SPECIAL RUSSIAN NUMBER.

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

For International Socialism.

Vol. V.—No. 40 SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28th, 1918 Price Twopence.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOVIET STATE. By John Reed.

(Reprinted from the 'New York Liberator.')

Through all the chorus of abuse and misrepresentation directed against the Russian Soviets by the capitalist press, there runs a voice shrill with a sort of panic, which cries: "There is no government in Russia! There is no organisation among the Russian workers! It will not work! It will not work!"

There is method in the slander.

As all real Socialists know, and as we who have seen the Russian Revolution can testify, there is to-day in Moscow and throughout all the cities and towns of the Russian land a highly complex political structure, which is upheld by the vast majority of the people, and which is functioning as well as any newborn popular government ever functioned. Also the workers of Russia have fashioned from their necessities and the demands of life an economic organisation which is evolving into a true industrial democracy.

HISTORY OF THE SOVIETS.

The Soviet state is based upon the Soviets—or Councils—of Workers and Peasants' Soviets.

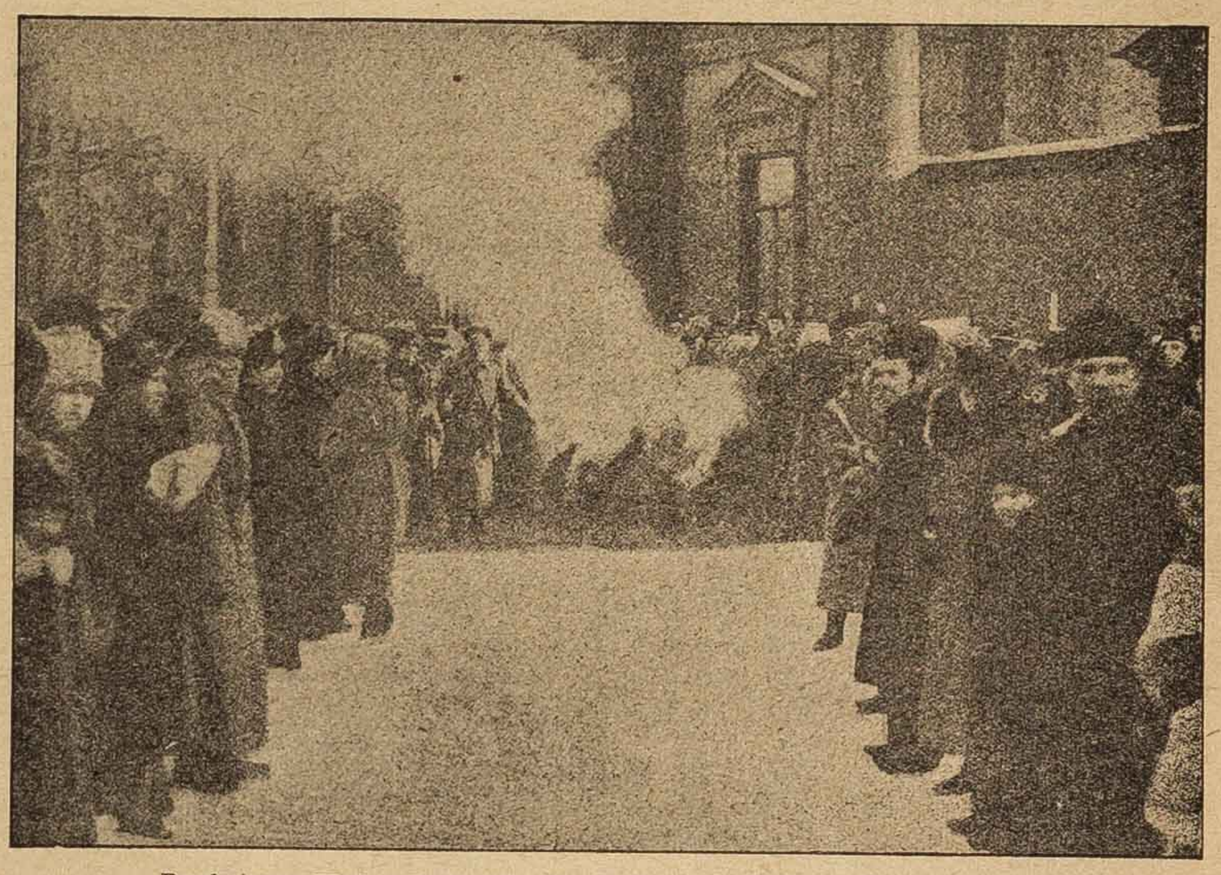
These Councils—institutions so characteristic of the Russian Revolution—originated in 1905, when, during the first general strike of the workers, Petrograd factories and labour organisations sent delegates to a Central Committee. This Strike Committee was named "Council of Workers' Deputies." It called the second general strike of the autumn of 1905, sent out organisers all over Russia, and for a short time was recognised by the Imperial Government as the authorised spokesman of the revolutionary Russian working-class.

Upon the failure of the 1905 Revolution, the members of the Council either fled or were sent to Siberia. But so astoundingly effective as a political organ was this type of union that all the revolutionary parties included a Council of Workers' Deputies in their plans for the next rising.

In March, 1917, when, in the face of all Russia raving like a sea, the Tsar abdicated and Grand Duke Michael declined the throne, and the reactionary Duma was forced to assume the reins of government, the Council of Workers' Deputies sprang full-fledged into being. In a few days it was enlarged to include delegates of the Army, and called the Council of Workers' *and Soldiers'* Deputies. Except for Kerensky, the Duma Committee was composed of *bourgeois*, and had no connection with the revolutionary masses whatever. Fighting had to be done, order had to be restored, the front guarded.... The Duma members had no way of executing these duties; they were obliged to appeal to the representatives of the workers and soldiers—in other words, the Council. The Council took charge of the work of revolution, of co-ordinating the activities of the people, preserving order. Moreover, it assumed the task of assuring the Revolution against its betrayal by the *bourgeoisie*.

From the moment when the Duma was forced to appeal to the Council, two governments existed in Russia, and these two governments struggled for the mastery until November, 1917, when the Soviets, with the Bolsheviki in control, overthrew the Coalition Government.

There were, as I have said, Soviets both of Workers' and of Soldiers' Deputies. Somewhat later there came into being Soviets of Peasants' Deputies. In most cities the Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets met together; they also held their All-Russian Congress jointly. The Peasants' Soviets, however, were held aloof by the reactionary elements in control, and did not join with the workers and soldiers until the November revolution and the establishment of the Soviet Government.



Revolutionary Workers Burning the Russian Eagle, the Emblem of Russian Czardom.

CONSTITUTION OF THE SOVIETS.

The Soviet is based directly upon the workers in the factories and the peasants in the fields.

Until the spring of 1918 there existed Soviets of Soldiers' Deputies. These were abolished after the demobilisation of the old army at the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, when the soldiers were absorbed into the factories and the farms.

At first the delegates of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Soviets were elected according to rules which varied with the needs and population of different localities. In some villages the peasants chose one delegate for each fifty voters. Soldiers in garrison were given a certain number of delegates for each regiment, regardless of its strength; the army in the field, however, had a different method of electing their Soviets. As for the workers in the great cities, they soon found out that their Soviets became unwieldy unless the delegates were limited to one for each five hundred. In the same way, the first two all-Russian Congresses of Soviets were roughly based upon one delegate for each twenty-five thousand voters, but in fact the delegates represented constituencies of various sizes.

Until February, 1918, anybody could vote for delegates to the Soviets. *If even the bourgeois had organised and demanded representation in the Soviets, it would have been given them.* For example, during the régime of the Provisional Government, there was *bourgeois* representation in the Petrograd Soviet—a delegate of the Union of Professional Men, which comprised doctors, lawyers, teachers, &c.

Last March the constitution of the Soviets was worked out in detail and applied universally.

It restricted the franchise to—

"Citizens of the Russian Socialist Republic of both sexes who shall have completed their eighteenth year by the day of election....

"All who have acquired the means of living through labour that is productive and useful to society and who are members of trade unions...."

Excluded from the right to vote were: employers of labour for profit; persons who lived on unearned increment; merchants and agents of private business; employees of religious communities; former members of the police and gendarmerie; the former ruling dynasty; the mentally deficient, the deaf and dumb; and those who had been punished for *selfish and dishonorable misdemeanors.*

As far as the peasants are concerned, each hundred peasants in the villages elect one representative to the Volost, or Township Soviet. These Volost Soviets send delegates to the Uyezd, or County, Soviet, which, in turn send its delegates to the Oblast, or Provincial, Soviet; to which also are elected delegates from the Workers' Soviets in the cities.

The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which was in operation when I was in Russia, may serve as an example of how the urban units of government function under the Socialist State.

It consisted of about 1,200 deputies, and in normal circumstances held a plenary session every two weeks. In the meantime, it elected a Central Executive Committee of 110 members, based upon party proportionality, and this Central Executive Committee *added to itself by invitation* delegates from the central committees of all the political parties, from the central committees of the Professional Unions, the Factory Shop Committees, and other democratic organisations.

Besides the big City Soviet, there were also Rayon, or Ward, Soviets. These were made up of the deputies elected from each ward to the City Soviet, and administered their part of the city. Naturally, in some wards there were no factories, and therefore, normally, no representation of those wards, either in the City Soviet or

THE STUCTURE OF THE SOVIET STATE continued.

in Ward Soviets of their own. But the Soviet system is extremely flexible, and if the cooks and waiters, or the street sweepers, or the court-yard servants, or the cab drivers of that ward organised and demanded representation, they were allowed delegates.

Elections of delegates are based on proportional representation, which means that the political parties are represented in exact proportion to the number of voters in the whole city. And it is *political parties and programmes* which are voted for—not candidates. The candidates are designated by the central committees of the political parties, which can replace them by other party members. Also, the delegates are not elected for any particular term, but are subject to recall *at any time.*

No political body more sensitive and responsive to the popular will was ever invented. And this was necessary, for in time of revolution, the popular will changes with great rapidity. For example, during the first week of December, 1917, there were parades and demonstrations in favour of the Constituent Assembly—that is to say, against the Soviet power. One of these parades was fired on by some irresponsible Red Guards, and several people killed. The reaction to this stupid violence was immediate. *Within twelve hours the complexion of the Petrograd Soviet changed.* More than a dozen Bolshevik deputies were withdrawn, and replaced by Mensheviki. And it was three weeks before public sentiment subsided—before the Mensheviki were one by one retired and the Bolsheviki sent back.

THE SOVIET STATE.

At least twice a year delegates are elected from all over Russia to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. Theoretically these delegates are chosen by direct popular election; from the provinces, one for each one hundred and twenty-five thousand voters—from the cities, one for each twenty-five thousand; practically, however, they are usually chosen by the provincial and the urban Soviets. An extraordinary session of the Congress can be called at any time upon the initiative of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, or upon the demand of Soviets representing one-third of the working population of Russia.

This body, consisting of about two thousand delegates, meets in the capital in the form of a *great Soviet,* and settles upon the essentials of national policy. It elects a Central Executive Committee, like the Central Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, which invites delegates from the central committees of all the democratic organisations.

This augmented Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviets is the *parliament* of the Russian Republic. It consists of about three hundred and fifty persons. Between All-Russian Congresses it is in supreme authority, but it must not act outside the lines laid down by the last Congress, and is strictly responsible in all its acts to the next Congress.

For example, the Central Executive Committee can, and did, order that the peace-treaty with Germany be signed. But it could not make this treaty binding on Russia. Only the All-Russian Congress had power to ratify the treaty.

The Central Executive Committee elects from its midst eleven Commissars, to be chairmen of committees in charge of the different branches of Government, in place of Ministers. These Commissars can be recalled *at any time.* They are strictly responsible to the Central Executive Committee. The Commissars elect a chairman. Ever since the Soviet Government has been formed, this chairman—or Premier—has been Nicolai Lenin. If his leadership were unsatisfactory Lenin could be recalled at any moment by the delegation of the masses of the Russian people, or in a few weeks' time directly by the Russian people themselves.

The chief function of the Soviets is the defence and consolidation of the Revolution. They express the political will of the masses, not only in the All-Russian Congresses, for the whole country, but also in their own localities, where their authority is practically supreme. This decentralisation exists because the local Soviets create the central Government, and not the central Government the local Soviets. In spite of local autonomy, however, the decrees of the Central Executive Committee, and the orders of the Commissars, are valid throughout all the country, because under the Soviet Republic there are no sectional or private interests to serve, and the cause of the Revolution is everywhere the same.

Ill-informed observers, mostly from the middle-class *Intelligentzia,* are fond of remarking that they are in favour of the Soviets, but against the Bolsheviki. This is an absurdity. The Soviets are the most perfect organs of working-class representation, it is true, but they are also the weapons of proletarian dictatorship, to which all anti-Bolshevik parties are bitterly opposed. So the measure of the adherence of the people to the policy of proletarian dictatorship is not only measured by the membership of the Bolshevik party—or as it is now called, the Communist party—but also by the growth and activity of local Soviets all over Russia.

The most striking example of this is among the peasants, who did not take the leadership of the Revolution, and whose primitive and almost exclusive interest in it was the confiscation of the great estates. The Soviets of Peasants' Deputies at first had practically no other function except the solution of the land question. It was the *failure* of the land solution under the Coalition Government which turned the attention of the great mass of peasants to the social reasons behind this failure—that, coupled with the ceaseless propaganda of the left wing of the Socialist-Revolutionary party, and of the Bolsheviki, and the return to the villages of the revolutionary soldiers.

The traditional party of the peasants is the Socialist-Revolutionary party. The great inert mass of peasants whose only interest was in their land, and who had neither fighting stamina nor political initiative, at first refused to have anything to do with the Soviets. Those peasants, however, who did participate in the Soviets, soon awoke to the idea of proletarian dictatorship. And they almost invariably joined the Left Socialist Revolutionary party, and became fighting partisans of the Soviet Government.

In the Commissariat of Agriculture in Petrograd hangs a map of Russia, sprinkled with red-headed pins. Each of these red-headed pins represents a Soviet of Peasants' Deputies. When first I saw that map, hanging in the old headquarters of the Peasants' Soviets at 6 Fontanka, the red points were sprinkled sparsely over the vast country, nor did their numbers grow. For the first eight months of the Revolution there were *volosts, uyezds,* whole provinces in fact, where only one or two large towns would show a Peasants' Soviet, and perhaps a scattering of villages. After the November revolution, however, you could see all Russia redden under your eyes, as village after village, county after county, province after province, awoke and formed its Peasant Council.

At the time of the Bolshevik insurrection a Constituent Assembly with an anti-Soviet majority could be elected; one month later it would have been impossible. I saw three All-Russian Peasant Conventions in Petrograd. The delegates arrived—the vast majority of them Right Socialist Revolutionaries. They met in session—and very stormy sessions they always were—under the presidency of conservatives of the type of Avksentiev and Peshekhanov. In a few days they would move to the left, and be dominated by pseudo-radicals like Tchernov. A few days later the majority would become very radical, and Maria Spiridonova would be elected chairman. Then the conservative minority would split off and set up a rump convention, which in a few days dwindled to nothing. And the main body would send delegates to join the Soviets at Smolny. This happened every time.

I shall never forget the Peasants' Conference which took place toward the end of November, and how Tchernov fought for control and lost it, and that wonderful procession of grizzled proletarians of the soil who marched to Smolny through the snowy streets, singing, their blood-red banner floating in the bitter wind. It was a dark night. On the steps of Smolny hundreds of working-men were waiting to receive their peasant brothers, and in the dim light the two masses, moving one down and the other up, rushed together and embraced, and wept, and cheered....

LAND COMMITTEES.

The Soviets can pass decrees effecting fundamental economic changes, but these must be carried out by the local popular organisations themselves.

The confiscation and distribution of the land, for example, were left to the Peasant Land Committees.

These Land Committees were elected by the peasants at the suggestion of Prince Lvov, first Premier of the Provisional Government. Some settlement of the land question was inevitable, by which the great estates should be broken up and distributed among the peasants. Prince Lvov asked the peasants to elect Land Committees, which should not only determine their own agricultural needs, but should also survey and make a valuation of the landed estates. But when these Land Committees attempted to function, the landlords had them arrested.

When the Soviet seized the power, its first action was to promulgate the Decree of the Land. This Land Decree was not a Bolshevik project at all, but the program of the Right (or moderate) Socialist Revolutionary party, drawn up on the basis of several hundred peasant memorials. It abolished for ever private title to land or natural resources in Russia, and gave over to the Land Committees the task of apportioning the land among the peasants, until the Constituent Assembly should finally settle the question. After the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly the Decree was made final.

Outside of these few general propositions, and a section providing for the emigration of surplus population in congested neighbourhoods, the details of confiscation and distribution were left entirely to the local Land Committees. Kalagayev, the first Commissar of Agriculture, drew up an elaborate set of rules to guide the peasants in their action. But Lenin, in a speech before the Central Executive Committee, persuaded the Government to leave the peasants to manage the matter in a revolutionary way, merely advising the poor peasants to combine against the rich peasants. ("Let ten poor peasants oppose every rich peasant," said Lenin.)

Of course no peasant could own his land, but still, he could take what land was due to him and treat it as his private property. But the policy of the government, acting through the local Land Committee, is to discourage this tendency. Peasants who wish to become private landlords may do so, but they are not assisted by the Government. On the other hand, peasants who farm co-operatively are given credit, seeds, implements and modern technical training.

Attached to the Land Committees are agricultural and forestry experts. In order to co-ordinate the practices of the local Committees, a central body is elected from them, known as the Main Land Committee, which sits in the capital in close touch with the Commissariat of Agriculture.

LABOUR UNIONS.

Labour Unions in Russia, as at present constituted, are less than twenty years old. Before the Revolution of 1905 there was very little economic organisation among the workers, and that was illegal. During the Revolution of 1905 the actual paid membership in the Professional Unions was about fifty thousand, and the reaction of 1906 outlawed them utterly.

The Russian Unions are an artificial development. They were designed by intellectuals, who made a scientific study of the labour organisation in other countries, constructed on paper the ideal labour union (in this case, a combination of the French *syndicats* with the German trade-union system), and applied it to Russia. The Russian unions, however, are industrial unions of the broadest kind—for example, in a cannon-factory the carpenters who make the gun-carriages are members of the Metal Workers Union.

In the first three months of the Revolution the membership of the Unions grew to more than two hundred thousand. Five months later the number of organised men was over a million, and two months after that more than three million were registered.

After the manner of Labour Unions everywhere the Professional Unions undertook the routine business of working for higher wages, shorter hours and better conditions, demanded Boards of Arbitration, and were granted representation in the Ministry of Labour of the Provisional Government.

This was not enough for Russian workers in Revolution. Although large numbers joined the Unions, still open shops existed, many workers could not see the necessity for organisation, and the struggle between the working masses and the bosses of industry was confused and deadened by the Unions.

Then, too, like the soldiers' Army Committees the constitution of the Unions was such that their policy was controlled by reactionaries, against the rapidly quickening pulse of the rank and file. Thus at the time of the Bolshevik insurrection the central Committees of the telephone workers, the postal and telegraph employees and the railwaymen were able to call strikes against the Bolsheviki in Smolny Institute, and temporarily isolate them from all Russia....This in spite of the revolutionary majority of the workers, who soon called conventions and reversed the policy of their outworn leaders, electing new Committees.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOVIET STATE continued.

At the present time the function of the Professional Unions is to standardise wages, hours and conditions throughout each industry, and maintain laboratories for efficiency and labour-saving experiments. But the Professional Unions occupy a secondary role in the organisation of Russian industrial workers. The precedence belongs to another organisation, a product of the conditions of the Revolution themselves—the Factory Shop Committee.

FACTORY SHOP COMMITTEES.

When the March Revolution broke, the owners and administrators of many industrial plants either left or were driven out by the workers. In Government factories, where labour had long been at the mercy of irresponsible bureaucrats appointed by the Tsar, this was particularly the case.

Without superintendents, foremen, and in many cases engineers and book-keepers, the workers found themselves faced with the alternative of keeping the works going or of starving. A committee was elected, one delegate from each "shop" or department; this committee attempted to run the factory....Of course, at first this plan seemed hopeless. The functions of the different departments could be co-ordinated in this way, but the lack of technical training on the part of the workers produced some grotesque results.

Finally there was a committee meeting at one of the factories, where a workman arose and said: "Comrades, why do we worry? The question of technical experts is not a difficult one. Remember, the boss wasn't a technical expert; *the boss* didn't know engineering or chemistry or book-keeping. All he did was to *own.* When he wanted technical help, he *hired* men to do it for him. Well, now we are the boss. Let's *hire* engineers, book-keepers, and so forth—to work for *us!*"

In the Government factories the problem was comparatively simple, since the Revolution automatically removed the "boss," and never really substituted another. But when the Factory Shop Committees spread to the privately-owned plants, they were viciously fought by factory owners, most of whom were making contracts with the unions.

In the private factories, too, the shop committees were the product of necessity. After the first three months of the Revolution, during which the middle class and the proletarian organisations worked together in Utopian harmony, the industrial capitalists began to be afraid of the growing power and ambition of the workers' organisations—just as the country land-owners feared the land committees, and the officers the soldiers' committees and Soviets. Along about the first part of June began the more or less conscious campaign of the entire bourgeoisie to halt the Revolution, and break down the democratic organisations. Beginning with the Factory Shop Committees, the industrial owners planned to make a clean sweep of everything, including the Soviets. The army was disorganised, supplies of munitions and food diverted from it, and military positions betrayed to the Germans—like Riga; in the country the peasants were persuaded to hoard their grain, and provoked to disorders, which gave an excuse to the Cossacks to "restore order"; and in industry, more important than all, the machinery and operations of the factories themselves were sabotaged, transportation was further wrecked, and the coal-mines, metal-mines and sources of raw materials damaged as much as possible. Every effort was made to close down the factories and starve the workers into submission to the old industrial regime.

This the workers were forced to resist. The Factory Shop Committee sprang up and took charge. At first, of course, Russian workers made ludicrous mistakes, as all the world has been told again and again. They demanded impossible wages—they attempted to run complicated scientific manufacturing processes without proper experience; in some cases, even, they asked the boss to return at his own terms. *But such cases are the great minority. In the majority of plants the workers were resourceful enough to be able to conduct the industry without bosses.*

The owners attempted to falsify the books, to conceal orders; the Factory Shop Committee was forced to find out ways to control the books. The owners tried to strip the works—so the committee had to rule that nothing should go in or out of the plant without permission. When the factory was going to close down for lack of fuel, raw material, or orders, the Factory Shop Committee had to send men half across Russia to the mines, or down into the Caucasus for oil, to the Crimea for cotton; and agents had to be sent out by the workers to sell the products. In the break-down of the railroads, committee agents had to make agreements with the Railwaymen's Union for transportation of freight. To guard against strike-breakers, the committee had to take over the function of hiring and discharging workers.

Thus the Factory Shop Committee was the creation of Russian anarchy, forced by necessity to learn how to manage industry, so that when the time came, the Russian workers could take over actual control with little friction.

As an instance of how the masses worked together, there is the matter of two hundred thousand poods of coal, which was taken from the bunkers of the Baltic battle fleet in December, and turned over by the sailors' committees to keep the factories of Petrograd running during the coal famine.

Obukhov Works was a steel plant manufacturing supplies for the Navy. The chairman of the Obukhov committee was a Russian-American, Petrovsky by name, well known here as an anarchist. One day the foreman of the torpedo department told Petrovsky that the department would have to close down, owing to the impossibility of procuring certain small tubes used in the manufacture of torpedoes. The tubes were manufactured by a factory across the river, whose product was contracted for three months ahead. The closing down of the torpedo department meant that four hundred men would be out of work.

"I'll get the tubes," said Petrovsky.

He went direct to the tube factory, where, instead of calling upon the manager, he sought the chairman of the local Factory Shop Committee.

"Comrade," he said, "if we don't get tubes in two days, our torpedo department will have to close down, and four hundred of the boys will be out of a job."

The chairman called for his factory's books, and discovered that some thousands of the tubes were contracted for by three private plants in the vicinity. He and Petrovsky thereupon visited these three plants, and called on the Factory Shop Committee chairman. At two of the factories it was discovered that the tubes were not immediately needed; and next day the tubes were delivered to Obukhov works, and the torpedo department did not shut down.

In Novgorod was a textile mill. At the outbreak of the Revolution the owner said to himself, "Here's trouble coming. We shall not be able to make any profits while this Revolution is on. Let's shut down the works until the thing blows over." So he shut down the works, and he and the office force, the chemists, engineers and manager, took the train for Petrograd. The next morning the workers opened the mill.

Now these workers were perhaps a little more ignorant than most workers. They knew nothing of the technical processes of manufacture, of book-keeping, or management, or selling. They elected a factory shop committee, and finding a certain amount of fuel and raw material in stock, set to work to manufacture cotton cloth.

Not knowing what was done with cotton cloth when manufactured, they first helped themselves to enough for their families. Next, some of the looms being out of order, they sent a delegate to a near by machine-shop, saying that they would give cloth in exchange for mechanical assistance. This done, they made a deal with the local city Co-operative, to supply cloth in exchange for food. They even extended the principle of barter so far as to exchange bolts of cloth for fuel with the coal miners of Kharkov, and with the Railwaymen's Union for transportation.

But finally they glutted the local market with cotton cloth, and then they ran up against a demand which cloth could not satisfy—rent. This was in the days of the Provisional Government, when there were still landlords. Rent had to be satisfied with money. So they loaded a train with cloth and sent it, in charge of a committeeman, to Moscow. The committeeman left his train at the station, and went down the street. He came to a tailor's shop, and asked if the tailor needed cloth.

"How much?" asked the tailor.

"A train-load," answered the committeeman.

"What does it cost?"

"I don't know. What do you usually pay for cloth?"

The tailor got his cloth for a song, and the committeeman, who had never seen so much money at one time, went back to Novgorod highly elated.

But the factory shop committee had been figuring on the rent question, and they had calculated on the basis of average production *for just how much they must sell their surplus cloth to provide enough money to pay the rent of all the workers!*

So it was that all over Russia the workers were getting the necessary education in the fundamentals of industrial production, *and even distribution,* so that when the November Revolution came they could take their places in the machinery of workers' control.

It was in June, 1917, that the first meeting of delegates from the shop committees was held. At this time the committees had hardly spread outside of Petrograd. It was a remarkable gathering, composed of delegates of the actual rank and file, most of them Bolsheviki, many of them Anarchist-Syndicalists; and its character was that of protest against the tactics of the trade-unions. In the political world the Bolsheviki were reiterating that no Socialist had any right to participate in a Coalition Government with the *bourgeoisie.* The meeting of shop committee delegates put itself on record as taking the same attitude toward industry. In other words, the employing class and the workers have no interests in common; no class-conscious worker can be a member of an arbitration or conciliation board except to acquaint the employers with the demand of the workers. No contracts between employers and the workers. Industrial production must be absolutely controlled by the workers.

At first the Professional Unions fought bitterly against the Factory Shop Committees. But the shop committees, which were in a position to clutch the command of industry at its heart, easily consolidated and extended their power. Many workmen could not see the necessity of joining a union; but all of them saw the necessity of participating in the elections of the shop committee, which controlled their immediate jobs. On the other hand, the shop committees recognised the value of the unions; no new worker was employed unless he could show a union card; it was the shop committees which applied locally the regulations of the different unions. At the present time the Professional Unions and the Factory Shop Committees work in perfect harmony, each in its place.

WORKERS' CONTROL.

Private ownership of industry in Russia is not yet abolished. In many factories the owner still holds title, and is allowed a certain limited profit on his investment, on condition that he works for the success and increase of scope of the enterprise; but control is taken away from him. Those industries whose owners attempt to lock out their workers, or who, by fraud or force, try to hinder the operation of the plant, are immediately confiscated by the workers. Conditions, hours and wages in all industries, private or Government owned, are uniform.

The reason for this survival of semi-capitalism, in a proletarian state, lies in the backwardness of Russia's economic life, the surrounding highly-organised capitalist states, and the necessity for *industrial production* in Russia *immediately,* to combat the pressure of foreign industry.

The agency by which the state controls industry, both labour and production, is called the Council of Workers' Control. This central body, sitting in the capital, is composed of delegates elected from local Councils of Workers' Control, which are made up of members of Factory Shop Committees, Professional Union officials, and technical engineers and experts. A central executive committee manages the affairs of each locality, composed of common workmen, but the majority is composed of *workmen from other districts,* so that its rulings shall be unprejudiced by any sectional interests. The local councils recommend to the All-Russian Council the confiscation of plants, report on the needs in fuel, raw materials, transportation and labour in their districts, and assist the workmen in learning to manage the various industries. The All-Russian Council has power to confiscate plants and to equalise the economic resources of the different localities.

Attached to the Council of Workers' Control is the so-called Chamber of Insurance. Workers are insured against lack of work, sickness, old age and death. *All premiums are paid by the employer*—whether a private person or the State. The compensation paid to the worker is always the *full amount of his wages.*

Under the Soviet Government the Wage System is retained as a necessary accommodation to the capitalist world, the machinery to abolish it being already in place, and the whole system being under the control of the workers themselves. Lenin has clear-sightedly stated that he considers the retention of capitalist forms, a step backward, a temporary defeat for the Revolution, but which must be endured until the workers are self-organised and self-disciplined enough to compete with capitalist industry.

Continued on page 1169.

JOHN MACLEAN.

We now learn on good authority that since last July John Maclean has been on hunger strike and undergoing forcible feeding. Is this country to be the last in granting reprieves. Germany has shown the way by freeing Karl Liebknecht, whose popularity has been increased enormously by the unjust treatment meted out to him. When are we going to have our political prisoners released? All sections of the community should protest against

LEANEY'S LTD., WHOLESALE NEWSAGENTS
City Agent for "Workers' Dreadnought"
9 and 10, ST. B[illegible] AVENUE, E
(Late City [illegible] Publishing Co.)

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

EDITOR: SYLVIA PANKHURST.

Published by the Workers' Socialist Federation.

Telephone: EAST 1787.

Annual Subscription - Post Free, 10s. 10d.

Back Numbers, 4½d, post free.

MSS. should be addressed to the Editor at 400, Old Ford Road, London, E.3

All business communications to the MANAGER, 152, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.

Vol. V., No. 40. Sat., December 28th 1918.

THE CHIEF TASK OF OUR TIMES

BY LENIN, Chairman of the Executive of the Soviet Republic.

You are wretched and you are prosperous,
You are mighty and you are powerless,
O Mother Russia.

The human race is at present passing through great and difficult changes which have (one can say it without the least exaggeration) a world-liberating significance. The world is passing to the war of the oppressed against the oppressors. In this new war the oppressed are struggling for liberation from the yoke of Capitalism; from the abyss of suffering, torment, hunger and brutalisation; they desire to pass onward to the bright future of a communist society, to universal well-being and a secure peace. It is not surprising that at the most critical periods of such a drastic evolution, when the old order is cracking and bursting, and out of it, in indescribable travail, the new order is being born, some lose their heads, some give way to despair, and some seek salvation, from a, perchance, too bitter reality, in beautiful and alluring phrases.

It has fallen to the people of Russia to perceive very clearly, and to live with acute suffering through this harshest of historical transitions leading from Imperialism to the Social Revolution. In a few days we demolished one of the oldest, most powerful, most barbarous, and most cruel of monarchies. In a few months we went through the phases of coalition with the bourgeosie and disillusionment in the bourgeois ideal, though it has taken other countries many years to reach this point. In a few weeks we deposed the bourgeoisie, and conquered its open resistance in civil war. Bolshevism swept the vast country in a triumphant procession from end to end. We raised to freedom and independence the lowest sections of the masses and those most oppressed by Czarism and the bourgeoisie. We have introduced and consolidated the Republic of Soviets, a new form of government, immeasureably loftier and more democratic than the best of the bourgeois Parliamentary Republics. We have established the dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the poorest peasantry, and we have inaugurated a broadly conceived system of Socialist reform. We have awakened faith in our powers, and have kindled the flame of enthusiasm in millions and millions of workers of all lands. Everywhere we have raised the cry of the International Proletarian Revolution. We have thrown out a challenge to the imperialistic robbers of all lands.

BREST-LITOVSK.

And in a few days we, who had laid down our arms, were thrown to the ground by the imperialistic robbers who attacked us. They forced us to sign a harsh and ignoble peace, a tribute which we had to pay for having dared, if only for a short time, to escape from the iron fetters of an imperialistic war. These robbers are crushing and stiffling and tearing Russia asunder, with a ferocity only equal to their dread of a proletarian revolution in their own country. We were forced to sign a "Tilsit"* peace, but do not let us delude ourselves. One must have the courage to look the bitter and unvarnished truth in the face. One must fathom to its greatest depth the abyss of defeat, dismemberment, subjection, and humiliation into which we have been hurled. The clearer our realisation of this, the firmer will be our will to free ourselves, our endeavour to rise again from servitude to independence, and our unconquerable determination to secure that, in spite of everything, Russia shall be no more wretched and powerless, but truly mighty and prosperous.

It is possible for her to become so, for we still retain enough in territory, in natural wealth, in reserves of man power, and in the magnificent impetus given to national creativeness by the Revolution, to make Russia truly great and to provide everyone with sufficient, if not lavish, means of existence.

Russia will accomplish all that we desire for her, if she will but shake off all despondency and all empty phrases; if with set teeth she will gather all her strength, will strain every nerve and muscle, and will understand that the only path to salvation is the International Socialistic Revolution upon which we have entered. To go forward on this path, undiscouraged by defeat; to lay gradually the sound foundation of a Socialist Society; to work unceasingly for the creation of discipline and self-discipline, for the strengthening everywhere of organisation, order, and businesslike methods; the harmonious co-operation of the national forces; general co-ordination and control of production and distribution; such is the path to military and Socialist power.

It is unworthy of present-day Socialists, in time of heavy defeat, either to make a fuss, or to give way to despair. It is not true, that (from the point of view of a "gentleman") there is no way out for us, save the choice between an inglorious death in the shape of the harshest of all peace treaties; and a glorious death in a hopeless fight. It is not true that we have betrayed our ideals, or our friends', in signing the "Tilsit" peace. We have betrayed nothing and no one; we have not condoned, but have exposed every lie. We have not refused to help, as far as it was in our power to help, any comrade in misfortune.

The General who retires with the remnants of a beaten and panic-striken army, and who defends this retirement in the case of extreme necessity by a harsh and humiliating peace, does not betray those sections of the army which he is unable to help and which are cut off by the enemy. Such a general fulfils his duty in selecting the only way of saving what can still be saved; refusing to embark on adventures; not glossing over the bitter truth before the people; but ceding ground in order to gain time; taking advantage of even the smallest respite in order to gather up strength and opportunity to recuperate for the army which was suffering from disintegration and demoralisation.

We have signed a "Tilsit" peace. When Napoleon in 1807 forced the "Tilsit" peace on Prussia, the conqueror had beaten all the forces of the Germans, had occupied the capital and all the large towns, had introduced his police, had forced the conquered to supply auxiliary troops for the prosecution of more wars of conquest for the conqueror, had dismembered Germany by making an alliance with one German power against other German powers. Nevertheless, the German people withstood even such a peace, and were able to rise again, and to acquire the right to freedom and independence.

To all those who desire to think, and know how to think, the example of the "Tilsit" peace (which was only one of the many harsh and humiliating peace treaties forced upon Germany) shows clearly how childish is the idea that, under all circumstances, a humiliating peace leads to irretrievable ruin, and a war to glory and salvation.

The history of wars teaches us that a peace, not infrequently provides breathing time and allows of the gathering up of strength. The "Tilsit" peace was Germany's greatest humiliation, and, at the same time, the turning point towards the greatest of national revivals. In those days the historical circumstances did not offer any other outlet for this revival than the formation of a bourgeois power. Then, but little more than a hundred years ago, history was made by a handful of nobles and a group of bourgeois intelligents; the masses of workmen and peasants were as yet hardly awake. In *those* days, therefore, history could only crawl along with exasperating slowness.

In *our* day Capitalism has raised the general standard of culture, but that of the masses only partially. The war has aroused the masses; it has awakened them by unheard-of perils and sufferings. The war has pushed history forward and history is hurrying along with the speed of a locomotive. History is now made by the independent millions, and tens of millions of people. Capitalism has now arrived at the level of Socialism.

And, therefore, if Russia is at present moving, as undoubtedly she is, from the "Tilsit" peace to the national revival, the outlet for this revival does not appear as an outlet to a bourgeois form of government, but to an International Socialist Revolution. We have been on the defensive since October 25th, 1917. We are defending our Motherland; but the national war, towards which we are moving, is a war for the Socialist Motherland, and we are a division of the universal army of Socialism.

"Hatred of the Germans"; "Beat the Germans," such were and are the watchwords of the ordinary bourgeois patriotism. But we say: "Hatred of imperialistic robbers, hatred of Capitalism, death to Capitalism;" and at the same time: "Learn from the Germans, remain true to our fraternal union with the German workers." They are late in coming to our help; but we shall not wait for them in vain; they will come. Yes, learn from the Germans. History is taking a zigzag route; it has come to pass that at present it is the German who personifies both brutal imperialism and the foundation of discipline, organisation, harmonious co-operation, based on the latest development of machinery, and the strictest co-ordination and control.

Organisation is just what we here lack, and just what we must acquire. It is precisely that which our great Revolution needs, and the possession of which would lead us from a victorious beginning, through a series of hard experiences, to a victorious end. Organisation is the thing which the Russian Republic of Soviets requires, in order to cease being wretched and weak, in order definitely to become powerful and prosperous.

(Reprinted from the *Isvestia*, March 14th, 1918.)

* Tilsit, a town in Prussia, on the Memel (Niemen), 60 miles N.E. of Könisberg, where Napoleon I. concluded treaties with Russia and Prussia in July, 1807. It has iron foundries, glass, cloth and machinery manufactures.

Arms of the Soviet Republic.

YOU appreciate the excellent Russian News which appears in the 'Workers' Dreadnought' therefore help to make it more widely known.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOVIET STATE

(continued from Page 1167).

SUPREME COUNCIL OF PUBLIC ECONOMY

The tendency of the Russian Soviet Republic as Lenin has himself pointed out, is away from political Government of any kind, and toward true industrial democracy. Lenin has even gone so far as to foresee the eventual disappearance of the Soviets in favour of an economic, purely administrative, body.

The prototype of this future economic parliament already exists in Russia. It is called the Supreme Council of Public Economy, and is made up of delegates from the Main Land Committee, and from the Council of Workers' Control. This Council has the power to regulate the economic life of the country, to control the flow of production and direct it, to administer in a large way the natural resources belonging to the Government, to control export and import; and to it alone belongs the right to start new industries, or to undertake new projects of railroad and highway building, the opening of new mines, the building of new factories, or the development of water-power.

The acting committee of the Council is composed of fifteen men, each one in charge of one of the fifteen branches of the country's economic life, such as railroads, agriculture, &c. These men are chosen as follows: The different professional organisations—such as the Institute of Mining Engineers, &c., nominate their best qualified men; and these candidates are voted upon by the delegates of the land committees and the Workers' Control organisations.

The fifteen committeemen sit in fifteen offices, surrounded by technical commissions applying their various fields. In the same building are also representatives of the Soviets, representatives of the Commissariat of Labour, the Commissariat of Commerce and Industry, the Commissariat of Finance; representatives of the factory shop committees, the peasant Soviets, Co-operatives, &c., &c.

Projects are brought in. For example, let us imagine the project of a railroad between Moscow and Novgorod (there is one already, but let us imagine it). The plan is laid before the committeemen in charge of railroads. If he rejects it the project goes to an appeal board. If he accepts, he calls in his technical commissions and tells them to work out the engineering problems. Other commissions, together with representatives of the workers' organisations from the steel factories, and with the unions, work out the cost. Then the delegates of the local workers' and peasants' organisations are brought in. Do they want the railroad? Do they need it? What amount of travel will there be? What amount of traffic in fuel and raw materials and manufactured products of industry? In farm-supplies and crop-transportation?

In other words, nothing is done in the way of economic development that is not needed by the people, and those things most needed by the people are done first. Since December, although Russia is racked to pieces, although she is at war with every country on earth, still vast projects are planned and work is begun upon them—like the linking of three hundred mines in the Urals with a net of railroads, and the harnessing of the great rivers of northern Russia to furnish light, heat and industrial power.

CO-OPERATIVE RUSSIA.

If it had not been for democratic organisations which existed already before the Revolution, there is little doubt that the Russian Revolution would have been starved to its knees long before this time.

The ordinary commercial machinery of distribution had been completely smashed. Only the consumers' co-operative societies managed to feed the people, and their system has since been adopted by the municipalities, and even by the Government.

Before the Revolution there were more than twelve million members of the Co-operative societies of Russia. It is a very natural way for Russians to combine, because of its resemblance to the primitive co-operation of Russian village life for centuries.

In the Putilov factory, where more than forty thousand workers are employed, the Co-operative society fed, housed and *even clothed* more than one hundred thousand people—sending all the way to England for clothing.

It is this quality in the Russians that is forgotten by people who think that Rusisa can have no Government, because there is no central *force*; and whose mental picture of Russia is a servile committee in Moscow, bossed by Lenin and Trotsky, and maintained by Red Guard mercenaries.

Quite the contrary is true. The organisations which I have described are reproduced in almost every community in Russia. And if any considerable part of Russia were seriously opposed to the Soviet Government, the Soviets could not last an hour.

Critics of the Soviet Government are just now crowing over Lenin's April article in *Pravda*, translated and published here as a pamphlet, 'The Soviets at Work.' In it the great proletarian statesman tells the Russian workers that they must stop talking, stop striking, stop stealing, maintain rigid discipline and increase production. He praises the Taylor system of scientific management. He points out the inexperience and lack of education of the Russian masses, and analyses the prevalent anarchy in industry and in agriculture. The proletariat, victorious over the bourgeoisie, must now turn its attention to the problem of "managing Russia," without which the Revolution must fail.

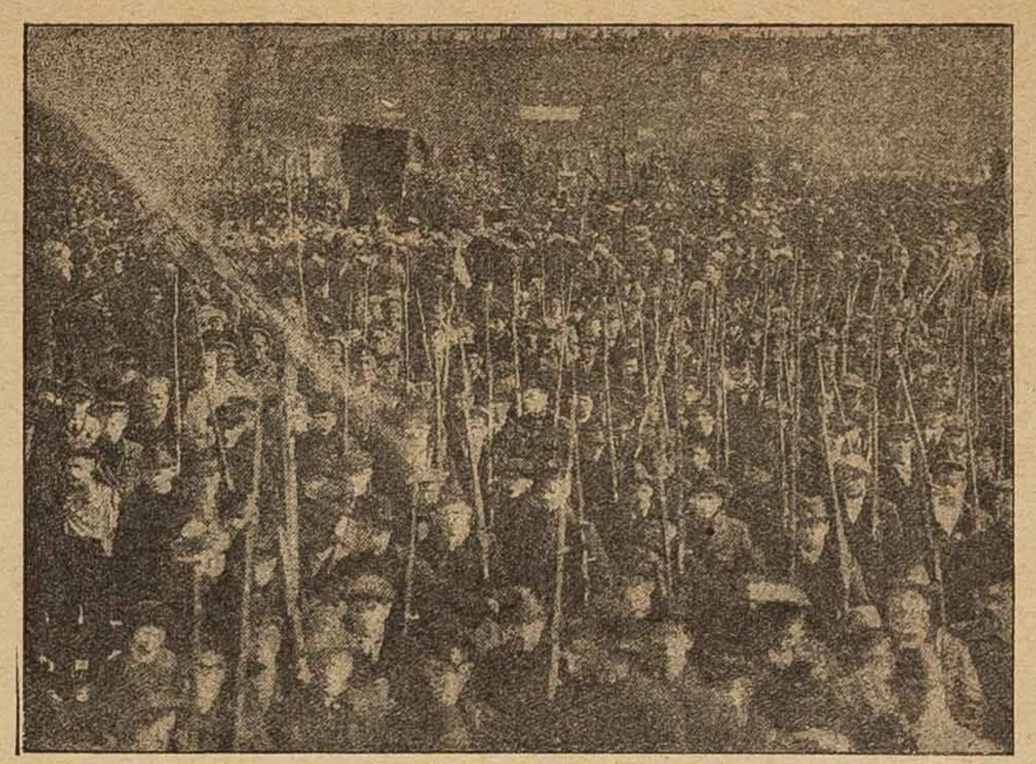
What is this, cry the critics—Socialists among them—but the application of outworn tyranny over the masses by a new set of masters? And see! Lenin himself admits that the Russians are incapable of running the dream-state they have set up....

Not so. The Socialist state is not to be a return to primeval simplicity, but instead a system of society more efficient than the capitalist state. In Russia particularly the immediate task of the workers is to be able to compete with the pressure of foreign capital, as well as to supply Russia with necessities. What is true of Russia, moreover, is true of the workers of all countries. Only in no other country have the workers clear-sighted leaders like Lenin; in no other country are the workers so united and so conscious. And in Russia there are groups of industries, like the Ural mines, like the factories of Vladivostok, where Workers' Control has actually improved upon capitalist management. And do not forget that industry *belongs* to the workers—*is run for the profit* of the workers.....

In June, 1918, Lenin told an American that the Russian people were not yet revolutionary. "If the masses do not become revolutionary in three months' time." he said, "the Revolution will fail."

We know now what he meant. "Revolutionary" does not mean merely a rebellious mood; what must be destroyed must be destroyed, but the new world must be built with anxious and laborious effort.

Across half the world we watch great Russia shake herself and take hold. In our ears sounds "the regular march of the iron battalions of the proletariat."



The Revolutionary Army.

E.T.U. PROTEST AGAINST INTERVENTION.

The N.W. Branch of the Electrical Trades Union passed the following resolution unanimously on December 17th:—

"The members of the N.W. Branch E.T.U. demand as British citizens that Britain shall not interfere with the internal question of Russia. We also protest against British intervention in their northern districts and demand at once the withdrawal of British troops from all Russian territory. We are prepared if need be to advocate a general strike of the United Kingdom to stop any such wars that will inevitably ensue from a continued occupation of the territory of the Russian proletariat. We desire you to know that we are working in the interest of civilised humanity which has suffered so grossly from the lust for territory and material gain of capitalism."

HANDS OFF RUSSIA!

A National Conference to *demand* the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Russia!

This Conference is being convened by the London Workers' Committee and the London District Council S.L.P. and will take place in London on Saturday, January 18th, 11 A.M. For further information please apply to the Secretary, London Workers' Committee, 7 Featherstone Buildings, London, W.C.1. A mass meeting will be held the same night.

IMPORTANT RUSSIAN LITERATURE which you should make a point of obtaining.

THE TRUTH ABOUT RUSSIA, by Arthur Ransome. Published by The Workers' Socialist Federation, 400, Old Ford Road, London, E. Price 3d.

RED RUSSIA, THE TRIUMPH OF THE BOLSHEVIKI, by John Reed. (Illustrated.) The W.S.F., 400, Old Ford Road, E. Price 6d.

NEW RUSSIA. Published by the Socialist Party of Ireland, Liberty Hall, Dublin, or from the People's Russian Information Bureau, 152, Fleet Street, London, E.C. Price 3d.

LEAFLETS PUBLISHED BY THE PEOPLE'S RUSSIAN INFORMATION BUREAU, 152, Fleet Street, London, E.C. "The Soviet Policy In The East" and "Arthur Ransome's Appeal." 1d. each., 9d. per doz. "Russia Gives The Land To The People" and "Housing For The Homeless." Decrees by the Russian Soviet. 1d. each, 9d. per doz.

SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION IN RUSSIA.—I. ½d. 4½d. per doz.

IN THE PRESS. Decrees published by the Russian Soviet Republic. Reprinted from the "Workers' Dreadnought." The "Dreadnought" Office, 152, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

NEXT WEEK'S PAPER

will contain another Vivid Article on Russia by Albert Rhys Williams. The Paris Peace Negotiations and the Socialists, by Our Special Correspondent in Paris. Special Article and Cartoon on Conscientious Objectors.

SOVIET DECREES.

THE DECREE ON PEACE.

Accepted unanimously at the meeting of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Delegates, October 26th, 1917.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government created by the revolution of October 24th-25th and supported by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Delegates, proposes to all belligerent nations and their governments to commence immediate negotiations for an equitable democratic peace. An equitable, democratic peace is desired by the vast majority of the exhausted, war ravaged workers of all combatant countries, and after the overthrow of the monarchy was most insistently and decisively demanded by the Russian workers and peasants. According to the Russian Workers' and Peasants' Government an equitable democratic peace is an immediate peace without annexations, that is to say, without the seizure of foreign lands, without the forcible annexation of foreign nationalities, and without the payment of indemnities.

This is the peace which the Russian Government proposes that all the belligerents shall immediately conclude. The Russian Government expresses its willingness to take all decisive steps, delaying not till all the conditions of such a peace are finally confirmed by the lawful meetings of the representatives of the people from all countries and from all nations.

By the term "annexations" the Russian Government understands the addition to any great and strong State of any small or weak nationality without the precisely, clearly, and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of the small or weak nationality. The principle is not affected by the period at which the annexation was accomplished; the level of culture or ignorance of the nation arbitrarily annexed or retained within the limits of a given State, or whether it be situated in Europe or far away across the ocean. If any nationality is being forcibly retained within the boundaries of a given State; if, notwithstanding its desire—expressed in print, in popular meetings, by the decisions of parties, or by revolts and uprisings against oppression—such nationality is not given the possibility of deciding the form of its existence as a state, by a free vote, without the least compulsion and with the absolute removal of all the troops of the annexing or stronger nation, then its annexation is an arbitrary seizure and violation of its right.

The Russian Government considers that to continue this war, in order to divide between the stronger and richer nations, the weaker nations seized by them, is a crime against humanity, and it solemnly declares its decision to sign immediately any conditions of peace which will stop this war on the above mentioned terms, which are equally fair to all nations without exception.

At the same time the Government declares that it does not in any way consider the aforesaid peace conditions as an ultimatum, that is to say, it will consent to examine all other conditions of peace, insisting only that they be proposed as quickly as possible and without ambiguity or secret clauses.

The Russian Government revokes all secret diplomacy, expressing its firm determination to conduct all negotiations openly before all peoples, and proceeding immediately to the publication of all secret agreements confirmed or concluded by the Government of landowners and capitalists since February and up to October 25th, 1917. The Government declares these secret agreements to be unconditionally and immediately revoked in so far as they are directed (as in most cases) to the granting of advantages and privileges to Russian landlords and capitalists, or to the retaining or increase of annexations of the great Russians.

In addressing to the Governments and peoples of all countries a proposal to open immediate peace negotiations, the Russian Government expresses its willingness to conduct these negotiations by telegraph, by discussions between representatives of the various nations, or by a conference of such representatives. To facilitate the negotiations the Government will send its representatives to the neutral countries.

The Russian Government proposes to all the Governments and peoples of the belligerent countries the conclusion of an immediate truce, which it desires shall continue for not less than three months, as this is a period in which it would be quite possible to complete the negotiations for peace. It would allow of the participation of representatives of all the nations and nationalities involved in the war or compelled to take part in it, and the convening of meetings of peoples' representatives from all countries fully empowered for the final confirmation of the peace conditions.

In making this peace proposal to the Governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries the Russian Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government addresses itself specially to the awakened workers of the three most advanced nations and greatest Powers participating in the present war—England, France, and Germany. The workers of these countries have given the best service to the cause of progress and Socialism. The great figures of the Chartist movement in England, the series of revolutions carried out by the French proletariat, and the heroic struggle of the Germans against the exclusive law and their long, stubborn, self-disciplinary work in the creation of working-class organisations which are a worthy example to the workmen of the whole world—all these models of working-class heroism and historical creation should serve as a guarantee that the workmen of those countries will understand the duty lying on them to deliver humanity from the horrors of war. These same workmen, by decisive and energetic action, will help us to bring the cause of peace to a successful end and at the same time to achieve the liberation of the entire working class from slavery and exploitation.

THE DECREE ESTABLISHING THE WORKERS' CONTROL OF INDUSTRY.

1. In the interests of a well-planned regulation of the national economy in industrial, commercial, banking, agricultural, transport, and co-operative associations, both for production and distribution, in which workpeople are employed or from which homework is given out, control by the workpeople is now established over the financial management, production, purchase, sale, and storage of products and raw materials.

2. The workers shall exercise control in each establishment by means of their elective organisations—factory committees, councils of elders (*starosta*), &c.—such organisations must include representatives of the employees and of the technical staffs.

3. For each large town, province, or industrial region must be formed a local Council (Soviet) of Workers' Control; this council is part of the organism of the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Delegates, and is composed of representatives of trade unions, factory and other workers' committees, and workers' co-operative societies.

4. Until the convening of a Congress of Workers' Control, an All-Russian Soviet of Workers' Control shall be established in Petrograd, consisting of representatives of the following organisations: the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates (five representatives), the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Peasant Delegates (5), the All-Russian Soviet of Trade Unions (5), the All-Russian Centre of Workers' Co-operative Societies (2), the All-Russian Bureau of Factory Committees (5), the All-Russian Union of Engineers and Technicians (5), the All-Russian Union of Agriculturalists (2), each All-Russian Trade Union with at least 100,000 members (2), the Petrograd Soviet of Trade Unions (2).

5. To the higher Committees of Workers' Control shall be attached commissions of specialists (technicians, accountants, &c.), who on the initiative of these Committees, or at the request of the subsidiary committees, shall be sent to inspect the financial and technical management of any undertaking.

6. The Committees of Workers' Control are entitled to supervise production, to fix minimum scales of production, and to take measures for ascertaining the cost of the products.

7. The Control Committees have also the right to direct the entire correspondence of the undertaking, and legal proceedings may be taken against proprietors who conceal any correspondence. All commercial secrecy is abolished. The owners must produce to the Committees of Workers' Control all accounts for the current year and all past accountable years.

8. The decisions of Committees of Workers' Control are obligatory upon proprietors and can only be revoked by the Superior Committees of Workers' Control.

9. The proprietor or management of an undertaking may appeal within three days from any resolution of a subsidiary Committee of Workers' Control to the Superior Committee.

10. The owners and the representatives of the employees elected to carry out the Workers' Control shall be responsible to the State for keeping the strictest order and discipline and for the protection of the property. Criminal proceedings may be taken against any person guilty of concealing products, or orders, of keeping false accounts, or of other abuses.

11. The District Soviets of Workers' Control (see paragraph 3) shall decide all disputes between the subsidiary committees and shall deal with the complaints of proprietors. They shall issue instructions in conformity with the above ruse.

DECLARATION OF THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSARY OF POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS.

[**The counter-revolutionaries paid Government employees in the postal and telegraphic service, schools, &c., full wages to remain away from work for three months after the Bolsheviki came into power. Most of the higher officials and Government experts refused to take service under the Soviet Government, while many of those who did so, committed sabotage, destroying the work which they were appointed to conserve and extend.—** EDITOR. 'WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT.']

The Government of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants cannot and does not wish to proceed, in the determination of its normal relations to the employees and workmen of the Governmental institutions, in the same order as the bourgeois autocracy, in which for centuries all bourgeois governments have proceeded. The label of civil service was formerly the implement of rightlessness and the stamp of a slave. From now on, all the workers of the post and telegraph department shall be in a position of full social equality with the whole proletariat, proud of its struggle, its liberty, and its successes.

To this end measures have been adopted as follows:—

1. All the regulations and instructions limiting the rights of the professional organisations of the post and telegraph employees, as, for instance, Circular No. 8 published by Tseretelli*, June 26th, 1917, will be revised and replaced by others or revoked.

2. The trade unions of the post and telegraph workers will be given the right to engage and dismiss employees and the right to reject the Chief. The Post and Telegraph Union will be invited to the formation of the college, which, together with Myself, as the representative of the Central State Powers, will administer the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs. All the rights of a worker's control over the management of the enterprise will be granted to the post and telegraph workers.

3. The post and telegraph services are the property of the revolutionary people; these services will be cleared of all counter-revolutionary elements which shall be replaced by the faithful children of the people. In particular those functionaries of the administration will be removed who were dismissed in the first days of the revolution, in the beginning of March, and were afterwards taken back notwithstanding the protests of the trade union organisation. In future when a vote of mistrust is passed by the employees against their chiefs, the question of dismissal will be decided by the executive committees of the circuit organisations, or by the local organisations equal to them.

4. The complete social insurance of the workers against unemployment, old age, orphanage, widowhood, and the loss of working capacity shall be applied to the employees of the post and telegraph services on the account of the State which is their employer.

5. The material† position of all the post and telegraph employees, especially the lower ones, shall be revised and made to correspond with the high prices, in accordance with the resolution of the Second Post and Telegraph Congress. The conditions and the order of work will be based on the principles of democratisation and respect to the public importance of the work of free citizens.

This programme, the establishment of normal relations in the province of the work of the service, will be the basis for a healthy development of our business itself and the meaning of our activity—to serve the population with post and telegraphs. After the war an energetic development of the whole postal and telegraph system is to be foreseen, and the soon-to-be-expected end of the war will open the way for all the faithful guards of the war, who will put an end to the criminal sabotage, return promptly to work, and thus secure for themselves a solid position in the army of workers of the post and telegraph department.

There shall be no return to the past, neither will

* A member of Kerensky's Coalition Government.

† It should be noted that this declaration was made on November 3rd, 1917. Since then the standard wage of 700 roubles a month for manual workers and 500 for sedentary workers has been adopted. Much has been done in the building of the Russian Socialist Republic since these rules were framed; but later decrees have not reached this country.

Continued on page 1171.

EDUCATION AND THE RUSSIAN SOVIETS.

Socialist Russia is rapidly forging ahead in educational matters. The printing press is busy; schools and libraries open everywhere, in towns, in villages, and along railway routes. The cinema has dropped the "cow-boy" film and is turned to instructive purposes. Workers are actually learning foreign languages, during the evening, in the rooms of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

At the Congress of Public Instruction held in Moscow, Comrades Lounacharski and Oulianov (Mrs. Lenin) delivered two important speeches, explaining, in general lines, the policy of the Soviets towards education.

LOUNACHARSKI'S SPEECH.

The Bolshevik revolution has given prominence to the question of education. The people made the revolution to conquer political power, economic independence, and the freedom of education. To conquer, even at one stroke, is not enough: one must organise.

The intellectuals, who gave their assistance to the Lvov and Kerensky regime, have refused it to the Government of the workers and peasants. They have used *sabotage* against it. Nevertheless, we have been able to do much useful work, especially since February last. The old system of education has been abolished completely; the old educationalists have been dismissed; the curriculum based on "Church and Latin" has been swept away. Co-education of both sexes has been introduced.

What will the "new school" be? It cannot, in any way, resemble that which the ruling class had organised for the "inferior" working people. In order to destroy this "class" education, we have to adopt the principle of "one standard of education for all," without privileges. The people being the principal factor in the production of commodities, it follows, of necessity, that the "new school" must be one that prepares the student to work. The teachers also must be persons able to work. The motto of the new school must be: "To live is to work." We therefore take "work" as the starting-point of our pedagogical system, as the chief subject of our teaching, aiming at the increase of technical knowledge. Our students must feel themselves part and parcel of the work of the community. The young girls and boys must prepare themselves to become big producers. The fact also must never be lost sight of that the chief aim of education is the knowledge of the various forms of human culture, which, in its turn, includes all forms of mental and manual activity. The artistic and physical education must be the fitting completion of the technical. There must be educational freedom and freedom *in* the school. We must preserve our ancient monuments, since these are to us the witnesses of the old Russian civilisation, but at the same time we hope to see the birth of an art fully in touch with the emotions of the modern world: of an art that will lead us to further conquests for liberty.

MRS. LENIN'S SPEECH.

Comrade Oulianov began by observing that, since the Bolshevik revolution, there has been in the people an immense desire for education, but ignorance, the dreadful result of the old regime, cannot disappear in a day. A vast number of persons, already engaged in production, cannot return to school; hence the pressing need of a post-scholastic education.

We must cover the country, she explains, with a multitude of elementary schools for adults, for the illiterate, and for the semi-illiterate. In Soviet Russia ignorance must disappear. We ask everybody's assistance in this great work. Knowledge and science, just like property, must not be the privilege of the few, but accessible to all. It is the common duty of everybody to impart knowledge to others.

The essential thing to remember is, that we must teach people how to make use of books. The student—let us call him the post-scholastic, the evening, or the artisan student—must know how to use the dictionary and he must always have it handy by him; likewise, books of reference, encyclopædias, &c. We must not only give him a key to open the door, but we must tell him where that door leads to.

Under the old regime, the intellectuals amongst the workers and peasants were chiefly interested in abstract sciences, since they opened to them new horizons. Those, on the contrary, who aimed at bettering their position were interested solely in the practice of science. The effect of the revolution has been that practical science is of interest now, even to the most politically advanced of our workers. In order to organise production in an efficient manner, to put in the right direction the great peasant communities, good technical education is necessary. The workers and the peasants have learned that without scientific knowledge they will never be able to control the economic life of the nation. Therefore the whole character of the professional education must be changed. Formerly it aimed at giving to the worker purely a mechanical proficiency; now it must give him a larger view of his trade, and of its importance and value to society. Education must also give him theoretical knowledge of the various sciences that are linked with his daily work, the history of his trade, the history of "work," and of production in the several forms of society of the past. Tell him what part his special trade plays in the economic evolution of the world, and the best means of increasing the communal production. This knowledge was not needed when the worker was only a machine, producing for others; it is necessary now that he is working for himself and for the free community in which he lives.

After that there must be the "Popular University," which will take the place of secondary education for the present adult worker. In that University there will be lectures, excursions, visits to museums, &c. The cinema, if properly used, can be of great assistance. The Commissary of Education has just opened a credit of six million roubles to assist and prepare educational films. There must be Museums of Social Economy, in order to spread knowledge on social and political questions.

We have called in specialists to assist the Government in preparing "subject catalogues," with short explanatory notes, for all the circulating libraries instituted by the Soviets, and there will be a central buying office to feed all provincial libraries. Art, too, must not be lost sight of in our post-scholastic education. The Commissary of Instruction has formed a musical, a theatrical section, and one also for decorative art; they will work jointly to assist the workers in their efforts of mental improvement. The theatrical section will shortly put within the reach of all the plays of Romain Rolland.

We are also doing our utmost, continued Comrade Oulianov, to open Peoples' Halls, to take the place of the churches of the old regime. Above all, she said in conclusion, all these forms of technical, scientific, artistic activities, to be truly popular in their character, must be moved by popular enthusiasm, carried out by the workers themselves, under their direct control. He only can be educated who works to educate himself.

AMPERSAND.

THE LIBERATION OF RUSSIA.

DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLES OF RUSSIA.

November 3rd, 1917, *No.* 215.

The Revolution of the workers and peasants on October, 1917, began under the sign of a general liberation.

The peasants are being liberated from the power of the landed proprietors, because there will be no more landed property—it is abolished.

The soldiers and sailors are liberated from the power of autocratic generals, because the generals will now be elected and they may be removed.

The workers are liberated from the caprices and oppression of the capitalists, because, from now on, a workers' control will be established over the factories and works.

Everything alive and capable is being liberated from hateful bondage. Only the peoples of Russia still suffer from oppression and arbitrary administration. Their liberation must be speedily and irrevocably achieved.

Under the Czarism the peoples of Russia were systematically set to bait each other. From this policy resulted, on the one hand, pogroms; and, on the other, slavery.

There shall be no return to this shameful policy; it must be replaced by a voluntary and honourable union of all the peoples of Russia.

In the imperialistic period which followed the revolution of February 9, 1917, when the power passed into the hands of the Cadet* bourgeoisie, the undisguised policy of baiting gave place to a cowardly mistrust of all the peoples of Russia, a policy of cavilling and provocation, hiding itself behind the words: "liberty and equality of the peoples." The results of this policy are well known: increase of national illwill, destruction of mutual confidence.

An end must be put to this unworthy policy. From now on it must be replaced by a frank and honest policy leading to a complete mutual understanding among the peoples of Russia.

Only as a result of such policy will there be formed an honourable and solid union of the peoples of Russia.

Only as a result of such a union will it be possible to weld the workmen and peasants of all the peoples of Russia into a single revolutionary force, capable of withstanding all attempts on the part of the imperialist-annexationist bourgeoisie.

The Congress of Soviets in June proclaimed the right of the peoples of Russia to a free self-determination.

The second Congress of Soviets in October confirmed this inalienable right of the peoples of Russia still more decisively and definitely.

In execution of the desire of these congresses the Council of Peoples' Commissaries has decided to lay the following principles as the basis of its activity in regard to the question of nationalities in Russia:—

1. The equality and sovereign rights of the peoples of Russia.
2. The right of the peoples of Russia to determine freely how they are to be governed even up to their separation and formation of an independent state.
3. The revocation of all national and religious privileges and limitations.
4. The free development of the national minorities and ethnographic groups inhabiting Russian territory.

The concrete decrees resulting from the above shall be elaborated immediately after the formation of a Commission for the Affairs of Nationalities.

In the name of the Russian Republic of the Peoples' Commissary on the Affairs of Nationalities,

JOSEPH DITIGASHVILI STALIN.

Chairman of the Council of Peoples' Commissaries, V. OULIANOFF (LENIN)

November 2nd, 1917.

* Liberal.

SOVIET DECREE concluded.

the bourgeois Coalition return; the workers and soldiers will not lay down their arms. The Soviet Government looks, not backward, but forward. It calls to you, workers of the post and telegraph services; here is our programme, this is whither we are going, now choose: with us you will drop your chains; against us you will acquire the burning, branding hatred of the proletariat. With you, or without you, the posts and telegraphs will remain in the hands of the Revolution and the Revolution will not wait. Counter-revolutionary political sabotage, inspired by hidden monarchists, will be removed—whether by means of a declaration of readiness to work with your comrades, or by the severe measures of the revolutionary dictatorship.

And to you, comrades, lower employees, to you, who are the nearest to the original kernel of the proletariat, according to your position, spirit, and interests, I, nominated by the People's Commissary by the will of the workers and soldiers, address myself with special words. Read this programme, read this declaration, consider who is leading you to sabotage, to a struggle against the Government of Workers, Soldiers, and Peasants, who is carelessly playing with your fate, challenging the hardly-repressed anger of the Revolution. Look, are there not among you those who bowed respectfully before the Stürmers and Savostianoffs, and to whom it is derogatory to have to do with a Government of peasants and workmen? Consider, lower employees, whom you are following and whither you are being lead by the enemies of the Revolution.

Petrograd,
November 3rd, 1917.

In the name of the Government of the Russian Republic People's Commissary,

N. P. AVILOFF.

Phone: Central 3820 **TOYE & Co.** Established 1855
57 Theobalds Road, London, W.C.
Sole Manufacturers of
Banners and Flags for Demonstrations.
Metal and Enamelled Badges for all Societies.
Medals. Celluloid and Buttons.
Flags for Charity Collection Days.
Write for CATALOGUE, DESIGN & QUOTATION

THE ORPHEUM CINEMATOGRAPH THEATRE
CROYDON.
Good Films. Good Music. Comfortably Heated. Clean. Well Ventilated.
LILLIAN SCOTT TROY, Managing Director.
(Hon. Member D.W.R. & G.L. Union).
Tel. Croydon 1827.

IMPRESSIONS OF RUSSIA.

An Extract from a Verbatim Report of a Conversation with Albert Rhys Williams.

(With acknowledgements to 'The Liberator' of New York.)

MR. WILLIAMS: No, I don't think they need the excuse to-day of wiping out German influence in Russia. It is wiping out the Bolsheviki, and no excuse is necessary. They are talking about taking the army over there after peace is made.

MRS. STOKES: There "ain't going to be no peace."

MR. WILLIAMS: Not if Lenin is right. Lenin says we have entered upon an era of wars that will last fifteen years—wars and social revolution. And Lenin is a great prophet among the Bolsheviki. They always say; "We vote against him in the secret conferences, and then we find he is right. Lenin insisted that the first thing to do was to get Kerensky and arrest him. We said: 'No,' and course he was right as usual."

Q. Did you see this portrait? Does this look like him?

A. That makes him look like a wolf. He looks more like a nice bourgeois—the mayor of a small French city. He does not impress you very much at first. He is stocky, rather inclined a little bit to be robust, but gives the impression of solid strength; always talks with his face right up near you; the most courteous man I think I ever met in my life—and, of course, his enemies call him the most vitriolic. I presented him when I first came, at the time of the uprising, with my credentials from the Socialist party. He kept them for about an hour, and gave them back to me but wouldn't give me a pass on the basis of them.

The second experience I had with him was in Michaelovsky Manege, when he was making a speech from the top of an armoured car. When he finished he asked me to speak to the crowd. He talks English very well, and he said, "I will be your interpreter." "It is not necessary," I said, "I will try in it Russian." And so I tried in Russian, and whenever I floundered he would throw me up a word. Well, from that time on, I began to have a pleasant relationship with the man, and he got interested in my learning the language.

The next time I had a little talk with him was at the Constituent Assembly, and he was rather bored with the whole thing, and, instead of trying to urge me to work for the cause, he began to ask how I was getting along with the language. He became excited about it—got himself all worked up, in fact, about *my learning Russian*. That shows how human and sympathetic he is. He had the simplest and most ingenious devices for learning it, too. I remember his saying: "Don't talk with any Americans. It won't do you any good anyway!" He always had a little touch of humour in him.

Q. You did learn it?

A. I learned it fairly well. That was the second time I had any personal conversation with him. Another time was when the Germans were driving on Petrograd. You see, I had stood up on that armoured car and said that I would join the Red Army and fight with the proletariat if the Germans came, and, having made speeches to that effect all over Petrograd, I could not very well crawl. And so, when the Germans came within two hundred miles of Petrograd, and most of the Americans and the whole foreign crowd left town on one excuse or another, I had to stay! I really could not think of any good excuse! So I went up to join the Red Army, and on the way I met Bucharin, who wanted to prove to Lenin that there was a great deal of fighting force left there. He hustled me up to Lenin, to prove that here was the whole foreign community ready to join the army! Lenin said, "We have no fighting force. The people at Pskof gave up all the munitions there without firing a gun."

"We ought to have the President of that Soviet shot on the spot," he added.

Well, Lenin gave me a note to Krylenko, and then he got very much interested in the International Legion I was forming to fight for the Revolution and the Soviet. After that I generally had access to him. And, of course, I was always thinking that the Revolution was going to fail every ten minutes, and I would get up elaborate schemes for injecting a little new life into it. He never would reject them, absurd as they often were, but I can see now how he took out of that mass of stuff the only little things that were any good. There was some scheme for getting American technical experts out there—he was always harping on that. The best thing about Lenin is that he is a realist. Instead of trying to get you over to his side of the game, and get your support for his party, he will say, "The points for us are 1, 2, 3, 4; and the points against us are 1, 2, 3, 4." He said to me, "Three months, it looks as though we can hold on now"—March, April and May—he was figuring it all up—"unless something big happens." He was always explaining to the people just how many chances they had of existence—just what the chances were of their going down; he never injected one note of bluff or voodooism.

Q. Was that the Trotsky appeal?

A. Trotsky was always more inclined to see things red and rosy and glorious. I had a good many experiences with Trotsky, too,—one very lurid experience.

I will tell it to you, to give you a little side-light on Trotzky. Trotzky had just written some great appeal to the working-men of the world. Raymond Robins read it, and he said, "That ought to go into Germany. I'd put down one hundred thousand rubles this moment to put a speech like that into Germany." I went up to see Trotzky—I had spoken on the same platform three days before in the November uprising, so I knew him pretty well. He said: "Come right in." I said a few general things, and I had to talk in German because he speaks hardly any English, and my German is not very fluent—luckily. In talking to him I spoke about Robins, how enthusiastic he was —"why he would give one hundred thousand rubles to put that paper into Germany!" He was sitting there,—you know Lenin always treats you in a sort of little, incidental, humorous way; but Trotzky has more of a ministerial attitude, due to his sense of revolutionary dignity. I repeated to him, "One hundred thousand rubles!" He just simply let a siren shriek out of him! Then he talked, very fast; I understood him to say that Robins gave two million rubles to Breshkovskaya, in order to put patriotic dope into the people, and was now trying to bribe the Bolsheviki,—and that he was using me as a medium for it. He called the guard—an honest little sailor and soldier—and delivered a terrible speech in Russian; the word "Breshkovskaya" came in every moment, and I understood enough to gather that, after having worked for the Bolsheviki from the time I arrived there, because I saw they were the only party that could save the people from ruin, I was going to be sent to prison! I grabbed him by the arm and made him sit down in a chair and we talked for an hour. "The Americans believe that they can do everything with money," he said—"this man for a hundred dollars, that man for a thousand and some other for a million."

Q. You convinced him that he had misunderstood you?

A. Naturally. Now, of course, I don't need any further proof of his honesty than that incident. If he had been cunning at all he would have got me to lug this one hundred thousand rubles up, and just led me on a little, and said, "Yes, that is very interesting," &c., and then he would have got me right in the act and grabbed that one hundred thousand rubles, and then he could certainly have had some great meeting—showing the American Imperialists at work. But his instinctive revolutionary honour and integrity is over-sensitive. He couldn't do that sort of thing. That is only an example. But that is why I say, from what I know of these men—fellows like Volardarski and Neibut and Peters, men who are mentioned in those Sisson documents—I found them in my personal relationship with them so absolutely square, having such integrity, having such honesty, even about little things, so much more than we have who were brought up as bourgeoisie—that all these stories are to me merely vapid falsehoods.

Q. Who is the popular one, Lenin or Trotzky?

A. Lenin didn't get much applause at the time I heard him speak; I suppose the people were tired of waiting eight hours, and besides he gave them a very general and abstract speech. Trotzky's speeches were always metallic, always full of pep and wonderful stuff. Robins said Trotzky was the greatest platform orator he had heard in twenty years.* Of course, the revolution got Robins; although he always maintained he was not a Bolshevik, they had faith in his honesty and integrity—and he thought Lenin the greatest man in Russia.

But Lenin does impress you in the end. He works eighteen hours a day. He is never tired. He is always sane, always reasonable, always has a smile, always courteous, and he has such an amplitude of knowledge. For example, he asked me about the two divisions in the Socialist Propaganda League in the United States—in other words, about certain currents in our own Socialist movement, that I did not even know existed! He knew every fine point of distinction between the Socialist Labour party and the Socialist party.

And he knew a whole lot about psychology. It is easy enough to make a god of your hero, but Lenin really does deliver the goods.

Q. When did you see him last?

A. I saw him the day I went away. At that particular time the Americans were playing in very good there, and America stood high with the Bolsheviki. They were ready to make many concessions to Americans. So they allowed me to collect a lot of literature to take to America; and they also prepared a moving picture reel, showing the creative and artistic side of the Socialist revolution, and they printed these in English—they spent hundreds of thousands of rubles on these reels to show America—

Q. What became of them?

A. Oh, well, of course, they were never allowed to come over. Lenin knew it would happen. He said, "I'm afraid they won't allow this literature to get into America. It is pretty bad literature, really." That is the last time I talked with him.

Q. Did he give you any message to deliver to American Socialists?

A. Well, I asked him if he had any message, and he wrote me a letter. I will give it to *The Liberator* as soon as I get my papers from the State Department.

* Raymond Robins was the head of the American Red Cross and an unofficial representative from the United States Government to the Bolsheviki.

WORKERS' SOCIALIST FEDERATION.

CHANDOS HALL,

FRIDAY, JANUARY 10th, 7.30 p.m.

EDWARD SOERMUS,

THE GREAT RUSSIAN VIOLINIST.

Chair, MISS SYLVIA PANKHURST.

Tickets, 2s 3d., 1s. and 8d., including tax. Application for tickets should be sent to Miss BUSH, 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E.

Berlin Capitalist Press Stopped.

The Berlin correspondent of the "Handelsblad" states that no "Bourgeois" papers are able to appear in Berlin owing to a strike on the part of their printers. Only Socialist papers are being issued.—Reuter.

Printed by J. E. Francis, 11 and 13 Breams' Buildings, London, E.C.4, and Published by the Workers' Socialist Federation, at 152 Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.