

THE SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLIC OF RUSSIA

Its Rise and Organisation

BY

CAPTAIN JACQUES SADOUL

(Formerly of the French Military Mission)



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The present pamphlet is of exceptional interest, being from the pen of a man who was a member of the French military mission during the time Russia was at war, and was afterwards employed by the French Government as its official agent in its dealings with the Bolsheviki and the Soviet Government. In this latter capacity he had numerous opportunities of coming into close contact with various leaders of New Russia, and conceived a deep sympathy for them and their cause. He, therefore, became a strong opponent of the idea of Allied intervention, and with a view to counteracting it wrote, in the summer of last year, a number of private letters to influential politicians in France, including Albert Thomas and Jean Longuet, describing the real condition of affairs in Russia, as distinguished from the official reports issued to the French Press, and the nefarious intrigues of the agents of the Allied Governments. The existence of these letters was not even suspected in Russia until August, 1918, when copies of them were found in the course of a search made by the authorities at the headquarters of the French Military Mission at Moscow. Some of them were immediately made public, and a full collection of them was recently published at Berne. Only one letter giving a survey of the internal organisation of the Soviet Republic and of its foreign policy failed to reach the Berne publishers in time, and it is this letter—or, rather, that part of it which deals with the internal organisation under the Soviet régime—which is now offered to the public in an English translation. The value of the information which it contains is naturally enhanced by the personality of its author, who, starting out as a Saul gradually became a Paul. In fact, since that time Jacques Sadoul openly went over to the Bolshevik side and became the head of the French-speaking section of the Russian Communist Party, in which capacity he played a prominent part in the revolt of the French armed forces at Odessa.

At an early date the second part of the letter will be published.

THE SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLIC OF RUSSIA.

Moscow, *July 25th*, 1918.

ALL is ready for the return of the Military Mission to France. General Lavergne considers it to be at hand; I can scarcely believe it, but am preparing, nevertheless, to cease this series of daily notes which began on October 25th/November 7th, 1917. It seems to me that the time has come to try to survey the whole ground covered since that date—ground which marks a new phase of the Russian Revolution; since, until that date, it was an essentially political revolution, while the Bolshevik *coup d'état* changed it abruptly into an economic social one.

THE BANKRUPTCY OF THE KERENSKY REGIME.

When the Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional Government, the situation in Russia was desperate. All observers of the great drama were attesting the irremediable decomposition of the army, the complete dissolution of the State, in which every village had in fact become independent, the scandalous neglect to carry out the orders of the Central Government, the vertiginous fall of industrial production, the fatal disorganisation of transport, the symptoms of approaching bankruptcy.

Such was the gulf of evils in which Kerensky was leaving Russia. No really revolutionary reform had been attempted. At times, for a moment, the people were shown from afar off the promises of Equality, Peace, Land; but these promised wonders were snatched away immediately, out of prudence. Prisoner of the Cadets, prisoner of the Allies, slave to his own fear of action, Kerensky had not dared to break with the past. He was continually trying to patch up the old bottles which the new wine of the Revolution had burst.

The March Revolution had been, above all, a protest against the war. Yet Kerensky had been able to force the Allies neither to take part in the International Socialist Conference at Stockholm nor to revise their war aims on the democratic lines proclaimed by the Russian Revolution and adopted

by Wilson. Moreover, he had been feeble enough to agree to the unfortunate offensive of July, 1917, which had culminated in the disaster of Tarnopol. In this way he had dealt the death blow to the material and moral powers of the Russian Army. The Kornilov affair, in which he was implicated, precipitated the death-agony of his rule.

The March Revolution had affirmed the will of the workers and peasants to conquer political and economic sovereignty in order to create a democratic Republic leading to Socialism.

Prisoners of the great industrial, financial and landowning capitalists, Kerensky and his colleagues did nothing to prepare a change in the economic system, nothing towards freeing the popular masses from wage-slavery. Weary of seeing the agrarian laws postponed without end, the peasants seized the great estates themselves; whereupon Kerensky had sent bayonets against them. He had broken all his promises. He was dashing all hopes. In the towns, both strike crisis and famine were growing.

THE BOLSHEVIKS IN POWER.

After eight months of power, the Coalition Ministry of Cadets and Socialist-Revolutionaries were plunging into the most pitiable bankruptcy. "The Revolution is dying! The Revolution is dead!" were the cries that rose on all sides—cries of despair amongst some, cries of hope amongst others. But the people wanted the Revolution to live; and the Bolsheviks took over the direction of affairs.

The Conservative Government of Kerensky had had one exclusive pre-occupation—to continue in power. It proved incapable of so doing. The revolutionary Government of the Soviets has lasted since November, and has never been stronger than at the present time. Nevertheless, it has accomplished an immense task in addition to continuing the struggle for life.

Having maintained themselves in power for nine months already, contrary to the expectation of all the prophets who, from September, 1917, announced that every Government, whatever its political complexion, could not live more than a few weeks, the Sovietists have worked a miracle. Besides, in that short time they have successfully begun the execution of their gigantic programme, ruined for ever the most solid institutions of the capitalist system, and outlined the detailed plan of a Socialist commonwealth; they have advanced very far towards the construction of a new world. This colossal

work ought henceforth to ensure for them the gratitude and the admiration of the workers of the whole world.

The annals of history do not, in fact, give an example of any previous revolutionary activity so profound, so rapid, so definitely popular.

Let us take the case of France—France which, in the past, was the predestined country of revolutions. We see 1789 allowing the first victory of the bourgeoisie over feudalism and absolute monarchy, 1830 and 1848 consolidating these conquests and firmly setting the capitalist yoke on the neck of the proletariat. The Commune of 1871, made, like every revolution, by the people, is the only modern example of a revolution whose whole course it was attempted to direct for the benefit of the people. But, enclosed within Paris, it was easily overthrown by the Versaillais on account of the feebleness of its armed forces, the insufficiency of its resources, the lack of education of the masses, and the unhappy situation of France; and that heroic insurrection, from which the Bolsheviks have none the less drawn precious examples and many useful lessons, could not be compared with the movement brought into being by the Bolsheviks—a movement so immense, so wonderfully pregnant with consequences.

To overthrow the capitalist class, to entrust the workers and peasants with all political power, to annihilate the former State—that is the instrument *par excellence* for the oppression of the workers—to shatter the bureaucratic and military machine, to establish the proletariat as the ruling class, to hand over to collective ownership all the means of production, and so to prepare for the organisation of the Communist order—such was the task undertaken by the Bolsheviks. What have they accomplished up to this day?

“ALL POWER TO THE SOVIETS.”

The famous watchword, “All power to the Soviets”—that is to say, all power to be handed over directly to the workers and peasants—summarises the political results of the November Revolution.

Many French comrades, sincere democrats, are indignant at the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by the Soviet Government. They are evidently not aware that the deputies to the Constituent Assembly had been elected in September, 1917, several weeks before the Bolshevik *coup d'état*, on lists drawn up in such a way that the electors did not know whether their candidate was for or against the

transference of all power to the Soviets. They are not aware that, after the Bolshevik Revolution and before the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, the same electors, by their vote, pronounced themselves against the Assembly and for the Soviets.

They are not aware that whatever the counter-revolutionaries may say—conscious or unconscious tools of the capitalist class, driven out by the Russian people and taking refuge in London or Paris—the Soviet Government is now supported by the overwhelming majority of the workers and peasants.

The Bolsheviks did not wish to impose on Russia a Constituent Assembly, that unfortunate copy of our old bourgeois parliaments—veritable collective sovereigns, absolute and uncontrollable, led by a handful of men too frequently sold to the powers of industry or finance, and whose crying inadequacy has thrown so many Western democrats into an anarchic anti-parliamentarism.

Our parliaments give only a caricature of popular representation—this was suspected before the war, but has now become a certainty. The Soviets, on the contrary, are institutions peculiarly suited for the workmen and peasants, being exclusively composed of workers hostile to the capitalist régime, and resolved not to collaborate but to struggle with it and destroy it.

If the characteristics of bourgeois and Sovietist political institutions are very different, the respective powers of their members are not less so.

The French deputy is elected for four years. For all this time he is absolute master of his mandate, he has complete liberty to defend, abandon or betray his electors.

The Soviet deputy is elected for three months. During these few weeks he is under the control of his constituents, who have the right, at any moment, of recalling and replacing him.

The French deputy is condemned to ignorance of how the laws he has voted are being carried out. In effect, the real work of the State is accomplished in France not by Parliament, but by the innumerable army of officials supported by the capitalist class, and employed by it to violate, to throttle all democratic laws.

On the other hand, the Soviet deputy is responsible for the laws he votes. He supervises their execution. For the Soviets are not only legislative, but also executive bodies; they are organs set up not for show and talk, but for work

and action, by means of which every elector (man and woman) acquires political experience, and participates *effectively* in the carrying on of public business.

The Russians quickly understood the superiority of the Soviet assemblies—legislative, executive, working—over parliamentary bodies, over our talking-shops of traditional type. Many peasants and a few workmen are dissatisfied with the Bolsheviks. No peasant, no worker, but is passionately determined to preserve the Soviets. And, knowing that the Government which would succeed the Bolsheviks—whatever its political complexion—would certainly suppress the Soviets, they are all ready to defend the Soviet Government. No one can deny that; and I am convinced that, when the French workmen and peasants are properly informed, they will follow the example of their Russian comrades

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT.

Because of the free working of the Soviet institutions, the real power is below. It springs from the widest masses of the people; and experience has shown that such power is stronger than the power from above of the capitalist monarchies and republics. No European Government is actually as stable as the Soviet Government; none could have resisted the terrible blows which have been struck at it for nine months with no apparent effect. Whatever our Ministers may imagine, they are less firm in their places than are the People's Commissaries; and the future will prove this beyond possibility of doubt.

The supple form of the Soviets has made it possible to realise and get accepted a revolutionary dictatorship; that is, a Government of iron—implacable, terrifying, but absolutely inevitable in such an acute crisis.

The dictatorship of the Soviets is a dictatorship of the proletariat—for the benefit, therefore, of the workers. It only gives civil rights to persons who are engaged in production for the benefit of society, who render to the community more than they receive from it. The dictatorial power of suppression is therefore used by the working classes against the parasitic classes, which yesterday held the reins of power and to-day, by sabotage, violence, or treason, are continually attempting to recover their privileges. The anarchy inherited from the old *régime* and from Kerensky has been reduced, little by little, by the strict subordination of the local Soviets to those of the Canton ["volost"], of the cantonal Soviets to

those of the district ["*uyezd*"], of the district Soviets to those of the county ["*gubernia*"], of the county Soviets to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of the Socialist Federal Republic. Intermediate between the county and the federal Centre, the Soviet Government has created the Region. This "invention" of the region assures the principle of autonomy as a counterpoise to the principle of unity; and in this way, in a State as immense and diversified as Russia, the peril of over-centralisation is avoided. By its regions, autonomous units which are nevertheless subordinated to the influence of the centre, Soviet Russia has solved the difficult problem of federalism.

I shall not here return to the Bolshevik political constitution; I have described it in a previous letter. I shall only recall that the local, county, regional Soviets send delegates to the All-Russian Congress of the Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, which meets at least twice a year (in actual practice every three months), and to which belongs all legislative and executive power. The All-Russian Congress of Soviets elects a Central Executive Committee of two hundred members, to which it delegates its powers, and which sits permanently, during the intervals between the Congresses, functioning as a parliament endowed with legislative and executive powers. The Central Executive Committee itself elects the members of the Council of People's Commissaries (the Ministers), who exercise executive power under the direction and incessant control of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, and of all the Soviet organisations.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD REGIME.

Based directly on the masses of workers and peasants, and working hand in hand with them for the strengthening, at every step, of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Soviets are day by day breaking up the formidable bureaucratic machine which formerly, under the eyes first of the Tsar and then of Kerensky, regulated the exploitation by the capitalist class of the unfortunate Russian workers.

The Army and the Administration are being filled with active and devoted workers; assisted by technical experts and specialists they are rapidly gaining instruction, driving out the counter-revolutionaries, and doing their utmost to transform the dusty and petrified Government departments into living organs of the public service. The greatest efforts are

made to simplify the administration and official duties, in order that any citizen of normal education can be capable of fulfilling the duties of almost any administrative post. All officials are elected, removable, and paid a modest wage. It goes without saying that this complex process is moving slowly, on account of the resistance offered by the old officials and the inexperience of the new men. The bourgeoisie and the aristocracy are fighting desperately against this revolution, which means for them extinction. Hence the coups, the disorders, the White Terror and the Red Terror, the bloodshed which stains every war, foreign or civil. But there is no more justification than in the case of the soldier fighting for his country to reproach the soldier of the Revolution for the blows he strikes, if it be in a just cause. And the cause defended by the soldier of the Russian Revolution is the holy cause of the proletariat of the whole world.

THE CREATIVE ACTIVITY OF THE SOVIETS.

Certainly, the gigantic transformation begun by the Bolsheviks does not go on without hindrance, gropings, mistakes, violence. How could it be otherwise? Do the anarchy, the excesses, the crimes, of which the great days of the French Revolution are full, prevent us from admiring the sublime edifice built by our ancestors? In order to build up a new social order on a new foundation, it is necessary to sweep aside all remnants of the past—to destroy all before we can rebuild all. Doctrinal formulas are not enough for this creative work; when at grips with reality, we have to go from experience to experience, to make an advance and then retreat in order to advance again.

A careful and impartial observer is thunderstruck by the vigour, precision, and rapidity with which the Bolsheviks accumulate *results*.

In order to organise the proletariat into the ruling class—in keeping with the formula of Karl Marx—it is not sufficient to destroy the old machinery of government and gradually to replace it by an administration founded controlled and directed by the people themselves; it is not sufficient to “dispossess the dispossessors”—the great landlords and the capitalists. It is necessary also for the community to take over the whole of the means of production, to educate itself, to create and set in working order the new social and economic apparatus.

Months and years will be necessary to carry out such a

programme of reconstruction, and to adapt the new institutions and laws little by little to the requirements of practical conditions. I have had many occasions since November, 1917, of examining the Soviet reforms, as they were voted. I have analysed them in my notes. To-day, therefore, I have only to retrace rapidly the principal stages of this mighty march towards Socialism.

THE LAND FOR THE PEASANTS.

The land problem has been solved; the peasant is master of the soil. The domains of the Tsar, of the Imperial family, of the churches and monasteries, of the great landed proprietors have been transferred to the community. The enormous areas so regained have been distributed amongst the peasants who had no land and amongst those who had not enough to live upon. Each village, cantonal or district Soviet, composed of the peasants of the locality, decides whether the lands of the village, canton or district are to be cultivated individually or collectively. The Land Committees (sections of the Soviets) study the best methods of realising these decisions in practice. The worst enemies of the Soviets are compelled to confess that the results obtained, from the point of view either of cultivation or of crops, surpass the most optimistic expectations.

THE FACTORIES FOR THE WORKERS.

The working man is master of the workshop.

The great directors of industry and commerce were, from the very beginning, placed under workers' control. The workers in every factory, the employees in every shop, have been entrusted, side by side with the proprietors, with the general administration of the undertaking, with supervision of the sales and purchases, with the drawing up and the application of labour discipline, with control and direction of production, with surveillance of accounts and distribution of profits.

Workers' control was a first step. Last month (July, 1918) many branches of industry were nationalised, and handed over for administration by the Supreme National Economic Council. This entirely new organ, directly subordinate to the Council of People's Commissaries and composed mainly of technical experts, has as its task the regulation of production, distribution and consumption for all industries. It is continually being swelled by new sections as one more industry

after another is nationalised. Every section is connected with the Central Committee of the Industrial Union concerned: "Centrosugar, Centrotextile, Centronaphtha," etc. In this way the collaboration is ensured of the State with each particular industry, with the object of regulating stocks, providing for future needs, indicating the scale of production required, allotting its quota to each centre of production. . .

Close connection between the latter and the local government is ensured by the Economic Councils established under the auspices of the county and regional Soviets. The importance of these really Socialist organisms is continually increasing in proportion as Russia advances along the path towards the realisation of Communism.

THE NATIONALISATION OF THE BANKS.

The workers are masters of the banks; they have been nationalised. It is well known what a sinister part has been played in every country by the great financial establishments, real masters of the world; dominating the proletariat, enslaving Parliaments and the Press, initiating costly Colonial expeditions and bloody military adventures to satisfy their own appetites. By nationalising the Russian banks, the Soviet Government has destroyed one of the root causes of imperialist wars. It has torn from the hands of the capitalists, and placed in the hands of the workers, the incomparable lever of modern credit.

THE EIGHT HOURS' DAY.

The eight hours' day (six hours for clerical workers)—the cherished hope of the workers throughout the world—has been granted by the Workers' and Peasants' Government to all the Russian toilers. The maximum duration of labour is 48 hours per week. The minimum duration of the weekly rest is 42 hours.

WAGES.

Wages, in accordance with the scales fixed by the industrial unions, have been increased considerably. Those paid to high officials and directors of industry have been reasonably lowered; they are still high enough, however, to attract and retain competent men. The proletarians are insured against accidents, illness, permanent disablement and old age. The number of the unemployed has been decreased by the multiplication of labour exchanges. Women and chil-

dren are specially protected by the Soviet legislation. I reserve for a special letter a detailed account of these many laws which have in this direction completely realised the wishes of the European trade unions.

THE HOUSE SHARKS ARE DEAD.

The housing question has been radically solved. Houseless workers, or those herded in the unhealthy tenements of the slums, are lodged in bourgeois houses, in the proportion of one person per room.

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE.

The separation of Church and State is an accomplished fact. In France the workers do not sufficiently realise how terrible religious oppression in Russia was under the old *régime*. One should consider at least the abominable pogroms of the Jews, a safety valve always in readiness and always opened wide by Tsarism whenever it wished to divert the people's anger from itself.

The free exercise of all forms of religion is guaranteed to all citizens. The Gregorian (Western) calendar has been adopted.

EDUCATION.

The work accomplished by the educational department has been gigantic. The programme of the People's Commissary, Lunatcharsky, covers both instruction in its proper sense and education, or general development of character. The minimum set is that all Russian citizens should be able to read and write; the ideal is higher education for all. The principal methods are: The formation of an army of teachers, the opening of technical schools and adult courses, the accessibility of the universities to all. The school, however, is not all; the working class must boldly create, by its own development, and expressing its own ideals and emotions, a new culture—literary, musical, artistic. To this end a Section of Proletarian Culture has been organised in every Soviet, while the Commissariat, *i.e.*, the Ministry, remains simply a co-ordinating organ.

Since November, 1917, the vast enterprise begun by the brilliant orator, the erudite and polished man of letters, the man of indomitable faith—Lunatcharsky—has been moving forward with courage and prudence, slowly and steadily. The

first and most difficult problem was to unite under the Commissariat all the different educational institutions, hitherto scattered amongst the different ministries or abandoned to the Church, and to abolish the purely bureaucratic encumbrances and sinecures which hung like a millstone round the neck of education. At the same time, constructive work was going on; improvements in the pay and conditions of teachers; creation in all schools of an advisory Council composed of representatives of the masters, of the pupils of the upper forms, of the parents, and of the local Soviet; foundation of a central educational museum, of a free school of Fine Arts at Petrograd, of a university at Nizhni-Novgorod, of a host of educational courses for adults, of technical schools of all kinds, of a Socialist Academy which is at one and the same time the supreme organ of science, like the Institut de France, and the highest authority of Education, like the Collège de France.

To satisfy the thirst for enlightenment of the Russian people, the free expansion, under the driving impulse of the Government, of theatres and workshop or Red Army clubs has been markedly noticeable. Every district of a great city, every little provincial town has its newspaper, its lecture halls, its lectures, concerts and dramatic performances, organised by the educational section of its Soviet.

Lunatcharsky has begun a People's Edition of the Russian Classics. A dozen volumes, already published, have been sold at extremely low prices in hundreds of thousands.

The literary life interrupted by the first period of the Revolution has been resumed. The most famous poets of contemporary Russia, A. Bloch and Esenin, have admirably expressed the creative and titanic spirit of the proletarian movement. New artistic, literary, professional and technical reviews appear daily. The Academy of Sciences, in close touch with the Soviet Government, is working at a great review of the productive forces of Russia. For this work it obtains all the funds it requires.

It is not unnecessary to state that the Bolshevik Government—the alleged agent of the Evil One, the Antichrist, the destroyer of all culture—has already done incomparably more to satisfy the intellectual and moral needs of its people than any capitalist Government has ever done in the world.

JUSTICE.

In the department of the Commissariat of Justice, the

laws of November 24th, 1917, and February 21st, 1918, suppressed the old courts, the Senate, the courts-martial, the police magistrates, the attorneys, and the lawyers. The old Russian judicial apparatus, complicated, obsolete, rotten with corruption and prejudice, was replaced by a very simple system:—

1. Local tribunals: 1 permanent judge and 2 sworn in rotation. All elected. Powers of imposing fines in civil cases up to 3,000 roubles, and of sentencing, in criminal cases, to not more than 2 years' imprisonment; no appeal, but reversal of sentences by congress of local judges.

2. People's tribunals for the district, their members being elected by the local Soviets. The members elect their president, and may or may not separate into different chambers.

3. People's tribunals for the region ("oblast"), elected by the permanent members of the district tribunals of the region assembled in congress; this regional tribunal acts as a Court of Revision.

4. Finally, at Petrograd, a Supreme Court of Judicial Control has been created for the purpose of laying down uniform rules of procedure; it is elected by the regional tribunals.

All judges are elected, and may be recalled and replaced within 24 hours by their electors. The procedure has been simplified. It is forbidden to take cognisance of the laws made by the former authorities except in so far as they do not clash with the decrees of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets or with the revolutionary conscience and equity.

Commissions have been set up by decree to deal with cases of minors, for arbitration, and to organise the revolutionary or press tribunals decreed in view of the actual state of civil war. The Extraordinary Commissions of Moscow and Petrograd are charged with the task of hunting down counter-revolution in all its lairs.

CIVIL RIGHTS.

The laws of civil rights withdraw from the Church the duty of keeping registers of births and deaths, introduce civil marriage, and legalise divorce by mutual consent.

It appears that all these judicial and civil reforms, in spite of their far-reaching character, have been brought into actual working without difficulty, and it only remains to draw them up into a code—though this task has been considerably lightened by the publication of the Constitution. The Russian people will always accept favourably a system which, while freeing them from lifeless formulas and rigid rules, relies on their instinct for justice and unfettered creation.

That is why the vast majority of the workers, despite their sufferings and their miseries, support the Workers' and Peasants' Government—the Government which has proclaimed, and is doing its utmost to realise, the right of the worker to life, to his daily bread, to health, to light. But it is also the reason why the capitalist exploiters and sharks of the whole world have launched the most unholy of crusades against the Socialist Soviet Republic. I am astonished that, confronted with this gigantic attempt, all intelligent and generous men do not applaud with both hands, do not assist it with all their hearts.

FINANCES.

From the first days of the Revolution, the state of the finances became worse from day to day. A high official of Kerensky, when asked to draw up a list of goods urgently required from England, wrote, "Above all, machines for printing bank-notes!" Since then, things have improved.

The Bolshevik Government assigns to financial questions the importance they merit by subordinating them always to political and social questions. The expenses of the State have been reduced as much as possible to the level of the necessary minimum required for the service of the people; the loans which weighed down the Budget have been annulled; high salaries and pensions have been radically diminished. . . . On the other hand, nothing has been spared for the work of social insurance, of public instruction, of reorganising industry, of restoring the railways and the food services. . . . The receipts due from those of the former direct taxes still in force are poor; there remains indirect taxation. In the future, the principal source of revenue will be the profits from the working of the nationalised enterprises. For the present, and for a long time to come, a deficit is inevitable. But what is the real importance to-day of financial fictions? The experience of the war, in all States, shows their complete unreality.

THE ORGANISATION OF PRODUCTION.

What has actually been done? A vast amount.

What remains to be done? Still more.

The problem put before itself, above all else, by this Socialist Government which has conquered political power, which already has more than half expropriated the capitalist expropriators and has crushed the resistance of the bourgeoisie, is to organise production. The problem is an extremely difficult one in a country which has at its disposal a backward administrative and industrial apparatus, composed of workers and peasants often illiterate, without political education, degraded by age-old serfdom, technically inferior to their European comrades, exhausted beyond description by three years of war and sixteen months of revolution.

With extraordinary tenacity and profound faith; led by Lenin, that admirably living, balanced and clear intelligence, gifted with marvellous foresight, a sovereign will, and a hand of iron; the Bolsheviks have made a frontal attack upon this problem, recognising both its capital importance and its difficulties. In order to restore order in the workshops, to rebuild the forces of production, they have had recourse to the bourgeois specialists and technical experts, who already are responding in great numbers to their appeal. In the capital and in local centres, they have everywhere created bodies to compile detailed statistics of the natural, industrial and commercial wealth of the country, in order to lay the foundations of public control over production and distribution.

Under the guidance and supervision of these bodies every Russian commune (parish) must tend more and more to become an autonomous unit, which the central power entrusts with the application of the Soviet laws and their adaptation to local necessities, in order to balance, in the best interests of its inhabitants, its production and consumption. Constant advice is being given to the communes. Those which obtain the best results receive the title of "model communes," and their success, with the reasons for their success, is made known by the Press throughout the length and breadth of the Republic.

The task of every unit of this transitional State which, following the destruction of the capitalist State, is preparing for proletarian dictatorship and the attainment of communist society, is to intensify production. To this end, the Bolsheviks are doing their utmost to raise the level of general

and technical education, to develop the spirit of discipline amongst all the workers, and to introduce scientific methods like the Taylor system, which enable the working man to produce more and in a shorter time with less fatigue.

THE RED ARMY.

The Soviet Government had hoped to be able to devote itself entirely to the creative work for which all its resources, all its energies, were none too great. Peace had been signed at Brest-Litovsk. Demobilisation, the colossal task which all the experts had declared impossible, had been completed in about six weeks. What need was there of an army?

The counter-revolutionaries of the whole world thought differently. Their manœuvres have forced Russia to create, hastily and anyhow, a new military organisation. A Herculean task after three years of war, and after a revolution made precisely in opposition to the war! My letters have, from day to day, given the history of the painful and laborious formation of this new army. That history is the history of the will of one man. As Carnot organised the armies of the French Revolution, so Trotsky is the father of the Red Army; and one could not express sufficient admiration for the extraordinary work done during the last nine months in the most varied spheres by this remarkable statesman—worthy colleague of Lenin. Having started with the voluntary system, Trotsky procured the swift acceptance of the great principle of compulsory service for all workers. Leaders were lacking. Trotsky forced the officers of the Tsarist army to give their services to the army of the Social Revolution. Many proved traitors. Trotsky had foreseen it; but he could not dispense at first with the services of these *ci-devants*. He was neither surprised nor discouraged by treachery. He was able gradually to eliminate traitors and enlist loyal officers. At the same time he had opened throughout Russia military schools of instruction where the proletariat developed leaders taken from its own ranks. The Prussian discipline which dominated the old Army had finally killed all discipline by reaction. Trotsky has laboured; and now, in the streets of all the towns, at Moscow, you will meet companies of the Red Army which drill excellently. What do the reverses of to-day (July, 1918) matter? This Army is now learning how to conquer, as Peter the Great learned at Poltava; and victories will come.

THE GRANDIOSE WORK OF THE SOVIETS.

The formidable programme of the Communist Party is not merely a programme. Week by week a careful observer can note new and fruitful achievements. The Bolsheviks know that months and years will pass by before the Socialist machine can work normally.

To destroy counter revolution; to restore order in this Russia which was always the country of disorder, and which had been plunged into total anarchy by the war and the revolution; to suppress corruption in the country of bribes; to overcome speculation; to organise and educate the most backward proletariat of Europe; these chief aims of the Russian Workers' and Peasants' Government appear lofty, distant, beyond the short reach of human arms.

The Russian people, sovereign masters of their own destinies, are confident. I share their confidence. I do not know whether they will go as far as the final goal they have set before themselves; but I am sure that they will go far, very far, farther than any people has ever gone who set out before them to win the ultimate ideal.

Whatever individual opinion may be as to the success of their effort, it would seem that every democrat, every man worthy of the name, is bound to pause respectfully before the gigantic task undertaken by this great people—idealist, mystic, ignorant, naive; but enthusiastic and greedy of justice, a people whom to know is to love, superior in all their infinite kindness to the cultivated barbarians who stupidly jeer at and despise them—the task of catching up and outdistancing with one leap the stage of civilisation attained by the most advanced nations, of creating out of its own brain, blood, energy, a brotherly, social order. It would seem that no man truly a member of the human race can refuse them his help or could deny the support of his strength and his spirit to these great creators of a higher humanity.

INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM AGAINST THE SOVIETS.

Nevertheless, what do we see? All the Governments of the world, those of the Entente as well as those of the Central Empires and those of the neutral countries, slander, insult, savagely attack the Russian Revolution—that is, the Russian people. They seem to be pursuing but one end; to destroy that Revolution. For nine months they have ceaselessly

fought against the Bolsheviks. In the interior, they have financed, supported, revived counter-revolutionary activity; they have sabotaged production, transports and provisioning; they have organised anarchy. From outside, they have tried to overwhelm the young and fragile Red Army; they have besieged Soviet Russia, cutting off its granaries, occupying its corn land, its coal, naphtha and iron fields, seizing its principal industrial centres; they have aggravated, by all the methods within their power, ruin, unemployment and famine.

If the great experiment begun by the workers and peasants of Russia were to fail, their reverse would be attributable less to the Utopianism of the Bolshevik leaders, to the cultural and technical immaturity of the Russian workers, to the resistance of the dispossessed bourgeoisie, to the immensity of the task, than to the implacable struggle carried on against the Soviet Government by the powerful capitalist Governments of the world. The peasants and workers of Russia are struggling and suffering on behalf of their European brothers, to put an end to the exploitation of one man by another. United with the Russian bourgeoisie, the capitalist Governments, faithful servants of the exploiters of the proletariat, wish at all costs to maintain the supremacy of Capital over the working classes. And that is why they have sworn to kill the Russian Revolution.

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