

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

For International Socialism.

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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 today 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 mentioned. Also the workers of Russia have organized 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 in 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-

men. 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 spring.

In March, 1917, when, in the face of all Russia rising like a sea, the Tsar abdicated and Grand Duke Michael declined the throne, and the revolution in Petrograd was forced to assume the reins of government, the Council of Workers' Deputies came 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 whatsoever. 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 the 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 Bolsheviks 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 the 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 Czarism.

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 gendarmes; 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 WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

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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.

It has fallen to the people of Russia to perceive very clearly, and to live with acute suffering through this hardest of historical transitions leading from Imperialism to the Social Revolution.

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.

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

peace, but do not let us delude ourselves. One must have the courage to look the bitter and unvarnished truth in the face.

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 creative-ness 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 Socialist Revolution upon which we have entered.

It is unworthy of present-day Socialists, in time of heavy defeat, either to make a fuss, or to give way to despair.

The General who retires with the remnants of a beaten and panic-stricken 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.

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.

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 national revival.

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.

"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."

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.

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 its time.



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.

JOHN MACLEAN.

We now learn on good authority that since last July John Maclean has been on hunger strike and undergoing forcible feeding.

...said that if the Pensions Ministry use of the machinery already here might be reason in the Bill.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOVIET STATE

(continued from Page 1167)

SUPREME COUNCIL OF PUBLIC ECONOMY

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

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.

Critics of the Soviet Government are just now crowding over Lenin's April article in Pravda, translated and published here as a pamphlet, 'The Soviets at Work'.

What is this, cry the critics—Socialists among them—but the application of outworn tyranny over the masses by a new set of masters?

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.

Co-operative Russia. 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 its time.

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

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.



The Revolutionary Army.

Trotsky, and maintained by Red Guard mercenaries.

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."

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.

IMPORTANT RUSSIAN LITERATURE

- 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 BOL-SHEVISTI, 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 8d.

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 Bolsheviks, 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 Bolsheviks. 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 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 fall 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 sidelight on Trotsky. Trotsky 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 Trotsky—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 Trotsky 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 Bolsheviks,—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 Bolsheviks 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's 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 bourgeois—that all these stories are to me merely vapid falsehoods.

Q. Who is the popular one, Lenin or Trotsky?
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. Trotsky's speeches were always metallic, always full of pep and wonderful stuff. Robins said Trotsky 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 Bolsheviks. 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's 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 Bolsheviks.

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 6d., including tax. Applications for tickets should be sent to Miss Buss, 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E. 4.

Berlin Capitalist Press Stopped
The Berlin correspondent of the "Handel-Blatt" 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 Breema' Buildings, London, E.C.4, and Published by the Workers' Socialist Federation, at 102 Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.

... said that if the Pensions Ministry use of the machinery already here might be reason in the Bill, the meantime ought right it had to claim more annexations. tion the Bill was read a indemnities. right of the peoples MS. us that Mr. Bonar s. eptational Federation of "Aster Endians" nents to grant facilities statement

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

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