

social theater. The walls were decorated with posters, with satirical cartoons of the bourgeoisie, and the labor press. The audience was an interesting mixture of intellectuals, school children, splendid looking laborers, and a general gathering of Russian people, like the party Congress the other day. Balabanova enjoys the performance in the company of three Italians who have recently arrived, and is overjoyed at meeting these representatives from her former country. With me there are two young boys, looking like college boys, but of a laborer type. One produces a paper and shows it to the other. It is a poem. Both of them read and discuss it. For a moment I feel something of the sentiment of my own college days, twenty years ago, when one waited eagerly and impatiently to see one's first rhymes printed.

Lunacharsky will be here within an hour. It is a Russian custom to give the full four quarters to each hour, so this cannot be blamed upon Bolshevism. He places himself upon a little stage beside a table, produces his typewritten manuscript, and begins his recital. He has a wonderful voice, which he varies in superb fashion in different roles,

and such is its magic and his mimicry that one scarcely misses scenery.

The play is, strictly speaking, a whole dramatic cycle, centering about the war and the revolution, a chronicle of humanity during the past few years. It begins with the chancellor of the north land declaring a war. The proletariat are being sold through the acceptance of a position of Minister of Labor by a Social Democrat, the iron worker. After the war is ended this man intends to work on the Social revolution. This he explains to his father, the laborer, who being ill wishes for a bourgeois peace. After the war a government is thus established, which is later overthrown by a Kornilov-Kapp *coup*, and is later succeeded by a Communist government.

After the recital a short debate and discussion of the play took place, during which the comment was made that it has been built too loosely and that the end was not in harmony with the beginning. The general opinion, however, was to the effect that the play contained many valuable points. It will be given in Moscow next fall.—*Folkets Dagblad Politiken*, June 23, 1920.

## Working Women in Soviet Russia

By HELEN BLONINA

**U**NDER capitalism the proletarian and peasant womenfolk were completely estranged from social and political life—both by the conditions of bourgeois family tradition and by their political subjection. Thanks to this, when power passed into the hands of the Soviets, when before the working class there arose the complex and difficult task of control and reconstruction, the working woman in the mass proved to be still more inexperienced than the working man. In order successfully to engage the working women in the common task, it was necessary, first and foremost, to help them to learn how to work, and to make clear where and how they could best apply their energies.

It was necessary to work out new methods of propaganda, new methods of approach, adapted to the psychological peculiarities of the working and peasant women and to the new problems awaiting them. And in this connection especial importance has to be attached to propaganda by deed, i.e., to propaganda by means of the direct attraction of the working and peasant women to one form or another of Soviet or similar work.

Women's Delegate Conferences were organized, which have rendered great services in this sense. These delegate conferences are composed of representatives from all the factories and works of the given ward or town, elected at general meetings of the undertakings. They play the part of institutions by means of which working women learn in practice how to carry on Soviet work, how to apply their forces and revolutionary energy to the common proletarian struggle and work of recon-

struction. From another point of view, they constitute an excellent link between the Soviet institution and the masses of working women.

The delegates break up into groups, working in one or another Soviet institution (mainly, hitherto, in the following sections: social welfare, labor, education, and health), and there assist in the creation, investigation, and control of creches, homes, children's parks, elementary and other schools, public dining halls and kitchens; in the elimination from these organizations of abuses or disorder; in supervising the distribution of boots and clothing in the schools; in collecting evidence for and assisting the inspectors of labor; in insuring the exact fulfilment of the regulations governing female and child labor. They are entrusted with the organization of ambulances and hospitals, the care of the wounded and the sick, the inspection and control of barracks; they participate in the militia (police); they supervise the payment of separation allowances; they assist in the engaging of women workers in all forms of direction and control of production, and so on.

On their part, the sections acquaint the delegates with their activity, and enroll them in schools or courses of instruction in one branch or another of Soviet work opened by them (courses in social welfare, pre-school education, Red Sisters and sanitary workers). At the same time the delegates, continuing to work in their factory or their workshops, make periodical reports to their electors concerning their activity and that of the sections in which they work, and organize vigilance committees in the workshops to receive complaints,

requests, and suggestions from the women workers.

The delegates take an active part in all the campaigns initiated by the Soviets or the Party (fuel campaign, sanitary detachments, food detachments, help for the wounded, fight with epidemics, expeditions for agitation into the country, etc.) The delegate conferences assemble two to four times a month. Lately, in Moscow and in some other towns, the basis of representation has been lowered, and delegates are now elected one for every twenty working women. In this way, through the medium of the delegate conferences, it becomes possible to reach the widest possible masses of women workers, and more and more they begin to constitute reserves, from which the Party and the Soviets can draw new forces. This was strikingly illustrated by the Party "weeks." In Moscow, for example, where during the Party "week" about 15,000 new members were enrolled, amongst them some thousands of women, a large percentage of the new membership was given by these very delegate conferences.

Great possibilities for agitation are contained in the non-party conferences of women workers, which in separate towns, provinces and counties are convoked approximately every three to four months.

Oral and printed propaganda and agitation are also carried on. In almost every party organ there is a "Working Woman's Page."

We can say, without exaggeration, that, whatever the faults and deficiencies in our work, the results achieved during the past year have surpassed our expectations.

A year ago there existed only a tiny group of class-conscious women workers, while the mass of the remainder, though revolutionary in temperament, was still lacking in consciousness and in organization. Today there is a strong body of intelligent workers, members of the Communist Party, and all with experience of one form or other of Soviet or Party work, gained during the past year. Not a few brilliant agitators have made their appearance, and now women journalists are also rising from the working-class ranks.

The women workers' movement already embraces the widest possible masses, and is becoming a considerable political force. Work has gone best in Petrograd, Moscow, the Moscow province, and the province of Ivanovo-Voznessensk. Undoubtedly the women workers are best organized and most class-conscious in Petrograd. Work has also begun in other provinces, and in some places fairly promisingly. At the All-Russian Conference of Party organizers of women workers there were present representatives of twenty-eight provinces; in addition to which comrades from the Ural, from Ufa, Orenburg, Astrakhan, amongst other places, were unable to be present, although work is going on there. The working women's movement thus covers today the whole of Russia.

The women workers have displayed splendid capacity both for organization and for labor. In

spite of unprecedented difficulties, they have already succeeded in helping the Soviet sections (sub-committees) to organize not a few creches, children's parks, schools, public dining halls, etc. And, while the working man has to go to the front in the ranks of the Red Army, to defend the Soviet power from the attacks of the Denikins, Yudeniches, Entente imperialists—the working woman in the rear is replacing him, not only in the factory and the workshop, but also in the Soviets, the trade unions, the militia, etc. Many women workers, also, expressed a wish to fight at the front against the White Guards, side by side with the working men.

### REPATRIATION OF RUSSIAN WAR PRISONERS

Moscow, July 26.—The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs has called the attention of the French Foreign Minister, in the matter of the repatriation of the Russian war prisoners by way of Odessa, to the fact that all ships without exception must make known their arrival twenty-five nautical miles before Odessa by wireless to Odessa or Nikolayev, and then take aboard a pilot. The Italian warship "Rucchia", which disregarded this order, sank in a mine field.

*The text of the Port Regulations governing the arrival of foreign ships in Soviet Russian harbors was printed in full in SOVIET RUSSIA for August 7, 1920.*

### VACANCIES IN UNIVERSITIES

HELSINGFORS.—The Soviet press regularly carries reports to the effect that professors are needed for universities and colleges. The *Izvestia* of June 4 contains an announcement of competitive examinations for the chairs of geology and mineralogy in the Institute of Forestry and for the chairs of pathology and therapy in the Medical Institute. It is expected that Dr. Rubel and Professor Grinchikov will be appointed to these chairs.

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