces making for chaos, and the Russian revolution has proved no exception to the general rule. It, too, has had to vigorously fight that ever-present predacious element which seeks to take advantage of the temporarily crippled society by preying upon it in a criminal manner. To begin with the Communists, with a naive conception of the Brotherhood of Man, handled their court cases with extreme mildness. But the folly of this soon became apparent. The anti-social elements mistook this mildness for weakness and entered upon an orgy of criminality. Disorder ran riot. Plots against the Government were hatched on every side, lawlessness became the order of the day; robberies and murders multiplied themselves with startling rapidity. Many people were killed by bandits, among them a number of well-known men. Lenin himself had a number of

adventures. Once he was stopped on the street and robbed of the automobile in which he was riding, and another time he was shot through the neck by a counter-revolutionist. The situation rapidly went from bad to worse.

Then the Communists took the matter seriously in charge. They instituted the Extraordinary Commission and the Revolutionary Tribunals and began dealing out justice with a stern hand. Counter-revolutionists were summarily dealt with, and ordinary criminals shot at the scenes of their crimes. Along with these harsh measures went an extensive educational campaign showing the danger outlawry brought to the revolution. Soon the anti-social forces were vanquished: the counter-revolutionists transferred their open activities to countries outside Russia, and the common bandits found that their trade was one that did not pay. Today Russian cities are as orderly and free from crime as any in the world. Holdups and burglaries are practically unknown. Although the streets of Moscow and Petrograd are almost entirely unlighted at night one may walk about them at any hour in perfect safety.

A great deal of outside criticism has been directed against these special revolutionary courts, before all the Extraordinary Commission, which has been painted as a darksome monster that holds the whole country in shivering terror. The Russian revolutionists also lament the necessity for such bodies, but they had no choice in the matter. It was either fight the reaction with its own weapons, or see the revolution collapse. And the Russians also know full well that most of the "terror" of the Extraordinary Commission is pure enemy propaganda. The whole thing has been grossly exaggerated. The few thousand reactionaries that met death at the hands of that organization are numerically insignificant when compared with the millions of workers and peasants slaughtered by these same reactionaries in the horrible world war. The special revolutionary courts were products of the great revolutionary crisis and they are disappearing as that crisis wears itself out.

The essential mildness of the revolutionary justice system, and the true spirit of the workers' new society is to be found in the Peoples' Courts. There crime, at

least as far as it is committed by workers, is considered primarily a product of ignorance. The prevailing conception is that offenders should be educated, not punished. Many remarkable and curious "sentences" are continually being delivered in the Peoples' Courts. For example, not long ago, a worker guilty of a serious offense was ordered by the judge, with the alternative of a jail sentence, to study the scientific explanation of why such crimes as his are committed, and then to deliver a lecture to the Court six months hence on the subject. The judge outlined a course of reading for him. Another recent case was that of a worker who was caught practicing sabotage and ordered to deliver a series of lectures to workers in various Moscow factories, explaining to them the virtues of working faithfully for the Soviet Republic, and exhorting them to avoid such crimes as his. The story goes that he derived as much good from his experience as his hearers did, for he developed into an active militant. Social parasites, however, do not come off with the light sentences that usually are given to actual workers. The "education" they get is always more drastic and less sympathetic. They are considered and treated as enemies of the new social order.

## XVII.

### SOME REVOLUTIONARY LEADERS.

Nicholai Lenin (V. I. Ulianov),\* President of the Council of Peoples' Commissars, is the central figure in the Russian revolution. He was born in Simbirsk, Russia, on April 10, 1870, of a family of the lower nobility. He was educated at the Universities of Kazan and Petersburg. Like his brother, Alexander, who was shot in 1887 for his revolutionary activities, Lenin was a born rebel. He was expelled from the Kazan University for helping organize a students' demonstration there. In 1897 he was exiled to Siberia, where he served three years. He left Russia in 1900, and travelled over Europe, taking an active part in the international movement. He became the leader of the left wing of the Russian Social Democratic Party. In 1903 this became the Bolshevik, or majority, faction. It was the forerunner of the modern Russian Communist Party. During the big uprising in 1905 Lenin returned to Russia, but he had to flee when the movement broke down. Then ensued another long period of wandering, during which he wrote a number of important books. Right after the first revolution in 1917 he went back to Russia. From that time on he has played a tremendous part in Russian and world affairs. More than any other man he has been responsible for the great revolutionary policies that have been carried out. The organizing of the resistance to Kerensky, the Brest-Litovsk treaty, the introduction of compulsory military service and the ex-czarist officers into the Red Army, the gradual transference of the management of industry from the actual producers' hands into those of the experts, the new economic policies of industrial treaties with capitalist nations, the granting of concessions in Russia, free trade the grain tax, etc.—are either his own propositions, or he early associated himself with

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\*In the old days the Russian Communist Party was an underground organization because of official persecution, and its members all had assumed names. Many of the leaders (Lenin, Trotzsky, Radek, etc.) are now much better known by these "party" names, which they constantly use, than by their real names.

those who foresaw their necessity. He is the rare case of an eminently practical radical, and has an uncanny ability to divine the way things will develop. Time and again he has fought in a minority against the violent prejudices of the large majority, only to be brilliantly justified by the course of events later on. The advocacy of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, which saved the revolution by giving it a few months' respite from attack was one of his great achievements. He is remarkable for his willingness to confess himself mistaken and to face a situation squarely, no matter what the circumstances. The whole Communist Party has become infused with this intellectual and tactical flexibility—that is one of the secrets of its power. Lenin speaks several languages, and is democratic and modest to a degree. During the recent congress of the III International he slipped into the hall unobserved. In a moment or two, however, he was seen, and the crowd of delegates stormed a greeting to him. He acted as embarrassed as one hit by stage fright. His popularity runs far beyond the rebel ranks: the people at large, including most of his political enemies, consider him one of the greatest and noblest men that the world has yet produced.

Leon Trotsky (Bronstein), Peoples' Commissar for War, and, next to Lenin, the biggest figure of the revolution. He was born in Kherson, Russia, in 1877. He, too, is another natural rebel and he early came into conflict with the Czarist authorities. In 1899, because of his activities for the workers, he was sentenced to serve four years in Siberia, but he managed to escape before his term expired. In 1905 he took an active part in the revolutionary attempt, for a time serving as President of the St. Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies. He was again arrested and sent to Siberia, and again he escaped. Afterwards he lived in Germany, Austria, France, and America. He went back to Russia after the February revolution in 1917, and immediately became active and influential, side by side with his lifelong comrade, Lenin. Trotsky is the unusual combination of an organizer and an orator. His greatest achievement was the organization of the Red Army: he is counted one of the best speakers of the revolution-

ary leaders. He speaks fluently in Russian, French, German, and English.

Zinoviev (Radomilsky), President of the III International, was born in Novomirgorod in 1883, of a middle class family. He is a veteran of the Russian revolutionary struggle. In 1908 he was exiled to Siberia but managed to escape abroad. For a number of years he lived the usual life of a propagandist in European countries, until the 1917 revolution gave him his chance. He is a left-wing radical among the Communists, and one of the most influential men in present-day Russia. He is one of the real fighters, but not an orator. He has a high falsetto voice that is altogether out of harmony with his revolutionary reputation and rugged physique.

Bukharin (Ivanovich), editor of "Pravda," organ of the Russian Communist Party, and one of the half dozen most influential men in that party. He was born in 1879 and educated in the University of Moscow. His father was a Counsellor at the Court. Bukharin is a stormy petrel of the revolution. He is a radical, speaks very well, has a most likable personality, and enjoys great prestige with the masses. He has the usual record of pre-revolutionary hardships, won by his devotion to the cause of the workers.

Kamenev (Rosenfeld), President of the Moscow State Soviet. He was born in 1883, and educated in the University of Moscow. A consistent left-wing fighter for many years past, he has undergone the usual exile and hardships characteristic of all the important Russian leaders. He is now one of the most powerful men in Russia. He is a splendid speaker, and cuts somewhat more the figure of a business man or intellectual than most of the other leaders, who are very much proletarian in appearance.

Kalenin, President of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet. His position is about equivalent to President of Russia. He is a peasant by origin, but long a member of the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Labor movement. He enjoys tremendous influence with the peasants, many of whom come thousands of miles to take up their grievance with him. Together with Budenny, the great peasant general, he

has been a power in making the peasants understand the revolution and in holding them true to it.

Radek is a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Russian Communist Party and of the III International. Still a young man, he is a seasoned veteran in the labor movement, and one of the most powerful and striking figures in the Russian revolution. He was born in Galicia. Radek's specialty is the international phases of the Communist and Socialist movements. In this respect he has few if any equals. He is an expert on tactics, and took a very active part in the German revolution. He is one of the brainiest men in the Communist movement and a dreaded opponent in debate. A favorite congress pastime of his is to show delegates from various countries how much more he knows about their own labor movements than they do. He has, as usual, command of several languages. As a speaker he is particularly forceful, although not eloquent. I considered it a real compliment to him when a couple of interpreters who were translating for the English section complained that they had to take down almost verbatim what he said, whereas they could let other speakers ramble along for ten minutes at a time without making any notes.

Lunacharsky, Peoples' Commissar for Education, is a man of about 50 years. He has a record of 25 years of revolutionary activity in Russia and other countries. He is of the intellectual type and counted one of the greatest educators in the world. It was under his supervision that the present tremendous educational campaign in Russia was worked out. In the first days of the Bolshevik revolution he received much publicity because he resigned his high office in protest when word came to him that the wonderful St. Basil's church in the Red Square of Moscow had been badly injured in the street fighting attendant upon the fall of Kerensky. His artistic soul revolted at the wanton destruction of beauty. He agreed to go on with his work, however, when he learned that the damage done was very slight and purely accidental.

Krassin, foreign trade envoy of the Soviet Government, is a Siberian by birth. He received a scientific education in Germany, and is an industrial expert of the first rank. His task is one of the most difficult ever undertaken in an economic way—the breaking of the

world's blockade against Russia. He is setting up trade relations between revolutionary Russia and reactionary capitalist countries, notwithstanding that Russia has repudiated its debts to them.\* He is also largely responsible for the elaboration and development of the other new economic policies (fully described elsewhere) which mean so much for Russia.

Tchitcherin, Peoples' Commissar for Foreign Affairs, was in his younger days an aristocrat and diplomat under the old regime. For many years past, however, he has been an active revolutionist. An exile from Russia, he travelled in many countries, learning their languages, their customs, and much else that proved invaluable when he later came to take over the job of working out the foreign policy of the Soviet Republic. He is generally conceded to be the equal of the world's cleverest diplomats.

Lossovsky, Secretary of the Red Trade Union International, is a hatter by trade. He is about 40 years of age. He, too, as an exile, lived in several countries. For a long time he was secretary of a clothing workers' union in France. Since the February revolution he has been very active in Russia. When Tomsy, President of the All-Russian trade unions, recently resigned his position, Lossovsky, then Secretary of the organization, was elected in his stead. Lossovsky is Russia's greatest expert on the world's trade union movement. Just now his big job is to build the Red Trade Union International into an organization that will win the support and affiliation of the great masses of workers now organized in the Amsterdam International.

Kol'ontai, head of the international Communist women's organization, is one of the most remarkable characters produced by the labor movement anywhere. Her activities cover a wide scope, and she has a long record as a revolutionary fighter. She is now one of the most prominent leaders of the "Workers' Opposition," or body of Syndicalist Communists who object to giving authority to the industrial experts and who want the full control of industry left to the actual manual workers. She is perhaps the best linguist of all the leaders (and that is an honor indeed), as she speaks several languages fluently. She has a wonderful

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\*It is almost certain that the capitalist nations will compel Russia to recognize these old debts before they trade with her.

voice and is a very effective speaker. She has travelled in many countries and has a wide knowledge of the labor movement.

To the foregoing list of notable revolutionary figures might be added the names of hundreds of others equally, or in some cases, even better known, such as Shliapnikov of the Department of Labor; Noghin, Larin, Bogdanov, Milyutin, and Rykov of the Supreme Economic Council; Dzerjinsky of the Extraordinary Commission; Preobrazhensky of the Department of Finance, and very many more, but we cannot even mention them in our limited space.

Nearly all of the most distinguished and effective Russian leaders, from Lenin down, came from the middle and upper classes; few indeed among them are actual workers and peasants. It has been truly said that the early revolutionary movement in Russia did not originate with the masses, but was brought to them by the intellectuals. This is partly true everywhere, but nowhere so much as in Russia. Which is another indication of how very backward the Russian working class really was. But if these leaders started out as non-worker elements, they eventually became thoroughly proletarianized by knocking around the world and living the hard life of the toilers. So that now they, despite their bourgeois origin, are more profoundly working class in thought and action than any other body of labor leaders in the world.

## XVIII.

### THE III INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS.

The III International is the international political party of the general Communist movement. Beginning June 22nd, and ending July 14th of this year, it held its third Congress in Moscow. Close to 600 delegates were in attendance. They represented every important country in the world.

The Russians look upon the III International as the general staff of the world revolution and they made the holding of its congress an occasion for great celebrations throughout Russia. Military demonstrations, outdoor fetes, and many other kinds of mass outpourings took place all over the country. The congress itself was opened in the Moscow Opera House, one of the finest theatres in the world. A curious thing about this theatre is that the Czar in his day, little dreaming how handy it would come in for revolutionaries later on, had the place decorated throughout with rich red silk and plush curtains and furnishings. Red was a favorite color in Russia with the former rulers even as it is now with the workers. The opening ceremonies were elaborate, many notable international labor men making speeches. After these were finished a long musical program was put on. The artists, Shalyapin and others, are the best that Russia has, which means that they will compare favorably with any in the world.

The regular sessions of the congress were held in the Czar's palace, situated in the historic Kremlin. It is a magnificent building; wealth having been lavishly squandered in its construction and decoration. The sittings took place in the very throne room itself. This is a large hall literally overwhelmed with barbaric splendor. No changes had been made in it for the congress, except that a speakers' platform had been erected over the throne, and three small pictures of Marx, Lenin, and Zinoviev, hung at the far end of the hall. Glaring at these significant pictures was a great golden symbolical eye, placed high above the throne. That mystic and fascinating eye, designed and built in the days of the Czars, was indeed intended to

look out upon far different scenes than have come within the range of vision since the advent of the Communist revolution.

Dozens of the other rooms of the palace were adapted to the many needs of a big convention. Next to the throne room was a wonderfully beautiful hall, the name of which I did not learn, used as a press bureau. The famous Hall of St. George inscribed with the names of thousands of regiments and officers noted in Russian military history, was a lounging place for the delegates. The two splendid rooms adjoining thereto had been turned into dining rooms, where bevies of red-capped waitresses were busy all day long serving black bread, caviar, and tea to the delegates. Many of the gorgeous bedrooms and private assembly halls of the royalty were used for caucussing. More than one weighty matter was settled in the luxurious bedchamber of the former Czarina, a favorite caucus room. Care was taken, of course, not to abuse any of the rich art objects, and the wonderful hardwood floors were heavily carpeted. Certainly no labor organization has ever held a convention under more beautiful and revolutionary surroundings than the HI International this year in Moscow.

The congress worked diligently—six to twelve hours per day as a rule—and disposed of a vast amount of matter covering a wide range of subjects. One of the most important questions had to do with the working out of a practical conception of the international situation, to serve as a basis for the tactical program to be formulated later by the congress. Trotsky and Varga submitted theses upon this subject. Condensed, their views amount to about as follows: The end of the war produced a highly revolutionary situation, but, because of its inexperience and traitorous leadership, the working class was unable to defeat the capitalist class. What lacked was a series of well-organized Communist Parties in the several countries. The consequence is that the bourgeoisie has been able to recover somewhat from its post-war demoralization, and with its "Orgesch," "Fascisti," "Guarde Civile," "Defense Force," etc., is waging an international offensive against the proletariat, which is discouraged and defeated after its first clumsy attempts at revolution. That capitalism will, however, be able to recover fully and to re-estab-

lish itself, Trotsky and Varga emphatically dispute. They point to the world-wide economic and financial decay and declare that, "The crumbling of the very foundations of industry is only beginning and is going to proceed all along the line." Hard times, such as the world has never known before, must be looked for, as the productive forces of society have definitely outrun the capitalistic system of distribution. The world markets are exhausted, and all that may be looked for, if capitalism is to continue, is the presence of a constant and enormous army of half-starved, unemployed workers. Periods of "prosperity" may occasionally occur, but these must be only temporary and cannot remedy the situation. For the capitalist class the only way to find even a temporary postponement of the eventual collapse is to get the workers to accept greatly reduced standards of living. But this the workers, with their growing class-consciousness and powerful organizations, will not do. They will fight desperately against further enslavement. To lead this fight, in good times and bad, to broaden and deepen it until it ends in the overthrow of the whole capitalist system, is the great function of the III International. Two years ago, in the midst of the acute after-war crisis, the world revolution seemed to be only a matter of a few months, now it may be a question of years. \* \* \* After a three days' debate, this conception was endorsed almost unanimously by the congress.

Zinoviev, President of the III International, submitted the report of the Executive Committee on Communist activities internationally. This caused several days discussion during which the Italian and German situations came sharply to the fore. In most countries the Communist Parties originate in the ranks of the old Socialist Parties; they are usually split-offs of the left wings from the right wings. The break in Italy occurred at the recent Leghorn convention of the S. P. Serrati, really a centrist, but long posing as a Communist, was blamed for the fact that the Communists got the worst of the split. He and the revolutionaries who remained behind in the old party were drubbed unmercifully. Just in the midst of the fray the Italian S. P. delegation, led by Lazzari, arrived. They declared themselves willing to stay with the III International, and to apply its famous 21 points, with reservations.

But the congress, continually recalling the reformist attitude of these men in the big metal workers' strike and in the Leghorn convention, refused to believe them and supported the action of those who had split away and formed the new party. The S. P. delegation, considerably chastened, issued a statement at the end of the debate, to the effect that they would try to get their Party, at its next convention, to subscribe fully to the 21 points necessary for affiliation, by expelling the reformists, etc.

The German situation provided many complications and much heat. In some respects it was directly related to that in Italy, Paul Levi, the President of the German United Communist Party and the man under fire, being in close touch with Serrati and apparently in full sympathy with his program. Levi sought to lead his Party into similar ways of compromise, but he came to grief in the recent Communist uprising, commonly termed "the March action." Levi condemned this movement, during which many workers lost their lives, as a "putsch" and sabotaged it as best he could. For this he was expelled from the Party. Clara Zetkin and several other prominent Party officials resigned in protest. The Executive Committee of the III International, at the time sustained the expulsion of Levi, and the congress endorsed its action. Clara Zetkin, who was present, came in for considerable sharp criticism.

Another angle of the German situation related to the Communist Labor Party. This organization is sectarian in tendency and thorny in debate. It denies aggressively that mass organizations, political and industrial, can be revolutionary. Its program consists of a political party of "pure" Communists on the one hand, and an idealistic dual union on the other. Originally the III International accepted this body as a sympathizing party, in the hope that it might be weaned away from its sectarianism. But finding this impossible, the congress ordered it to affiliate with the larger United Communist Party or stand ready for expulsion.

The question of tactics received much consideration from the congress. Radek reported on the subject. He covered the ground in great detail, pointing out how the III International must go in order not to be dragged into "right" reformism, paralyzed by "centrist" phrasemongering, or isolated by "left" sectarianism. He

showed how all these tendencies work in practice and how they must be handled. First and foremost, everywhere, comes the "right" reformers, diverting all working class protest into futile demands for empty reforms. They are enemies, definite counter-revolutionaries, and must be fought openly upon all occasions. Likewise the "centrist" phrase-mongers: They are the type who are full of big words, but when the decisive moment arrives they cannot pass from the realm of revolutionary theory into that of revolutionary practice. They are always fatal to action, and must be fought. The "lefts" are of many varieties: the "pure" Communists, who spin fine doctrinaire webs and are afraid of contact with the masses; the dual unionists, who quit the old trade unions and found sterile revolutionary unions; the "putschists," who turn insignificant disputes into hopeless and fatal struggles; the Syndicalists, who object to political action, and the Anarchists, who oppose all sorts of centralization. The attitude to be taken towards these revolutionary but mistaken "left" elements is one of patient instruction and co-operation. In a masterful way, Radek outlined the parts played by these various groups in the big revolutionary struggles since the end of the war.

Throughout the congress much concern was shown over the trade union question; it cropped up under nearly every order of business. The Communist attitude on this matter is very different to what it is on the political question. In the political field, as this is counted the major one, the essential thing is to have an organization that clearly expresses the Communist conceptions and program. Hence the policy is to capture the old Socialist Parties and to expel the "right" and "centrist" elements; or, if this cannot be done, to split the old parties and to form new ones. But on the industrial field splits are rigidly avoided. Labor unions are recognized as mass organizations which are bound to reflect the mass psychology. The policy of Communists breaking away from the old unions and starting new ones was sharply condemned from the standpoint of both theory and practice. Such a course has always resulted in isolating the Communists in little outside groups and in leaving the reactionaries in undisputed control of the old organizations. Consequent upon this conception, revolutionaries all over the world were

urged by the congress to become active in the trade unions and to make their influence felt there. The members of the American I. W. W. were specifically recommended to join the A. F. of L. unions in their respective callings. Communists have no use for idealist dual unionism.

Many other matters of importance were handled by the congress, including the questions of the relations of the III International to the Red Trade Union International—the congress was for a close affiliation, the tactics of the Russian Communist Party, the establishment of a Red Co-operative International, and the means to be used in developing world organizations of women and Communist young people. Although much heat was shown in the debates, little real factionalism developed. The congress exhibited genuine unity in the international Communist movement.

A most interesting phase of the congress was the Russian revolutionary leaders. Many of them were in attendance, including Lenin, Trotzsky, Zinoviev, Radek, Bukharin, Dzerjinsky, Lossovsky, Lunarcharsky, Rykov, Kollontai, etc. They are indeed a capable body of men and women. A favorite argument of the opposition, when any developed, was that the Russians were unacquainted with the situation in other countries. But when all was said and done, usually the Russians came out on top. Time after time Radek and others met and routed in intellectual combat delegates from other countries when the latter's own movements were in question. This is not remarkable, as most of the Russian leaders have been exiles wandering from country to country and learning the labor movements as they went. They know every angle of the struggle through practical experience, from the tamest kind of tame trade unionism and milk-and-water Socialism, to the roughest kind of revolutionary activity. Ordinarily they speak from three to five languages apiece, and they all follow closely the movements of the countries they have lived in. The Russian leaders are by far the best informed, most cosmopolitan body of labor men in the world. They are real internationalists.

The congress came to an end in striking fashion—trust the Russians to exploit the dramatic possibilities of such a situation. Zinoviev, again elected to the Presidency of the III International, closed the debates

with a ringing speech reviewing the struggles of the Russian Communist Party and pledging its unfaltering support to the international revolution. He hoped that next year's congress might be held in London, Paris, or Berlin. Then a great military band struck up "The International" and the crowd joined in, singing the famous revolutionary hymn in a score of languages. This officially ended the congress, but the delegates lingered deep into the morning singing proletarian songs, one nation vying with another. The Italians easily won the pa'm. Radek, Bukharin, and Zinoviev came off the platform and led the various delegations in the celebration. Finally the crowd was tired out and streamed down the great staircase of the palace and out into the Krem'in streets. As they passed through the gates out into Moscow the Red Army sentries on duty lined up and gave them a final salute. Then they broke up in little groups and scattered, still singing, through the pitch dark streets of Moscow, homeward bound. The historic third congress of the III International was at an end.

## XIX.

### THE RED TRADE UNION INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS.

During the month of July the Red Trade Union International held its first congress in Moscow. This body is the labor union section of the general international Communist movement—the other sections being the III International (political party), the Women's Communist International, the Society of Communist Youth, and the International Council of Red Co-operatives. The Red Trade Union International is an outgrowth of the International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions, which was formed a year ago in Moscow by a group of labor militants from various countries called together by the III International and the Russian Trade Union movement.

The congress held its sessions in the Moscow labor temple, a splendid building formerly used as a clubhouse by the nobility. There were 380 delegates in attendance, from 41 countries. They represented many types of organizations, including general national labor movements (Russia, Spain, etc.) separate independent unions (I. W. W., Amalgamated Food Workers, Unione Syndicale, Freie Arbeiter Union, etc.), organized minority committees in the old trade unions (France, England, Germany, etc.), and trade union central bodies (Seattle Central Labor Council, Detroit Federation of Labor, etc.). Due to the nature of some of the organizations, it was difficult to state just how many workers were represented in the congress, but the Provisional Council estimated them at 17,000,000.

One of the most important questions dealt with by the congress was that of how the new International is to secure the affiliation of the world's workers; whether through the building of new unions or the capture of the old ones. On this matter Lossovsky, President of the All-Russian Trade Unions, and later elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Red Labor Union International, commented as follows in the thesis on "Organization":

"The policy of breaking off from the trade unions by the revolutionary elements, thanks to which the great masses are abandoned to the influence of traitors to the working-class, plays into the hands of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy

and must be resolutely and categorically rejected. Not to destroy, but to conquer the unions; that is, the great mass of workers who are in the old trade unions—this should be our rallying point in the development of the revolutionary struggle.”

The congress agreed overwhelmingly with this point of view. Not for a moment was it in doubt. Dozens of speakers from all over the world, including such able militants as Tom Mann, cited their practical experiences to demonstrate the fallacy of revolutionaries quitting the old unions and trying to form simon-pure, theoretically perfect organizations. Such separatist tactics, they argued, never lead to the hoped-for powerful revolutionary movements, but always to the disastrous result of strengthening the grip of the reactionaries in the old unions by sabotaging and destroying all rebel resistance to them in those bodies. They condemned the slogan, “Out of the Trade Unions” as counter-revolutionary, because it has the endorsement of reactionaries the world over and it dovetails exactly with their interests. The bureaucrats like nothing better than for the militants to quit the unions and leave them in undisputed control. The complete failure of dualism in the United States, Germany, and other countries was cited as positive evidence of the folly of leaving the old unions. On the other hand, many instances were shown of the success achieved by working within. The French delegation declared that through their system of minority committees they had just about won control of the general labor movement of their country. Tom Mann produced figures to demonstrate that at least 20 per cent of the great British unions had been won over to a clean-cut revolutionary position, and that the rest had been largely influenced by the propaganda among them. The German delegates who represented the minority committees in the trade unions stated that they had the direct backing of at least 2,500,000 of the 9,000,000 members of German trade unions.

Representatives of the Industrial Workers of the World, the Freie Arbeiter Union of Germany, and one or two other small dual revolutionary unions, attempted to defend the dualistic policy, but their voices were lost in the storm of condemnation of that program. The congress was categorically against them. Quite evidently the Communists have little sympathy for the De

Leonistic, blue-print, utopian type of union so popular in this country. They are not content merely to "pay themselves with words" as we have been doing for a generation past by toying with all sorts of impossible dual unions. They want results, hence their vote of ten to one in favor of staying within the old trade unions. Later on the Executive Board of the R. T. U. L. recommended that the members of the I. W. W. and other dual unions rejoin their respective trade unions.

Another important question considered by the congress was the relationship to be established between the newly-formed Red Trade Union International and the III International. Over this the congress divided into two factions—Communists and Syndicalists. The Communists with their usual program of welding all the workers' organizations into a single fighting body, stood for a firm organic connection between the workers' international economic and political movements. The Syndicalists opposed this, but their opposition showed that the Communist conception is gradually winning ascendancy over their old anti-political ideas. The militant, fighting Communist Party is disproving their theory that all political organizations are necessarily reformist and compromising in character. Over half of the French delegation were outspoken Communists, and the rest had Communist leanings. A similar condition prevailed in other groups formerly entirely Syndicalist. The I. W. W. delegate alone adhered strictly to the orthodox anti-political position and would have no truck whatsoever with the III International.

As against the definite proposition of the Communists, the Syndicalists, unable to agree among themselves, put forth a variety of plans. These usually went no further than calling for close co-operation between the Red Trade Union International and the III International, facilitated by an exchange of fraternal delegates between the two bodies. Their conception of the role of the two movements was well summed up by the expression, "To walk separately, but to strike together." Arlandes of Spain, like some others, feared that the Communist Party might not always remain revolutionary: he advocated a spiritual alliance only between the two organizations. Another group found their ideas

best expressed in paragraph 5 of the resolution adopted by the Berlin Syndicalist Conference, December, 1920, which is as follows:

"The revolutionary trade union international is absolutely independent of any political party. In cases where the revolutionary trade union international is ready for action and this action meets with the approval of political parties, or vice versa, such actions could be carried out in conjunction with these political parties or organizations."

The congress, however, went far beyond the Syndicalist proposals and by a vote of 285 to 35 adopted a resolution containing the following clauses:

"To take all necessary steps to consolidate the revolutionary trade unions into a single fighting organization, with one international general staff—the Red Trade Union International.

"To establish as close relations as possible with the III International, the vanguard of the international revolutionary movement, on the basis of mutual representation on all the executive committees of both internationals, by joint meetings, etc.

"This co-ordination must be organic and of an active character, and must lead the way to a common preparation and fulfillment of the revolutionary activities on a national and international scale.

"The congress emphatically declares the necessity of establishing a single revolutionary trade union organization and the establishment of a real and close co-ordination between the Red Trade Unions and Communist Parties in carrying out the instructions of both congresses.

Proceeding in the sense of this resolution, arrangements were made later for an exchange of three full-powered delegates between the Red Trade Union International and the III International.

Considerable of the congress' attention was taken up by the Italian Confederation of Labor. The leaders of this organization were among the founders of the International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions, forerunner of the Red Trade Union International. But since then they have had a change of heart; they are now holding aloof. In spite of direct instructions of their Leghorn convention to affiliate with the Red Trade Union International, they have failed so far to do so. They are still affiliated with the Amsterdam International, and they sent to the Moscow congress delegates equipped only with advisory powers. Bianchi was one of these, and the congress took him sharply to task for the double-dealing of the Italian leaders. He replied that the Confederation of Labor could not directly affli-

ate with the Red Trade Union International because the Socialist Party, with which it has a working agreement, is not a member of the III International. He professed great friendship, however, for the R. T. U. L. The congress did not accept his explanation and issued a manifesto to the workers of Italy, advising them of their leaders' tactics, and calling upon them to decide at once which International they will affiliate with: Amsterdam, the International of class co-operation; or Moscow, the International or revolutionary struggle.

Throughout the congress uncompromising hostility was shown toward the Amsterdam Trade Union International. It was denounced as a creature of the world's bourgeoisie, and the principal obstacle to the revolution. War to the finish was declared. This war is being already carried on, not by founding new unions, but by revolutionizing the thought, tactics, and leadership of the old ones. As fast as the trade unions are won over they are detached from Amsterdam and affiliated to Moscow. The program is to shift the old unions from their conservative moorings, not to split them. The Communists clearly perceive the difference between this method and the dual unionism of the I. W. W. and others. The effect of the Communist union policy is to always keep the masses intact and to keep the militants among them; whereas dual unionism always splits the masses and isolates the militants in little, outside groups. Following out the general plan of paralleling the Amsterdam structure and absorbing its membership, several international propaganda committees were formed in the transport, mining, textile, clothing, and other industries. These will undertake to win the leadership of the old unions operating in their respective spheres and to transfer their affiliation from Amsterdam to the Red Trade Union International.

Just before the close of the congress considerable of a flurry was caused over the question of the Anarchists who are now being kept in jail by the Soviet Government. For a month or more previously a number of Russian Anarchists had carried on an open and active campaign among the delegates about the matter, thus creating something of an agitation. Bukharin, speaking in the name of the Russian Communist Party, undertook to allay this by making an official statement to the congress about the matter. He showed how the

men in question had been caught red-handed in counter-revolutionary activities, and cited as the work of them and their friends, many recent dynamitings of railroad bridges, burning of buildings, shootings of Soviet officials, etc., in various parts of the country. This caused a commotion among the Anarchist delegates, and Sirole of France demanded the floor. He denied Bukharin's charges, and stated that an agreement had been reached between the Soviet Government and a committee of Anarchist and Syndicalist delegates that would result in freeing the prisoners. Without further discussion the matter was dropped.

Before going to Moscow I had been filled with the usual stories about how the Russians pack the international Communist congresses and rule them with an iron hand. But that was certainly not so in this case. Russia was in an insignificant minority so far as votes were concerned—even the American de'legation, which represented a very small body of workers, had as many votes as the Russians, who represented several millions. Nor was the congress overawed by the big men of Russia: Quite the contrary. Except for Rykov, who made a couple of routine talks, and Bukharin, who spoke on the Anarchist prisoner question, not one of the prominent revolutionary figures who was not actively connected with the unions, even appeared at the congress. Lenin, Trotzsky and Zinoviev did not show up there, although it is rather the Russian custom to trot out the big fe'llows on such special occasions. The congress was left entirely to its own devices. Whatever was done there, whether wise or unwise, was a true product of the sentiment of the de'legates assembled.

The head of the new Red Trade Union International is A. Lossovsky, who is also President of the Russian trade unions. He is a very able and experienced labor leader. A man of about 40, he has lived for many years in France and Germany and has taken an active part in their labor movements. He speaks French and German fluently and has a smattering of English. He has written several works upon trade unionism. Lossovsky is one of the busiest men in Russia, and punctual and business-like in his methods to a degree that shocks all good Russians. It was his custom to open the R. T. U. L. congress sessions promptly upon the stroke of the hour set—some of the delegates declared that they

corrected their watches by the sound of his opening bell—whereas, in the recent III International congress, which was run in true Russian fashion, the sessions began anywhere from one to three hours after the appointed time. It is safe to prophecy that under Losovsky's skilled guidance the Red Trade Union International will soon come to play an important role in the international labor struggle.

## XX.

### BOLSHEVIK RAILROADING.

Even before 1914 the approximately 50,000 miles of railroads in Russia were inadequate to meet the needs of her 167,000,000 people scattered over a territory about three times as large as the United States. Now their insufficiency is more acute than ever, for the stormy days since August, 1914, have just about wrought their ruin. It is estimated that at present they are working at about 30 to 40 per cent of their pre-war efficiency. Industry in general is suffering accordingly.

The breakdown of the railroads began during the world war, when they were badly over-worked and neglected. Things were made worse by the social upheaval attending the revolution, which brought about wholesale sabotage of the railroad service by reactionary officials who still held their old positions. The ruin was further accentuated by the economic blockade of Russia, which by shutting off all importation, threw thousands of locomotives out of service for want of injectors, piping, and other small parts which had formerly all come from foreign countries and which Russia, in the broken-down state of her industries, was unable to produce. The final blow at the railroads was struck by the long civil war. Denekine, Kolchak, and other counter-revolutionaries destroyed thousands of miles of track, and great numbers of stations, engines, cars, etc. They dynamited 1600 bridges—a Red Army colonel told me of one bridge that had been blown up and rebuilt no less than six times by the advancing and retreating armies.

Under all these destructive influences the Russian railroads collapsed, and in view of the country's generally demoralized condition industrially, it is almost a super-human task to re-habilitate them. Yet a great deal has been done. Practically all the track has been put in shape again and most of the bridges also. Little by little the number of "well" engines increases and that of "sick" ones decreases. More and more cars are constantly being rendered available for transport. The

1,250,000 railroaders are earnestly at work, and the people at large follow with interest the "scores" made by them in the "shock" shops and on the various divisions. Gradually the difficulties are being overcome. With the lifting of the blockade large numbers of injectors and other articles, for which the roads are in dire need, are coming into the country. Heavy orders for locomotives, for early delivery, have been placed in Germany and Sweden. A general air of optimism prevails in railroad circles and great plans are being made for the future improvement of Russia's transportation system, among which is one providing for the electrification of every railroad in the country.

A few days ago, in company with a body of railroad men from various countries, I visited a number of Moscow's railroad offices, shops, and yards. First we called on the head of an important road. He greeted us most affably, and bubbling over with enthusiasm, explained for an hour the economic functions of his road and the plans that have been laid out for its future development. Leaving his office, we then had a look at the offices of the trade union and the Communist Party hard by. Both these organizations have definitely recognized functions in Russian industry, and their headquarters are always to be found near those of the general management.

Next our party went to the "back shop." There we found much activity, nearly all of which stopped upon our arrival. The workers were "tickled to death" to greet us. The mechanics among them explained the great difficulties they suffered for want of brass, babbit, tin, etc., and described their many ingenious substitutes for these apparently indispensable materials. To me the machinery in the shops, a heritage from the days of the Czars, seemed primitive—about what was to be found in American railroad shops twenty years ago. Attached to the shop were large dining rooms, assembly halls, and library—all built since the revolution—for the refreshment, entertainment, and education of the workers.

From the shops we went to the big switching yard on the Moscow belt line. Since the recapture of the Baku oil regions and the Donetz coal mines by the Soviet forces most Russian locomotives have been readapted to burning oil or coal with a consequent great saving

in fuel production and transport. But the one that pulled our train was still a wood burner. I rode in the cab, and on the way out fell into an argument with the engine crew as to the proper way to fire a locomotive with wood. I told them that when steam was badly needed the wood should be thrown in with the bark side up, and used to buttress my argument the story told by ancient American railroad men to the effect that even the old wood-burning engines themselves were aware of this fact, and as they laboriously coughed their way up the hills their slow exhaust kept enjoining the firemen to put the wood in "Bark-side-up," "Bark-side-up," etc., and when they topped the grades and steaming became easy, the rapid exhaust generously advised the firemen to "Throw-it-in-any-old-way," "Throw-it-in-any-old-way," etc. The Russian engine crew marvelled at the intelligence of our old wood-burners, but disputed the bark-side-up theory; the engineer from the standpoint of the laws of combustion, and the fireman from the less scientific, but more convincing grounds that as he could get no leather gloves because of the general shortage the only way he could protect his hands from splinters was to fire the wood bark-side-down. The fireman's reasoning settled the question.

The switching yard was at a town with an unpronounceable name not far from Moscow. It had two "humps," and about fifty miles of track. Several "cuts" of cars were broken up while we were there. Being a railroader myself, I watched the work with great interest. It was performed with dispatch; almost as fast as in American yards, despite the fact that Russian freight cars have no automatic couplers and to uncouple them the switchmen have to crawl under outlandish looking bumpers and unhook a turnbuckle arrangement. One advantage over the American system was that the cars, being very much smaller and lighter, could be sent down the hump riderless. A disadvantage of the yard was that for some reason, unknown to me, the tracks were about ten feet apart; thus at least doubling the walking necessary between the switches. The switch throwing was all done by hand.

In the yard was one of the world-famous propaganda trains. There are several of these in Russia. It is their mission to popularize the Government program

and revolutionary ideas in general among the workers and peasants who live far from the big cities. The whole country is divided into sections, each of which has its propaganda train. The train we saw was decorated from end to end with revolutionary pictures. One car was fitted-out as a moving-picture theatre, another as a bookstore, and a third as a power plant to furnish light and electricity to the whole train. The train carried a large crew of speakers and agitators, who hold meetings along the route. The train also was equipped with a printing outfit, upon which are prepared newspapers and pamphlets for the eager peasants. A powerful wireless furnished the latest news to this unique newspaper. Wherever the propaganda trains go they make a sensation. Unquestionably they are an unusually powerful means of educating the people. The railroad men themselves are very much taken by the idea, and everywhere one sees the cars and locomotive tenders adorned with revolutionary mottoes and pictures, many of them very well painted.

The switch-yard we visited was the freight terminus of one of the most important railroads in Russia. The road's condition may be judged from the following figures given me by the guide accompanying our party. He said that before the world war there were eight freight trains each way daily; during the war the number ran up to twenty-four, and when we visited it there were ten. We inquired about passenger traffic, but as our guide was a freight man he could give us no authentic figures.

On our way home we called in at a hospital devoted to railroad workers employed in the Moscow district. The hospital was built several years ago, and its equipment was quite modern. There was a terrible shortage of medicines, however, as we could plainly see from the depleted aspect of the hospital apothecary shop. The doctors and nurses told us that many of their railroader patients had died in agony simply because the Entente countries would not allow Russia to import indispensable medical supplies. Many of the sick were women, a large percentage of Russian railroad workers being of that sex. The place was equipped for 500 patients and was nearly full. The staff informed us that during the recent typhus epidemic there were as many as 2500 cases being taken care of at one time.

They were all railroad workers from the Moscow district. We visited every department in the institution except those devoted to patients suffering from cholera, typhus, and other contagious diseases. We could see some cholera cases through the windows of their section, but we were not anxious to make any closer acquaintance with the dreaded plague of which they were victims. Finally, bidding goodbye to our new-found sick railroader friends, we mounted our train and soon were plugging serenely along on our way back to Moscow.

## XXI.

### A MUNITION PLANT.

Another American and I were invited to address a large body of workers employed in a munition plant some fifteen versts from Moscow. We went out by automobile and were given a rousing reception. The workers insisted upon showing us the whole establishment before the meeting began.

The plant is a powder factory, specializing in the making of explosives and filling of shells. It was founded in the days of the Czar, but it did not take on any great size or importance until after the revolution. Its recent growth was due to the danger of invasion, which forced the removal of munition plants generally from the western towns to Moscow and other more inland points. The increased need of the Red Army for munitions, because of the severe civil wars, was also a factor. At present the plant is a very extensive one, comprising scores of great modern buildings scattered over a 300-acre lot, at such distances from each other that the explosion of one building would not touch off the rest. When going at full speed the plant employed about 3500 workers. In these piping times of peace the crew consists of only about 1000.

The first place we visited was the office of the Communist yatchayka, or factory group. In another chapter, dealing with the Communist Party, I have explained the tremendous importance of such groups in Soviet Russia. This one, as usual, was composed of the liveliest elements among the workers. It published its own plant paper and generally looked after the educational and political activities of the employees. It did not, however, directly interfere with the managing expert from the Supreme Economic Council. The members of the yatchayka were pleased beyond measure at meeting militants from America, and outdid themselves in greeting us. They sat us down to a rattling good meal of black bread, butter, milk, honey, and—pickled herring.

Our meal finished, we were shown about the plant and initiated into some of the mysteries of munition

making. We filled a few shells ourselves and speculated as to what would be their final destination. My companion, who is a skilled machinist, was keen to examine the machinery. He pronounced it rather primitive, but in good shape. The work turned out averaged up good, according to him, some of it being of very high quality. In the black powder section, the most dangerous of the whole institution, we were equipped with great felt slippers, in which we slithered along the heavily carpeted floors—precautions to prevent our striking sparks with our shoes.

While going about we had an interesting experience with a large body of workers whom we found loading shells upon railroad cars. The place was such that the munitions had to be moved a hundred yards or so to the cars. The men used the "Armstrong Method," carrying the 300-pound cases upon their backs. Through our interpreter we learned that there had recently been some "labor trouble" on the job. It seems that the man in charge of the work set twenty-four cases as the daily task; twelve to be carried in the forenoon and twelve in the afternoon. But the men complained at this arrangement and demanded more work. So their daily stunt was raised 100 per cent. Thereafter they carried forty-eight cases instead of twenty-four. That established industrial peace again.

This incident is typical of Soviet Russia. It shows the spirit of the revolutionary workers. In spite of their reduced rations, they are ever ready to perform more and more service for proletarian Russia. The workers in question stopped their labors as we approached, gathered around us, and were not content until we had promised to take their greetings to the workers of the United States.

A striking feature of the plant was the elaborate precautions to meet the danger from fire. As our party entered the main gate we were subjected to a very rigid search for matches. Even the commander himself had to stand a "frisk." Everywhere about the buildings there were buckets and tanks for "first-aid" fire work. In addition there was a splendid fire department, consisting of 140 men and eight engines, hose wagons and tanks. The men were uniformed, wearing the brass helmets one finds all over Europe in this calling. They were also subject to regular military drill.

For our benefit an alarm was sent in, and in six minutes the fire brigade had hooked up, come a full mile, attached their hose to the piping system, and were playing water on a building. After that they lined up for our inspection, and we congratulated them upon their excellent showing. As for myself, I felt that the whole incident was quite an honor to shower upon a couple of workmen like us. But then, that is how things go in modern Russia.

Returning to the plant office again, we had another try at the black bread, honey, milk, butter, and fish. Then we were shown some of the social and educational features of the place, which were typical of what now exists in Russian industries generally. One whole floor of a large building had been remodelled and devoted to this phase of the plant's activities. There was a school of art, where painting, sculpture, carving, etc., were taught—and some of the work done was surprisingly good. Next to this was the technical school, where a large class of workers were being taught the intricacies of chemistry and other industrial sciences. Close by this place was a large reading room, with a library in connection—I should say the latter contained 5000 volumes at least. Next to the library was the "Room of Youth," where the younger workers have their club and carry on a whole series of activities of their own. Finally, at the end of the building, was a large theatre where the workers themselves put on plays, sometimes with the assistance of Moscow professionals. Our guides told us that besides a large number of other plays they had several operas in their repertoire. In addition to the institutions above mentioned, the employees also have singing societies, debating clubs, orchestras, etc., galore. Whatever else may be said, at least it cannot be denied that the Communists are making every possible effort for the cultural development of the Russian people.

Quitting time in the plant having finally arrived, the workers assembled in a great open-air theatre in the midst of a grove of trees. There we and the other speakers regaled them with what we had on our minds. It pleased them mightily. They gave us a written resolution of thanks, and cheered us lustily as we sped down the road toward Moscow. So ended a typical visit to a typical Russian factory.

## XXIV.

### A BOLSHEVIK FESTIVAL.

I had the real pleasure of attending a most interesting outdoor fete, arranged by the Commissariat of Education in honor of the opening of the World Congress of the Third International. The participants were half-grown boys and girls, members of various civil and semi-military organizations which make up the great movement for the physical training of Russia's youth preparatory to its later military education.

After a street car ride of about six miles from the Hotel Continental our party arrived at Sparrow's Hill, the scene of the activities. Where we alighted the view was magnificent. The valley, far below, was carpeted with the most beautiful farms and forests imaginable, through which the Moscow River lazily threaded its way. In the distance, in far flung panorama, stretched the great city of Moscow, its hundreds of gaily painted churches and cupolas glittering in the brilliant sunlight. I was told that Napoleon, during his ill-fated Russian campaign, camped at this entrancing spot.

Descending from the hilltop, we came to a sort of bench or plateau, which formed an ideal national amphitheatre, and which was still high enough above the river to preserve the splendid view. There we found grandstands erected for the hundreds of delegates and visitors. Soon the performers began to appear: thousands of boys and girls, marching up great runways (one on either side) from a lower bench, which, being invisible from where the spectators sat, made excellent "wings" for the enormous outdoor stage. Many types of organizations were represented—Red Army Units, Officers' Training Schools, Grammar and High Schools, Physical Culture Academies, etc. Practically all of the boys were dressed only in short running trunks, while the girls wore natty costumes of various kinds. As usual, the red flag was everywhere.

The celebration began by all the performers (we counted them up to be about 10,000) drawing up in formation for inspection. This finished, they then organized themselves into a parade and marched past

the reviewing stand. A special feature of the parade was a detachment of Red Army soldier girls. Uniformed, and carrying bayoneted rifles like veterans—which many of them no doubt were—they marched in the same general units as the men. With their cloth hats, khaki jackets and short skirts they cut a dashing figure. They received a great ovation. Americans, having in mind their own pampered, weak women, are inclined to smile when they hear talk of women soldiers. But those who have followed the course of events in this country, and who are acquainted with the wonderfully strong Russian women, look upon the matter quite differently. A constant marvel of visiting Americans was the magnificent physique and vigor of the Russian women and girls.

After the parade came what are termed massed military exercises. These were much the same as one finds in Germany, Sweden, and other countries where the ruling class can take its mind off money chasing long enough to devote a little time to the upbuilding of the people's health. Thousands of youngsters drew up in detachments along the theatre greensward. Then at flag signals from the director, they deployed step by step until each individual occupied about an eight foot square. In this formation they then went through an elaborate set of exercises, the beauty of which needs no telling to those who have witnessed such performances.

Following these exercises there were many kinds of bayonet drills, ring games, cavalry evolutions, etc., all well done by picked crews. But the "piece de resistance," it seemed to me, was the "rhythmic exercises." These are a peculiar combination of calisthenics and dancing, performed in time with band music. I was told that they were originally developed in Switzerland and had some vogue among the Russian upper classes before the revolution. The Bolsheviki brought them to the masses of the people.

There are many varieties of rhythmic exercises. The general principle of them all, however, is that the performing teams go through a long list of calisthenic movements, working them in series of three or four pausing slightly after each series, and finishing exactly with the last beat of the band music accompanying them. The effect is indescribably curious and pleasing.

One piece that made a hit was called "Hammer and Shovel Exercises." It was formed by 200 boys from a physical culture school. They divided themselves into three sections, those in the center section being equipped with the sledge hammers, and those on the ends with spades. While the band played the team went through a ten-minute drill, the various movements illustrating the uses of the plebian hammer and shovel. With wonderful precision the whole thing ended exactly with the last strains of the music. The audience was carried away with delight. I had never even dreamed that there could be such poetry and beauty in prosaic shovels and hammers. But the Russian revolution has been able to find it.

Another rhythmic exercise that greatly pleased the crowd was called "The Fall of the Tyrant." It was done to band music by thirteen picked physical culturists, dressed as Romans. One typified the tyrant exploiter, and the rest the oppressed workers. The latter, keeping exact time to the music, went through elaborate motions portraying hard labor, pulling, lifting, hammering, throwing, carrying, etc., whilst the tyrant hovered about, driving them on. Now and again one would revolt; then two or three, but the tyrant always crushed them and drove them back to their slavery again. Finally, one died from exhaustion. This was the thing needed to bring about the required solidarity, and as one man the twelve rose and overthrew the tyrant—just as the music ceased. The lessons of the piece were obvious, and the acting splendid. The crowd applauded to the echo. In its art, as well as in its politics, Communism knows how to spread the education that will eventually emancipate Russia.

In view of the prevailing grave food shortage, I was very much interested in noting the physical condition of the performing boys. This was easy to do as they were practically naked. To me they looked like an especially husky bunch of kids, unquestionably averaging better in weight and development than a similar body of American boys of the same age. It was touching to see the way the grown-ups, the revolutionists, followed the maneuvers. During the day I heard them say a hundred times that the children are the hope of Russia. The Communists consider the present generation practically ruined because of its capitalistic training.

They say "Give us the children for a few years and we will furnish them such a foundation of proletarian thought and education that capitalism will be forever impossible in Russia." And I think they know what they are talking about.

The festival finished by all hands singing "The Marseillaise" and "The International." Then we went to the river bank, where we had tea and black bread in a swell, flag-bedecked boat club house, whose aristocratic former owners had long since departed in haste for parts unknown. As we ate and drank we speculated on the whereabouts of these parasites and wondered what they would have thought could they see the use we were putting "their" property to. But we soon gave up these idle thoughts and, thrilling with the spirit of the great Russian revolution, went home in the street cars, packed with Red Army soldiers, Congress delegates and the various other elements that helped make up this happy day.

## XXII.

### A REST HOME FOR WORKERS.

Unlike governments in capitalist countries, the Russian Government takes a direct and positive interest in the welfare of the workers. It is especially concerned in looking after their health. As one of the means to this end it has established the famous rest homes, hundreds of which are scattered about the suburbs of the various industrial centers. These are places, usually fine country mansions confiscated from the aristocrats, where the run-down workers from the chemical, tobacco and other health-destroying industries are sent to recuperate. In the rest homes there are no restrictions on diet. All the workers have to do is to eat, sleep, and have a good time generally. The unions decide which of their members shall enjoy the highly-prized two-weeks' vacation. When Russia becomes more prosperous the rest homes will be multiplied and developed to the greatest possible extent.

It was my good fortune to visit one of these rest homes situated about twenty miles from Moscow. It was located in a great white mansion, built upon a hill. All about it lay well-kept park land. In front a beautiful lake, timbered to its edges, lay shimmering in the sun. Across the valley nestled a tiny Russian church, with its white walls and golden cupolas standing out sharply against the rich green foliage of the trees. A quaint village sprawled half-way up the hill. The whole scene was a picture of exquisite beauty.

We were a party of five—Lossovsky, president of the All-Russian Trade Unions; Szanto, a member of the former Hungarian Soviet Government; Fritz Heckert, a prominent German trade unionist; the latter's wife, and myself—and as our automobile dashed up the workers flocked out and gave us a royal welcome. There were a hundred or so of them, and they were attired in all sorts of makeup. Clothes are exceedingly precious in Russia now, and it was one of the rules of the rest home that the sojourners there had to wear whatever bizarre togs the place could provide. This encour-

aged the workers to loll around and thoroughly relax, which they would not have done in their own clothes.

Our party was shown about the place, which was furnished with the semi-barbaric splendor characteristic of Russian mansions. There was gilt and gold everywhere. Upon the walls hung many old masters, some of which I noted as being as much as 500 years old. There were dozens of rooms—I did not attempt to count them. And the whole business, before the revolution, had been for the pleasure of one old woman who lived alone—if it can be called living alone when one has fifty servants. Her son lived close by in another mansion, almost as large and magnificent. It, too, is now being used as a rest home.

After a hearty supper we strolled about the grounds and soon found ourselves in the yard playing "Gavoretka"—I think that is what they called it. Gavoretka is one of the national games of Russia. It is very fascinating and is played as follows: Two six-foot squares are marked off about 50 feet apart, one for each of the opposing teams. In these squares are arranged five six-inch blocks in various curious successive formations, such as the "sausage," "woman at the window," "cannon," "house," "train," "cross," "snake," "registered letter," etc. The point of the game is that the competing teams, each player of which is equipped with two great clubs for throwing, strive to be first in knocking a specified number of the block formations from each other's squares. It is a rough game but a very interesting one. It brings out all a person's strength and skill in throwing. We played it until midnight, when darkness set in. For several days afterward my "soupbone" was as sore as a boil.

Next morning we arose early—that is, early for Russia. We had a good meal and started a busy day of fishing, boating, swimming, playing gavoretka, and wandering around in the beautiful woods. The part of the program that pleased me most, however, was the concert in the afternoon. It was held in the large ball-room of the mansion. This ball-room, about fifty feet square, was luxuriously fitted out. Wonderful paintings decorated the walls and ceilings. The furniture was exquisite and costly. There must have been a hundred chairs, each of which was delicately carved,

enameled, inlaid with gold, and upholstered with the finest of silk.

The ball-room presented a truly revolutionary scene. Its former aristocratic revellers were gone and the useful workers were come in their stead to enjoy themselves. Many of the peasant girls, who had come in from the surrounding villages, were dressed in their gay national costumes. Across the walls were strung great red banners bearing revolutionary watchwords. In front, on the lawn, stood an enormous bust of Karl Marx, flanked by several more of Engels, Liebknecht, and other fighters in the cause. I wondered what the assembled workers thought of it all. Here just a few years ago they were talking in whispers of the masters in the big mansion on the hill and gazing respectfully from afar at their brilliantly lighted festivities. But now they had risen up, driven away these masters, divided up their lands, and were using the sacred ball-room for their own enjoyment. To me the whole incident seemed to bring the revolution very close.

As always with Russian working class concerts, the program was excellent. The artists—a pianist, a singer, and a violinist from Moscow—were superior performers. The work of the pianist particularly interested me. He interspersed his playing with short talks explaining the theory, evolution, history, and technique of music. The hearers were entranced. On that beautiful Sunday afternoon, with all outdoors calling to them, they sat through three hours of classical and folk music and enjoyed every minute of it. The concert wound up by everybody singing "The Internationale."

Tired out, but delighted beyond measure by our experience at the rest home, our party reached Moscow at midnight—after an automobile drive at the breakneck pace habitual to Russian chauffeurs.

## XXIII.

### GARMENT-MAKING INDUSTRIES.

In company with a small party of garment workers from various countries, I visited three of Moscow's largest clothing shops. We were shown about by a couple of Russian union officials and Brother Resnikoff of Local No. 2, Cloth Hat and Cap Makers' International Union of America.

The first place we went through was primitive in the extreme. In former times it had been a prison workshop devoted to tent making. Now, as a free shop, it was being used to manufacture all sorts of military clothing. It was quite a large establishment, employing some 900 workers. Four-fifths of these were women. The plant was made up of several one- and two-story buildings, scattered about in a way that would make Taylor, the efficiency expert, turn over in his grave.

Practically all of the sewing machines were of Singer make, many of them being out of commission for want of small but indispensable parts. Such parts the metal industry, in its present broken-down state, is unable to furnish. A crying need of the shop was for buttonhole machines. There were two or three of them, but they were quite evidently incapable of meeting the situation. Consequently large numbers of women sat about sewing buttonholes by hand. I was informed that they average about 30 a day for each worker, whereas one operator on a machine could easily do 1500, or fifty times as much. From this it may be imagined what a welcome a few additional buttonhole machines would get in that shop—for in Russia, of course, the benefits of all labor-saving devices accrue directly to the workers. Another serious need was for cutting machines. We saw the cutters laboriously hacking away with carving knives, doing 134 layers of cloth at one time and stopping every few minutes to sharpen their sadly worn knives. Not only is such work extremely hard and slow, but it is also very inaccurate,

because of the goods slipping and stretching around under the primitive cutting instruments.

After finishing with the quaint old prison factory, our party went to another shop, also formerly occupied by prisoners. This was in the famous Buteerka prison, not far from the center of Moscow. The shop was situated in a great modern structure, one wing of which was still being used as a jail. Military garments for the Red Army were being made and the place seemed fairly well equipped for the work. About 1000 workers, nearly all of them women, were employed. The whole building was a mass of bolts and bars and the workers had sawed away many of them in order to permit freer operations. Where armed guards had once walked in great cages that separated them from the workers, be-  
vies of laughing girls were now to be found busy at work making clothes for the working-class soldiers at the front. One of the foremen in the shop had been a prisoner there in the days of the Czar because of his revolutionary activities. He smiled broadly as he told of the change that had come about in his position in the shop. As for us, these two old prison workshops, now turned into free shops, seemed very expressive of the new liberative influences that the revolution has brought to Russia.

Nearly all the Buteerka shop workers live together in a splendid big apartment house close by. Formerly it was occupied by social parasites of various sorts, but they have long since been driven away. The place was now run upon a communal basis. Its affairs were managed by a committee elected by the tenants. No rent was charged the workers. Across the street was a "creche" where the women workers left their babies to be taken care of during the day. A little further along the street there was a kindergarten for the larger children. In the same neighborhood were the workers' meeting halls, their club rooms, commissaries, etc. This grouping of the workers and their activities close about the shops in which they work is very characteristic of modern Russian life. It greatly facilitates the development of the budding communistic institutions.

The last place we visited was a general clothing shop making men's, women's and children's garments for civilians. It occupied five floors of a big, up-to-date factory building and employed some 700 workers. The

place was managed by Brother Bogaratchoff, formerly a member of the Baltimore Basters' Local, Amalgamated Clothing Workers. In the face of great difficulties he is developing it into a model shop which shall serve as the basic type for the reorganization of the whole Russian clothing industry. As assistants he had a number of garment workers who had formerly been in the United States and were acquainted with efficiency methods. These "Americans" (in Russia every worker who has been in America is called an American) showered us with greetings and inquiries about friends left behind.

So far as the inadequate and primitive equipment of the shop permitted, the shop was being reorganized according to American methods. We were told that at first the workers objected to the specializing of their work, but when they came to see what a great benefit it would be in getting out the production which Russia so badly needs, they accepted it. The whole place was agog with activity, the workers performing their tasks with vigor. Compared with American standards, the shop was working at about 70 per cent efficiency, with a constantly increasing output. We were amazed at the quantity and quality of goods being produced. The manager deplored the lack of modern machinery and also of the small parts that are required to keep in operation such equipment as they have. An especially urgent need, so he said, was for pressing machines, all that heavy work being done by hand. There was also a shortage of skilled labor. We promised to do what we could to get the powerful needle trades unions of the United States to send some of the machinery and other stuff so badly needed by the beleaguered Russian garment workers.

As in all other Russian industries, the trade union plays a very important role in the garment shops we visited. All the workers, from the managers down, belong to the same union. The managers are nominated by the National Union of Clothing Workers and then appointed by the Supreme Economic Council. The union works out the hours, wages and working conditions in the shops. These are then approved by the Department of Labor. The union also establishes the amount of work to be turned out by the individual workers. General supervision over the shops (in addition to that

of the regular managers and foremen) is exercised by a committee of two workers, one elected by the shop employees and the other selected by the Department of Workers' and Peasants' Control, which is part of the national Government. This local control committee keeps constant track of the plant's operation and has access at all times to the books, the various departments, etc.

The clothing workers' union also functions extensively through shop committees. These bodies, elected from the rank and file of the workers and usually consisting of five or seven members, have regularly fitted-out offices in the shops. They look after the social and political education of the workers, and see to it that all the union and Governmental regulations are strictly enforced. The shop committees also often trade off with the workers in other industries that portion of their wages which they receive in kind (in addition to their rations of clothes, food, etc.) after they have met the Government's demand on their shop. Thus in one of the plants the shop committee had several boxes of shoes, etc., which it had received from workers elsewhere and which it was distributing to the workers in its own factory. The same committee had recently sent one of its members to a grain growing section to negotiate with the peasants there about exchanging food-stuffs for clothes. Under the new free trade regulations in Russia it is intended to organize all such exchanging into the hands of the co-operative societies.

The clothing workers we met with were quite evidently suffering because of the food shortage. But they were animated with the same spirit of determination and stoical courage that one finds everywhere among the Russian working-class. They know they have a long, hard road to travel; yet they are confident of arriving at the goal—economic freedom. They are game and will fight the thing through to victory, regardless of the sacrifices required.

## XXIV.

### A BOLSHEVIK VARIETY SHOW.

One of the most striking features of the Russian revolution is the extraordinary vigor being shown by the theatre. Although industry in general is lagging and languishing, the theatrical profession flourishes as never before. Wherever one turns there are operas, ballets, plays, concerts, etc. And their quality is superb, for the Russians are natural artists. New York and London, notwithstanding all their wealth and prosperity, are not now enjoying such high grade theatrical performances as are being offered nightly to the revolutionary workers of Moscow.

The Communists are keenly aware of the educational value of the theatre—it is significant that in the new scheme of social organization they have placed it under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education—and they are losing no opportunity of using it to popularize the revolutionary point of view. Recently I saw a real Communist performance at the famous “Terevsat,”\* which will serve to indicate one type of this branch of educational work.

The evening’s spectacle was a real variety show, consisting of several sketches. The first was a three-act comedy-drama portraying the winning of a home to the revolution. The point of the play, besides offering the workers a splendid entertainment, was to indicate many of the evils the new society has to contend with—sabotage, thievery, laziness, etc.—and to emphasize the need for loyal citizens and efficient workers in the industries. The “hero” of the play was a young Communist, and the “villain” a stupid, capitalistic-minded worker who stood at the head of the house. There were comedians, workers, villagers, etc., galore.

In the first act the “villain,” a militant blockhead, took occasion to express his opinions about the Soviet

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\*“Terevsat” is an abbreviation of “Theatre of Revolutionary Satire.” Many similar “words” have been produced by the revolution. Usually they stand for the new institutions; such as, “Comintern” (Communist International), “Sovnarcom” (Council of Peoples’ Commissars), etc.

Government and the new order of society in general. He voiced every objection to Communism that one finds current among the people, and this with vigor. These attacks provoked elaborate answers from the Communist members of his household, among whom was the young Communist "hero," his brother-in-law. The latter met his arguments one by one, outlining in his talks the real meaning of the Government's policies and the general conception of Communism. This he did so skillfully that the "villain" was intellectually routed, to the glee of the audience.

The scene of the second act was a machine shop. There were a number of workers at work, the "hero" and "villain" among them. The latter spent his time idling about and wasting the other men's time arguing with them over the sins of the Soviets. Finally he was caught stealing a number of newly-made tin buckets. This brought down upon his head a lecture about the cardinal crime of stealing from the workers' republic.

The climax came in the third act. The "villain's" wife, tired of his unsocial conduct, decided to leave him. She packed up her clothes and, taking the baby, prepared to depart. He objected violently to this, claiming ownership over her as in the old days. But all he achieved was a new discourse from his Communist brother-in-law on the rights of women under the workers' regime. Finally the "villain," defeated at every point, capitulated and declared that henceforth he would do his part in building the new society. The worker audience were delighted and sat through the playlet with rapt attention. In the characters portrayed and the plot of the piece they saw their own life depicted. There could be no doubt but that the lessons intended sank into their minds.

The next part of the program was a humorous encounter between a Bolshevik woman and a slacker man. They found themselves met on a bench in the park, and when she chided him for not being at work he replied with with an individualistic argument about how he intended to get along as easy as he could, etc. Then the repartee began. Jokes for and against Soviet society flew back and forth, with the woman always getting the better of it. Finally they gave up their intellectual duel and wound up the act by a dancing contest. This team made a special hit with the crowd.

Then followed a curious act called "The Soviet Postman." A letter-carrier, placed upon a raised platform, was supposed to read us the letters he found in his mail. The reading, however, was really a series of recitations by players, of appropriate types, who appeared at an opening in the platform. The good worker, the slacker, the aristocrat, the Red Army officer, the peasant, the Communist, the speculator, the counter-revolutionist, the expropriated capitalist—all the elements of modern Russian society were there, each voicing his criticisms, praises, or aspirations for the new society. Many were the laughs that were had, especially at the complaints of representatives of the old regime. And in the midst of the laughs were inserted more than one lesson that the Communists wanted the masses to learn.

After "The Soviet Postman" there was some excellent singing, first a charming folk song, and then a special rendering of "The Marseillaise" in honor of the Paris Commune. The whole was done in the artistic fashion characteristic of the Russians.

The next act was a real gem. It depicted an awkward squad being drilled by a martinet of the old-time Czar's army. The scene was a barracks drill hall, upon one wall of which hung a forlorn portrait of Nicholas II. The soldiers were attired in Czarist uniforms, and the officer was a true type of the old Russian petty military tyrant. He brutalized the men through the drill, savagely kicking one, a student, who dared to protest at his harsh treatment. There was no positive propaganda. It was just a picture taken from the old regime, which the workers were left to compare with conditions in the Red Army. But the effect was more powerful than endless moralizing would have been.

The last act on the program we Americans voted the best; for it was a pantomime. It was a sort of historical dance, entitled "The Scales," portraying the struggles of revolutionary Russia against her many foes. No words were spoken except the names of the characters as they appeared upon the stage.

The playlet opened up with a prologue in which a dark figure, typifying the old regime and very active later on as Counter Revolution, was driven away by Time. Then the curtain went up upon the main scene. An enormous scales occupied a large part of the stage. On one side of it was a man, Kerensky, and on the

opposite side another, Capitalism. Between the two a struggle raged, each one striving to pull down his side of the scales. A beautiful girl attired all in red, Russia, watched the battle with interest. But Kerensky lost, and Russia drove him from her. He immediately went over and joined Capitalism on the other side of the scales. Thereupon a handsome young man, Communism, appeared upon the scene. He at once won favor with Russia, joined her on the scales and sent Capitalism's and Kerensky's side of the beam in the air.

Then began a wonderful dance, participated in by figures representing Skoropadkin, Petlura, Denekin, Kolchak, Wrangel, Yudenich, and all the other prominent counter-revolutionary generals. They entered the dance in the actual order that they took the field against the revolution. There were one, two, or three of them on the stage at a time just as they had been in the field together. Historical accuracy was followed in every detail. The counter-revolutionary dancers whirled about Russia, trying to win her favor. But without avail. One after another they gave it up and abandoned the dance in the order that they were defeated in battle. They, too, took their place on the side of the scales with Capitalism.

Next entered the figures England, France, and United States. Uncle Sam came throwing enormous dollars, which Denekin and others caught and were thus enabled to dance a little longer. In the dance of the Great Powers was portrayed every conference and every other important move that they made in the Russian situation. After they had become weary and taken their place with Capitalism, Poland appeared, playing her warlike part and encouraged by all the enemies of Russia. Then came the Kronstadt revolt, typified by a sailor. At first the sailor was shown to be a victim of the wiles of Counter-Revolution (who was all the while hovering about encouraging his agents), and fawned upon by Capitalism, the White Guard Generals, and the Great Powers. Finally, however, he went over and joined Russia on her side of the scales. For a time, with so many opponents, Communism seemed about to lose, his side of the scales began to go up. But by heaping books and papers upon it (education of the

people) it was sent down again and Russia's many enemies were defeated.

The last figure to appear was a black man, The Orient. A great struggle occurred over him. All the counter-revolutionary elements made desperate efforts to win him to their side. His will was to join with Russia, and he fought hard to do so, but the others finally dragged him with them. And thus ended this remarkable historical pantomime.

The whole performance lasted four solid hours, from seven until eleven, "Lenin's time,"\* and the worker audience enjoyed every minute of it. The theatre was but half-lighted (because of the fuel shortage) and the workers half-hungry (because of the food shortage), but the show "went" big. Although the whole thing was only "propaganda" the capacity crowd devoured it. The Russians who were with us rather deprecated the acting, calling it second class. As for me, I thought it splendid. But then, coming as I did from barbarous, uncultured America and being educated on Broadway theatrical trash, it was only natural for me to mistake Russian second rate actors for stars.

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\*In Russia the irreverent say that there are two times: Standard, or God's time, and Daylight Saving, or Lenin's Time. And they also say that as Lenin is the bigger man of the two in Russia his is the time that is followed. It is three hours ahead of Standard time.

## XXV.

### A PROLETARIAN OUTPOURING.

Once in awhile one has an experience that can never be forgotten so long as life lasts. That was my lot one day: I witnessed a great Russian mass demonstration. It seemed as though I saw the very soul of the revolution.

The demonstration, part of the ceremonies attending the opening of the Congress of the Third International in a day or two took place in the super-historic Red Square of Moscow. No more fitting scene for a revolutionary gathering can be imagined. The Red Square (the name was the same in the days of the Czars) is a large cobble-paved plaza about 150 yards wide by 300 yards long. Along one side of it runs the famous Kremlin wall, above which, in the interior, rise buildings literally bullet-riddled from the terrible fighting in the October revolution; while at its base, in a great common grave, lie hundreds of workers who gave up their lives in the revolutionary battles. Along the other side of the Red Square stretches an enormous arcade, likewise torn by bullets. Once it was a hive of intense capitalistic activity, but now its many shops and offices are tightly closed, and the painted names of their former parasitic occupants look down lugubriously upon an unsympathetic Moscow. At one end of the square there is a large revolutionary museum, and at the other end the celebrated church of St. Basil, the most beautiful building in Russia, if not in the whole world. Just in front of this church stands the great stone executioner's block where hundreds of victims of Ivan the Terrible and other Czars were beheaded. Merely to look about the famous Red Square is to get a thrill such as the New World cannot produce. But when one sees it filled with a surging, revolutionary proletariat, as it was on this day, one's feelings are indescribable.

The day started with a review of the Red Army Moscow garrison. About 10 o'clock the various units began to assemble and to arrange themselves in the Red Square. All branches of the military service were

represented, including infantry, cavalry, lancers, artillery, signal corps, officers' schools, etc. Aloft, over St. Basel's church, hung a great "sausage" observation balloon; while a score of aeroplanes skimmed in and about the heavy clouds overhead dropping propaganda leaflets. Promptly at the scheduled time, exactly upon the stroke of twelve by the great Kremlin clock, the ceremony began. The massed bands struck up "The International," and Leon Trotzsky, Peoples' Commissar for War, came out of the Kremlin gate to inspect the 20,000 assembled troops.

Trotzsky is a man in the prime of life, well-built and vigorous. He was afoot and accompanied by half a dozen officers dressed as usual like privates save for the small rank markings on their sleeves. Trotzsky himself wore an absolutely plain, non-military khaki suit. The party walked up to the reviewing stand, where they were joined by a group of Congress delegates from various countries, who then made a tour of the square with them to inspect the troops. The soldiers stood at "Attention" (I am told that "Present Arms" is not in the manual of the Red Army), and each regiment chorussed the greeting, "We serve the people," as the reviewers reached it. Meanwhile the great combination band poured forth the inspiring strains of "The International." It was a memorable scene.

As I looked at this simple, yet most impressive picture I could not help comparing it with the gorgeous military pageants I had seen in other European countries, and speculating upon the vast differences in their meaning. This was the famous Red Army, typifying the age-long struggle for liberty, justice and humanity; while the others were the masters' potent instruments for tyranny, slavery and brutal slaughter.

One feature of the review was almost startling in its significance. This was the part played by the delegates who accompanied Trotzsky in his inspection. Even as imperialistic army officers study each other's armies and military methods, so did these delegates, future officers in the Red Armies to be created in their own countries, study those of their Russian brothers. They symbolized the universal proletarian army of the world revolution.

I was particularly interested to note the makeup of the soldiers. They had all the appearances of being

well fed, highly trained and thoroughly equipped. For the most part they were attired in plain khaki, although one regiment wore red trousers and another black ones. Several other units had small red or black cloth straps across their breasts. The regular uniform consisted of a sort of cloth helmet, Russian blouse, heavy leather belt, ordinary military trousers, and high leather boots. Just what rifles the soldiers had I could not learn positively, but I was told that most of them were of French make, captured from General Wrangel. Besides cutting a generally smart appearance, the Red Army soldiers had a very business-like look which was heightened by their habit of constantly carrying their rifles with bayonets fixed. The man with me was an American, formerly a regular United States Army soldier for several years. He was especially impressed by the morale of the troops, which he pronounced as being remarkably high.

As for the officers, they were unique. Conspicuous by an absence of the usual military swagger and bluster, they were quiet, human and efficient. They were the antipodes of the officers of Czarist times. They dressed so like the common soldiers that they could hardly be distinguished from the rank and file. Most of the Red Army officers were very young, although experienced veterans. Here and there an ex-Czarist officer could be seen, some of them holding high rank. They could be told almost at a glance. Although quite evidently they had been profoundly modified by the new social order, there was something about them—a remnant from their old imperialistic training—that the new working-class officers did not have. I was interested in two who stood close by where I sat. One wore a sabre, evidently from the old army, for it bore the usual imperial emblems. The other officer, noticing it, pointed to the Czar's coat-of-arms, and both smiled broadly. There was a world of meaning in those smiles, and I would have given a great deal to know what it was. I watched closely such Czarist officers as I could distinguish from the rest. They seemed to fit in fairly well with the new scheme of things, but I thought they did not come to "Attention" as readily and freely when

“The International” was played as the younger officers, who are nearly all Communists.

After the inspection Trotzky made a speech to the troops, touching on the needs and opportunities of Russia. He has a splendid ringing voice. I doubt if there was a person in the vast Red Square outside the range of it. Recently I read in one issue of the New York Times that he was fatally afflicted with cancer, and in another that he was dying of tuberculosis of the throat. But he was the healthiest looking sick man I have seen for a long time. To have made oneself heard in that vast open air gathering was a real achievement physically. Representatives of many other countries also spoke. Trotzsky seemed much affected by the occasion and often led in the cheering.

Following the speech-making there came a great parade. There were fully 60,000 people in line. It was a combined military, naval and civil affair. In other countries the armed forces rarely or never condescend to march with civilians. This is because they are things apart from the life of the people. But not so in Russia; there the Red Army is as much of a working-class institution as the trade unions or the co-operatives. They are proud of it and it is of them. In this kaleidoscopic demonstration it sandwiched itself among a mass of civilian organizations of school children, university students, civil guards, trade unions, factory groups, etc. It was a veritable outpouring of the proletariat.

A prime feature of the parade, and to the foreigners the most interesting one, was the Communist Party groups from the various sections about Moscow. The Communist Party enjoys a tremendous prestige in Russia. It is generally conceded to be the embodiment of the revolution; the driving force that has carried it on through incredible difficulties. Here were the members of this marvelous organization, which I have described in a previous chapter. And they were plain and unromantic enough in appearance. Just common workingmen and women with the flame of revolution burning in their hearts and good rifles on their shoulders. Confirmed revolutionists and idealists to the last one, they are the shock troops of the revolution. No capitalist country possesses armed forces which, man for man, could meet them successfully in battle. It

was significant that they were given the place of honor in the parade, coming even before the Red Army. In Russia the Communists are first in war and everywhere else. Upon them rests the burden of the revolution. I watched them march by—thousands of armed, plain, un-uniformed workers—with more interest than I have ever bestowed upon any other body of human beings in my life. I was looking at the Russian revolution itself.

THE END.

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M.B.

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