

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

By

JAMES P. CANNON



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Foreword

Although separated by an interval of twenty years, the two documents contained in this pamphlet express the same political line, namely, the Trotskyist position with regard to the Soviet Union. The first is a speech delivered at a mass meeting in New York City on November 8, 1942, in connection with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the October revolution, while the second dates back to the fifth anniversary of this world-shaking event, i.e., 1922.

In that year James P. Cannon was National Chairman of the Workers Party of America (the legal form of the Communist Party at that time). In May 1922 he went to Moscow as a delegate to the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International and participated in its preparation and deliberations, remaining in the Soviet Union until the end of the year. Upon returning to the United States, he delivered a lecture—first in New York in February 1923, and then on a national tour—on the USSR in the fifth year of its existence. This lecture was then published by the Workers Party as a pamphlet, which is here reprinted unabridged. It is one of the few authentic records of the Russian revolution that have survived since Lenin's death.

The Communist International of the days of Lenin and Trotsky told the truth to the workers, as Cannon's lecture demonstrates. The 1942 speech is further proof that this heritage has been continued only by the Fourth International and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, of which James P. Cannon is the National Secretary. For continuing to tell the truth Cannon together with the other leaders of the SWP is now serving a sentence in Roosevelt's penitentiary.—*Ed.*



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Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution

Comrades:

We meet on the twenty-fifth anniversary of that great day when the world-encircling chain of imperialism snapped at its weakest link, and the workers of Czarist Russia, supported by the peasants, broke through to victory and established the first workers' state. We are meeting tonight, as we and our kind have been meeting on each succeeding anniversary throughout the years since 1917, as partisans and defenders of the Russian revolution and of the workers' state which the Russian revolution created.

We are not alone today. The whole world is taking notice of the USSR on this anniversary. Everybody is recognizing the Soviet Union, each in his own way. Churchill, who tried his best to overthrow it in the early days, and Roosevelt, who to judge by the indictment which his administration drew up against us, was, to say the least, not very friendly to the Russian revolution—Churchill and Roosevelt pay hypocritical tribute today to “the great Russian people” and “the heroic Red Army.” Hitler looks toward the East through dark glasses tonight, with fear and trembling, wondering whether his insane dream of empire hasn't been shattered on the Russian front.

Remembering the Russian revolution of 1917, the workers of Europe and the colonial slaves lift up their hearts in hope once more today. Each in his own way, for reasons of his own, takes notice of this twenty-fifth anniversary. But the differences in the reasons—and they are whole worlds apart—change nothing in the decisive fact that everybody is saluting, recognizing, or cursing a state and an army which issued from a victorious revolution of the workers. This revolution is in the greatest crisis of its entire history at this hour, in its greatest peril. We know this and we say it openly. And we say also, and with truth, that in its greatest crisis and danger, we Fourth Internationalists, we disciples of Lenin and Trotsky, remain the best defenders of the Soviet Union. The fact that we are celebrating the revolution and not announcing its funeral shows that we are still fighting. We are fighting for a revolution that is still living.

THE DECISIVE TRIBUNALS OF HISTORY

War and revolution are the most authoritative of all tribunals. It is there, in war and in revolution, that all the great questions are decided in our epoch. The outbreak of the first World War in

August 1914, demonstrated that capitalism, as an economic and social system, had exhausted its progressive historic mission. The Russian revolution of November 1917 served notice that a more powerful class than the class of capitalists had come to maturity. The modern proletariat, the progressive force in modern society, the herald and representative of a new social order—this class, as demonstrated by the revolution, took the offensive in the class battle which can only end in world-wide victory.

November 7, 1917. The death sentence on the old order of capitalism and the beginning of the new order of world socialism were both proclaimed on that day. And whatever vicissitudes, whatever setbacks, betrayals or defeats may overtake the proletariat on the road to that final goal; however sharp and deep may be the zigzags in the line which charts the course of the struggle through which humanity shall pass from capitalism to socialism; whatever may befall, the starting point in the line of development will always be traced to that great day which we commemorate tonight—November 7, 1917.

EFFECTS OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

I can remember the dark days of the first World War, 1914-1918. Then, as now, all the hopes for humanity's progress seemed to be drowned in the blood of the war. Reaction seemed to be triumphant everywhere. The enemies of the proletariat gloated over the treachery and capitulation of the socialist parties, and to many—to the great majority, I venture to say—the theory and the hope of socialism seemed vanished like a utopian dream. And then, as now—as has already been remarked here tonight—faint hearts and deserters mocked at those who continued the stubborn struggle and held on to the revolutionary faith. The whole world labor movement was overcome with depression and despair in 1914-15-16 and 17.

But the Russian revolution of November 7 changed all that overnight. At one blow the revolution lifted the proletariat of Europe to its feet again. It stirred the hundreds of millions of colonial slaves who had never known political aspiration before, who had never dared to hope before. The Russian revolution awakened them to a new life.

Here in the United States, the progressive sections of the socialist and labor movement were reinvigorated by the Russian revolution. The morale of the movement grew stronger than ever before. For the first time, concentrated in revolutionary action, we had a demonstration of the real meaning of the doctrines of Marxism. For the first time, we learned from the example and teachings of

Lenin and Trotsky and the leaders of the Russian revolution, the real meaning of a revolutionary party. Those who remember that time, whose lives became welded to the Russian revolution, must think of it today as the greatest inspiring and educational force that the oppressed class of the world has ever known.

Marx and Engels lifted the conception of socialism from utopia to science. The Russian revolution developed scientific socialism from theory into action, and proved several things which before had been abstract generalizations and predictions. The Russian revolution proved in action that certain things were true beyond all further doubting. The first of these things proved by the revolution was that it is possible for the workers to take power. It is possible for the workers to forge out of their ranks a party that is capable of leading the struggle to victory. And the workers in all countries will everlastingly remember that. Nothing can erase from history that example. Victory of the proletariat is possible—the Russian revolution in action, in blood and fire, proved that it is so.

We all know that the authentic leaders of the revolution, Lenin, Trotsky, conceived of it not as an end in itself, but as a first step, the first stage, in the world revolution which alone could complete what had been started in the Soviet Union. The conditions objectively were already mature in 1917, '18 and '19, for such a world revolution, beginning in Europe. What was lacking was the leadership, the party, without which the workers cannot succeed. The leadership of the old party, the Social-Democrats, who had betrayed the workers under the test of war, supported the bourgeoisie in their counter-revolutionary fight against the workers in the period following the war. The young and hastily organized Communist parties, which had been formed in European countries in response to the example of the Russian revolution, were as yet too weak and too young, too inexperienced, for their historic task.

WHAT THE DEFEATS HAVE COST

Thus the revolution, which objectively had every possibility to succeed on the whole continent of Europe, failed in the post-war years. The workers today have to pay for that failure, and for the consequent isolation of the Soviet Union, with another and even more terrible World War.

The capitalist world surrounded and isolated the Soviet Union. For three years, 1918 to 1920, the revolution had to fight for its life in the civil war financed and supported by the world imperialists, and in the interventionist attempts in which the great majority of the capitalist powers participated. The economy of Russia, terribly backward when the war began, a heritage from Czarism, was almost

completely ruined in the war and the civil war which followed. Hunger and famine ravished the whole land, but the first workers' state survived all of that. It survived the isolation and the blockade imposed upon it by world imperialism. It survived the civil war, the intervention, the famine, the hunger, the economic disorganization and demoralization. The Soviet Union survived because, contained within that effort of the proletariat of Russia, there was a dynamic power such as had never been released before in the whole world, the power of the revolutionary proletariat.

The revolution survived, but not without terrible cost. On the basis of the hunger and the scarcity and the backwardness and the isolation, arose the reactionary privileged bureaucracy, personified by Stalin. The crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy are known to everyone present here. They debased the theory which had guided the revolution. They destroyed the party that had made the revolution. They destroyed the Soviets and the trade unions as self-acting organisms of the workers. They assassinated a whole generation of the leaders of the revolution. They beheaded the Red Army, and they capped their series of unprecedented crimes against the people by the assassination of the most authentic representative of the revolution—Comrade Trotsky.

HOW THE REVOLUTION PROVED ITSELF

But they haven't, in spite of all that, been able to kill the revolution. There is something there that proved itself to be stronger than all the imperialist powers of the world in the early days; something stronger than the corroding and degenerating bureaucracy. We alone know the full extent of the bureaucratic degeneration that has taken place in the Soviet Union since the death of Lenin. And we, following Trotsky, exposed it and explained it before others and without any embellishments whatever. We know the full extent of the degeneration but we also know the limits of the degeneration. We know that the basic conquests of the revolution, the nationalized industry and the planned production, remain at the base of the Soviet state. That is why the revolution stays alive in spite of all the premature announcements to the contrary.

The vitality of the revolution is demonstrated in every test. First of all, in the most decisive field, the field of economy, the base of society. The Russian revolution proved for all time, in spite of bureaucratic mismanagement, the superiority of the Soviet system of planned economy over the capitalist system of private property and anarchy in production. This superiority of Soviet economy was first demonstrated, most dramatically and convincingly, in that very period, after 1929, of the world-wide crisis of the capitalist nations.

When capitalist economy was plunging down to unheard of depths of stagnation and demoralization—in that very period, in spite of the backwardness of Russia, in spite of the isolation of Russia and its unworthy leadership, in that very period the Soviet revolution showed its power in a tremendous advance and development of industry.

That economic strength of the Soviet regime, and the strength of the revolutionary tradition, are being reflected now in the military field. The whole world has been surprised and astounded by the military prowess of the Red Army. All the military experts counted upon a defeat of the Russian armies in the space of a few weeks or months. But this Red Army has stood up for 17 months, despite bad leadership and almost continuous retreats and defeats, without cracking. I say, the whole world has been surprised, including Stalin, who had no more confidence in the Red Army than he had in Soviet economy, than he has in the revolutionary powers of the workers generally. The Trotskyists were not taken by surprise. Trotsky predicted that imperialist attack on the Soviet Union would unleash marvels of proletarian enthusiasm and fighting capacity in the Red Army. He could do that because he, better than others, understood that the great motive power of the victorious revolution had not all been expended. The Red Army which the world hails is an army created by a proletarian revolution. This revolution lives in the memory of the Soviet people. That, and the basic conquests which they still retain and upon which they stand, constitute the basis upon which the Red Army has unfolded such unparalleled capacity for defense and resistance and heroic sacrifice.

FASCISM AND THE WORKERS' STATE

The war put to a test the fetish of fascism. In the period of the great reaction following the death of Lenin, the betrayal of the Chinese revolution, the defeat in Germany, and the fascist victory in Italy, followed by the fascist victory in Germany—all these events gave rise to a fetish of fascism as of some new, great, invincible power which might possibly have a progressive historic role to play. Along with that, we have seen developed in recent years the theory of the identity of fascism and Sovietism. The identity of the political methods of Stalinism and fascism led Philistines and renegades to identify the Stalinist and fascist regimes altogether, to say they are the same thing, national sectors of a new social order that is developing, creating some new class of “bureaucratic collectivists”, or something of that sort.

Our movement, the movement of the Fourth International, long ago refuted these superficial theories. Trotsky's analysis has been fully confirmed in the war. Trotsky, in his analysis, did not proceed from the estimation of single events or isolated symptoms. Reasoning as a Marxist, he took this theory of the identity of fascism and the Soviet Union, and he put the question first of all: How did each one arise? Here the most profound difference is revealed at the very start. In Russia the Soviet regime arose as a product of the proletarian revolution, as a victory of the workers against the Czarist police, Black Hundreds and White Guards. Fascism in Italy, on the other hand, arose as a counter-revolution of Black Hundred gangs, financed by the big capitalists, against the workers. Italian fascism did not come to power as an imitation of the Russian revolution, but as a counter-revolutionary answer to it.

Secondly, Trotsky put the question: How did each regime—the Russian and the fascist—develop in its first stage, and whom did it benefit? In Russia, the Soviet regime developed as a power of the workers and peasants, expropriated the capitalists and landlords and enhanced the strength of the workers and peasants. In Italy, the counter-revolution of fascism immediately and directly strengthened and benefited finance capital at the expense of the interests of the workers and the peasants and all the poor.

What was the world attitude toward Soviet Russia and fascist Italy in the beginning? That part of the world which is made up of workers and colonial slaves hailed the Russian revolution with enthusiasm and surrounded it with their sympathy in the early years. The capitalists, the foreign money sharks, the exploiters of all lands, ardently supported Mussolini. American money—Wall Street money—helped to prop him up in the earliest days.

Next, take the most important criterion, the economy of the country. What was the effect of the fascist counter-revolution on the one side, and the workers' revolution on the other, on the development of the productive powers of the workers, which is the decisive and basic criterion for all regimes? In fascist Italy, economy was stifled, put in an iron grip of the big monopolists and twisted to serve their private interests at every turn. The hideously distorted and declining economy has cursed Italy ever since the fascist counter-revolution. The Soviet revolution in Russia liberated the forces of production from the strait-jacket of private ownership and made possible a development of the productive powers of the workers and an expansion of industrial development on a scale never seen before in history, through the medium of nationalized industry and planned economy.

All these profound differences in the two regimes, which superficial people wanted to identify, show their significance now under the test of the war. And what does the war say about the theory that fascism and Sovietism are the same thing? Ten days ago Italian fascism celebrated its twentieth anniversary—October 29. But it wasn't much of a celebration. It was more like a funeral. Mussolini didn't even appear in the arena to puff out his chest and make threatening speeches. Very little was said because all the dreams of the fascist Roman Empire of Mussolini are gone with the wind. The people of Italy are starving. The economy is bankrupt. The country seethes with revolution. The fascist masters of Italy are no longer able to control the people; they have to rely on Hitler's troops and secret police.

BANKRUPTCY OF ITALIAN FASCISM

The soldiers of Italy will no longer fight any more anywhere in the world. And we have this absurd explanation of cowardice. Every time a serious military struggle begins, the Italian soldiers retreat or surrender. We hear this stupid chauvinistic explanation that this is due to the racial inferiority of the Italians, to their cowardice. But, of course, it is ridiculous to speak about the cowardice or the military incapacity of the Italian soldiers. There are no braver people than the Italians. They are the equals in every way of any other nationality in Europe or America. The true explanation of the Italian military debacle is very simple.

The Italian workers and peasants don't want to fight because they haven't got a particle of confidence in the regime and don't consider it worth fighting for. That is the explanation of the Italian military defeats everywhere. In Greece the Italian soldiers on one front laid down their arms and marched in as prisoners, not with their heads bowed, seeking pardon from the conquerors; they marched in singing "Bandiera Rossa", the great suppressed marching song of the Italian workers' movement. That song will resound again in mighty chorus in the streets of Italy.

The truth is that the fascist regime of Italy, after a brief twenty years, is bankrupt through and through and cannot stand defeats, while the Soviet Union, the product of a proletarian revolution, has shown a mighty strength in war in spite of the most terrible defeats caused by bad leadership. And if the German fascist, Hitler, brooding over the Eastern front and the steadily growing wave of discontent and revolt throughout the mass of the people at home, wants to know the fate of his dream of a thousand years of Ger-

man fascist domination, he can look to Mussolini—there he will see the image of his own future. Fascism cannot stand the test of war, cannot stand defeat. Those who say that fascism and Sovietism are the same are completely refuted by the realities of the war.

Fascism and the Soviet system are not the same. Fascism is a desperate and short-lived, final expedient of a dying social system. In a brief twenty years Italian fascism has exhausted its economic, its military, and all its moral reserves. On the other hand, the Soviet system is the historically necessary birth of a new social order, better and more progressive than capitalism either in its democratic or its fascist form, and historically destined to supercede capitalism.

CLASS NATURE OF THE USSR

The Russian revolution proved three things for all time. Two of them have been mentioned. First, it proved that the party and the leadership necessary for victory can be created by the proletariat, as they have been created by the Russian proletariat.

Second, the Russian revolution proved—I am now repeating what I said before—that the system of nationalized industry and planned economy, introduced by a Soviet revolution, is superior, more progressive, more productive, than any device of capitalism, whether democratic or fascist.

And the third thing which we can say is demonstrated by the revolution, and proved now in the test of war, is that only one class is capable of solving the great social problems of our epoch. That class is the proletariat.

The Fourth International with its program and its tactics anchored to these three propositions, has been proven correct by the whole test of events. Therefore, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the revolution, we do not change our course. We see not only the terrible weakness of the Soviet regime which derives from the bureaucratic mismanagement and control. We see also the strength and the power which derives from the revolutionary origin of the Soviet Union and its basic conquests.

I think it is quite clear that Hitler made a mortal error in attacking the Soviet Union. Fascist thinking was far too superficial for the complicated problem involved in the attempt to destroy the Soviet Union and its Red Army and its economic system. Hitler made a very common mistake. He saw only the bureaucracy which is weak, inefficient and cowardly, and he did not see, and did not understand, the vitality of the still living revolution, and the mighty sources of achievement and heroism that this revolution could call forth in time of war. All the petty-bourgeois political

thinkers overlook this point—the difference between the Soviet Union, which is the product of a great revolution, and the usurping bureaucracy, which is a parasitic tumor on the Soviet Union. It is quite obvious that Hitler is no genius but just another petty-bourgeois thinker.

WE REMAIN DEFENDERS OF THE USSR

For our part, we have always rejected these superficial conclusions of the vulgar thinkers, who judge every feature or incident out of its historic context, without regard for what went before and what must come after. To our way of thinking, to the Marxist method of analysis, the origin of the Soviet state had to be taken as the point of departure. This origin was in revolution. We studied it, aided and directed by Comrade Trotsky. We studied the Soviet Union, not as an isolated static phenomenon but as a process. We studied it in its changes, and tried to determine in each case what was fundamental and what was secondary, what had been gained and what had been lost in that changing process. And by this method of thinking we arrived at our conclusion: That the Soviet Union does not and cannot represent fascism, nor a social order ruled by a new exploitive class, but a deformed and degenerated workers' state. And from that we proceeded to our fighting motto: "Never surrender a position before it is lost!" We know all the defects of the Soviet Union. We know all the crimes of the bureaucracy. But we know also all that mighty power of those conquests of the progressive revolution which remain still intact, and therefore we continue to defend the Soviet Union.

Some may say, "Defense of the Soviet Union in the present circumstances can be only moral support. Of what use is it?" We can answer—and I can tell you from my personal knowledge and recollection—that the moral support of the international proletariat was the force which saved the Soviet Union from destruction in its earliest years, and even later. The interventions against the Soviet Union could not succeed because the sympathy of the masses of the people of Europe for the Soviet Union was so great. It was impossible for the imperialists to organize mass armies or take any serious military measures because of the threats of the workers against any government that would try it.

Moral support is what we give here in America, as always since 1917, but our policy is not only for the United States. Our policy is a world policy, as that of the Marxists and Bolsheviks has always been. Our policy is the policy of the Russian section of the Fourth International, which lives and fights. And they continue at their task—to defend the country, to rebuild the Bolshevik party, to

revive the Soviets and the trade unions, and to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy. Whether, with the help of the international proletariat, they shall succeed or fail, history has yet to show.

Stalin's speech the other day, printed in all the capitalist newspapers, only shows that he is still doing all that he can to ensure the defeat of the Soviet Union in the war with Hitlerism. Stalin rejects the real allies of the Soviet Union—the workers of Europe and America and the colonial people, and above all, the workers of Germany—and he directs his appeal and his alliances to the imperialists of the United States and Great Britain. He looks for the salvation of the Soviet Union, rather of the bureaucracy, in a victory of the so-called United Nations against the Axis powers. If they defeat the Axis, if America and Great Britain crush fascist Germany in the war, would that ensure the safety of the Soviet Union? Those who may be deluded by that thought for a moment, should remember 1918-20.

STALIN'S POLICY OF BETRAYAL

No sooner had an armistice with the Central Powers been arranged, before peace was concluded, than the former allies of Russia, the champions of democracy—England, France and America—turned all their force against the Russian revolution. If they succeed in establishing a front in the Balkans and defeat Hitler, who can imagine in the absence of a European revolution, that the sword of Hitler having been broken, it will not be replaced by the sword of Anglo-American imperialism pointed at the Soviet Union, as it was in 1918-20? How can it be otherwise? The conflict between the Soviet Union and the imperialist powers is something different and more profound than the rivalry between one imperialist power and another. Here is involved the clash, the irreconcilable conflict of two contrasting social systems. One or the other must prevail in the world; one or the other must go down. And whoever preaches trust in the Anglo-American imperialists is a traitor to the Soviet Union.

We, for our part, turn to the workers—above all, to the German workers—and to the colonial people, and we say, they are the only true allies of the Soviet Union. They are the only true allies because they alone have their fundamental interest bound up with the preservation of the Soviet Union, just as the fundamental interests of the Soviet Union are indissolubly connected with the fate of the uprisings of the colonial masses and the victory of the workers in the world. And let those doubt who will. We believe in the workers. We believe in the colonial slaves awakened to new life by the Russian revolution.

OUR FAITH REMAINS UNDIMMED

We don't doubt that in India tonight, millions of the colonial insurgents are thinking, on this anniversary day, of the Russian revolution. They are thinking, simply but strongly, and saying to themselves: "The Russians did it; why can't we?" Once the oppressed masses of the world begin to think that way the realization of that aspiration will be placed on the order of the day. We believe that before this bloody carnage is over, the workers, the people, will say their decisive word. And when they speak to the imperialists, they will speak Russian.

The Russian revolution is in the greatest peril today. We do not delude ourselves about that. We do not deceive ourselves or others with any false optimism about the danger confronting the Soviet Union. We see the situation as it really is. We know that the fate of the Soviet Union hangs in the balance, that it depends now, more than ever, on the world revolution of the proletariat and the colonial masses. But we have faith in the world revolution, and because of that, we retain our hope in the ultimate regeneration of the Soviet Union. We keep undimmed our faith that the world revolution will release humanity from this terrible vise of the war, and open up a new stage of progress on the way to the communist future. Because of that, here on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary, as we celebrate the living revolution, we can still express the confident hope that the funeral of the Russian revolution, which so many renegades and traitors are announcing, will not merely be postponed, but will never take place.

November 8, 1942

The Fifth Year of the Russian Revolution

The story of Soviet Russia for the first four years after the revolution was a story of desperate struggle against tremendous odds. The fight of the Russian workers did not end with their victory over the bourgeoisie within Russia. The capitalist class of the entire world came to the aid of Russian capitalism.

RUSSIA THROUGH THE SHADOWS

The Workers' Republic was blockaded and shut off from the world. Counter-revolutionary plots and uprisings inside of Russia were financed and directed from the outside. Mercenary invading armies backed by world capital, attacked Soviet Russia on all sides. On top of all this came the terrible famine which threatened to deal the final blow.

In those four years Soviet Russia indeed went "through the shadows." But now, after five years of the revolution, we can tell a brighter story. In 1922 Soviet Russia began to emerge from the shadows and started on the upward track. The long and devastating civil war was at an end and the counter-revolution stamped out. The great famine was conquered. The last of the invading foreign armies—except the Japanese in the Far East—had been driven from Russian soil; and the workers' government, freed from the terrible strain and necessity of war, was enabled, for the first time, to turn its efforts and energies to the great constructive task of building a new Russia on the ruins of the old.

While I was yet in Russia the Red Army drove the Japanese out of Vladivostok and set up the Soviets again. And before the Fourth Congress of the Communist International was ended, we had the joy of hearing comrade Lenin say that all the territory of Russia was at last living in peace under the Red Flag of the Soviets.

REPAIRING THE RAVAGES OF CIVIL WAR

I reached Moscow on the first day of June. Signs of recuperation from the long travail were already noticeable. The streets and sidewalks were being repaired and buildings were being painted; for the first time in five years, they told me. During the war all resources and all energies went for bitter necessity; everything else had to wait. Even the buildings in the Kremlin got their first coat of paint this year.

I was riding on a Moscow street car one day soon after my arrival, with a comrade who had once been in America and who now holds a responsible position in the Soviet Government. I spoke of the good appearance and condition of the car; it had just been newly painted, and looked very pretty. They know more about blending colors than we do; and they care more about it, too. He told me that the Moscow street car system had been greatly improved during the past year. The number of cars in operation had been greatly increased, the trackage extended and a fairly reliable schedule maintained. The Moscow street car workers were very proud of their achievement; especially so, because the improvement in the service had brought with it a corresponding improvement in their own living conditions.

The famous Genoa Conference was still alive at that time; the conference which Lloyd George called to settle the problems of Europe, but which didn't succeed in settling anything except the career of Lloyd George. France and Belgium, you will remember, were demanding that the property in Russia, which had been confiscated by the revolution, should be restored to the original foreign owners. Russia had not yet given her final answer, and I asked my friend in the street car what he thought it would be.

"NO CHANCE AT ALL"

He said, "Most of the big industrial plants in Russia, and even a part of the railroad system, belonged to foreign capitalists before the revolution. Russia was practically a colony of European capitalism."

"Do you know," he asked me, "who used to own the street car system in Moscow—it belonged to the poor Belgian capitalists, and they are trying to get it back at Genoa."

I asked him what chance the poor Belgian capitalists had to get their street cars back. He answered, "No chance at all."

He told me as soon as that demand became known the Moscow street car workers—as well as the workers in the other important industries—called meetings and passed resolutions to this effect: "The foreign capitalists tried for four years to take these industries away from us by armed force, and they couldn't succeed. Now, we are certainly not going to let them *talk* us out of them at the diplomatic table."

Before I went to Russia I had read much about the impending collapse of the Soviet government. A story of this kind used to appear on an average of about once a week in the *New York Times* and other capitalist newspapers; and no doubt you have all read them. Here lately the capitalist press has dropped that story and

the Socialist Party and the I.W.W. papers have taken it up. I spent seven months in Russia, and I assure you that I looked diligently for the signs of this famous "collapse," but I couldn't find it. On the contrary, the more I investigated, the more I saw of the attitude of the Russian workers, the more I became convinced that the Soviet government under the control of the Communist Party, is firmer and stronger now than at any period in its history.

I saw the power of the Russian Communist Party tested by an historic conflict with another party which challenged its control. The occasion was the trial of the leaders of the so-called Social-Revolutionary Party.

THE TRIAL OF THE S.R.'s

These Social-Revolutionaries were brought to trial before the proletarian court and when I was in Moscow, I was present, with an interpreter, on the day it opened in the Labor Temple, and at many of the other sessions. It was a fair trial—nothing like it ever occurred in America. The defendants were allowed to talk as freely and as much as they pleased. There was no restriction whatever on their liberty to speak in their own defense. The trouble with them was that they had no defense. The Soviet government had the goods on them. A number of the prisoners had repented of their crimes against the revolution, and they testified for the Soviet government.

The case was clear. These leaders of the S.R. Party, defeated in the political struggle with the Communist Party, resorted to a campaign of terror and assassination. They murdered Uritsky and Volodarsky. They dynamited the building which housed the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party and killed fourteen people. They had Trotsky and Zinoviev marked for assassination. It was an S.R. bullet that brought Lenin down and from which he still suffers to-day. They went even further than that. They went to the point that all the opponents of the Soviet system go in the end. They collaborated with the White Guards and they took money from the French government to do its dirty work in Russia. All this was clearly proven in the trial; most of it out of the mouths of men who had taken active part in the campaign.

While the trial was in progress occurred the anniversary of the assassination of Volodarsky, one of the most beloved leaders of the revolution, who had been shot down by the S.R.'s; and the Communist Party called upon the workers to honor his memory by a demonstration for the Soviet Government and against the S.R. Party. The Communist speakers went to the factories and requested that no worker march except of his own free will.

I stood in the Red Square and watched that demonstration. Practically the whole working class population of Moscow marched that day, carrying banners which proclaimed their solidarity with the Soviet government and the Communist Party, and demanding the death penalty for the leaders of the counter-revolutionary, white-guard S.R. Party.

I was standing in the reviewing stand with the members of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. It was five o'clock in the evening. The demonstration had commenced at noon and the workers of Moscow were still marching in wide streams from all directions through the Red Square. One of the leaders of the Russian Communist Party turned to us and said, "Comrades, this is the funeral of the counter-revolution in Russia!"

So it was. The counter-revolution in Russia is as dead as the King of Egypt. The only places there is any life left in it, are Paris, London, and the East Side of New York.

ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION

Politically, the Soviet regime, under the leadership of the Communist Party, greatly strengthened itself in the past year. And economic progress went hand in hand with political improvement. Much of this economic progress, and its reflection in the field of politics, was due to the timely introduction of the New Economic Policy, or, as they say in Russia, the NEP.

Early in 1921 it became evident that some of the drastic economic measures taken by the Soviet government, under the pressure of political and military necessity, could not be adhered to. The backward social and industrial development of Russia, together with the failure of the European proletariat to succeed in making a revolution, compelled the Soviet government to make a retreat on the economic field.

The Soviet government had been forced to adopt many of these extreme economic measures by political and military necessity. But Lenin did not hesitate to say that they had been going too fast. The economic development of Russia did not permit the direct transition to a system of pure socialist economy.

When this frank and obvious statement was made by Lenin the yellow socialists of the Second International, as well as some so-called "Marxians" of this country who have been against the Russian revolution because it wasn't made according to their blueprint, found much satisfaction. They say: "Ha! Ha! We told you so. The Bolshevik revolution was a mistake!" Their conclusions are that the workers of Russia should give up the political power and go back to capitalism.

But the Russian Bolsheviks are practical people. They have made the revolution once and they don't intend to go back and do it over again. They say: "No, the revolution was not a mistake, and we will not go back to capitalism. We will make a retreat on the economic field, but we will keep the political power in the hands of the proletariat and use that as a lever to develop our industry to the point where it can serve as a base for a system of socialist economy. And if we can't find anything in the books to support this procedure, we'll write a book of our own."

HOW THE NEP WORKS

There are people who say that Russia has gone back to capitalism, but that is not true. In Russia, they say, "It is neither capitalism nor communism, it is 'NEP'!" Trotsky described the present situation in Russia as follows:

"The workers control the government. The Workers' Government has control of industry and is carrying on this industry according to the methods of the capitalist market, of capitalist calculation."

I think that is the best concise definition of the NEP.

The state controls commerce and has a monopoly of foreign trade. The state owns all the land, and from the peasants who cultivate the land it collects a tax in kind of approximately ten per cent of the crop. Free trade is permitted. Peasants may sell or exchange their surplus products after the tax has been paid.

Private enterprises exist alongside of state enterprises. The workers in both state and private enterprises are paid wages in money and the medium of calculation and exchange is money. That is the NEP.

The New Economic Policy was first introduced in the spring of 1921; but it was not until 1922 that the effects of it began to be felt on a wide scale. During the period that I was in Russia the positive and beneficial results of the NEP could be seen in all fields.

The paper money of Soviet Russia, like that of all countries ruined by the war, was greatly inflated. But in 1922 it was stabilized for a period of six months as against three months in 1921. The peasants were able in 1922 to overcome the famine and they voluntarily brought their tax in kind to the government elevators and warehouses. Only in the most exceptional and isolated cases was it necessary to use force to collect the tax.

Before the revolution the Russian peasant had the landlord on his back. Today the landlord system is done away with; there is not one landlord left in the whole of Russia. All that the peasant

produces, above his tax in kind of approximately ten per cent, is his own, to do with as he sees fit. The result is a very friendly attitude toward the Soviet government.

THE PEASANTS AND THE SOVIET STATE

1922 marked the beginning of a general revival in trade and industry. The revolution inherited from the old regime an industrial system that was poorly developed, inefficiently managed and badly demoralized by the strain of the imperialist war. The long civil war, the interventions and the blockade dealt still heavier blows to Russian industry and almost brought it to complete ruin.

To try to do anything with it seemed a hopeless task. Agents of other governments, industrial experts, went to Russia, investigated her industries and reported that they couldn't be revived without assistance from the outside. It was reports of this kind that bolstered up the hope of European and American capitalists, and their political agents, that the Soviet government was certain to fall. These gentlemen reckoned without the Russian working class and the Communist Party that leads and inspires it.

In the revolution and the war which followed it for more than four years, the Communist Party dared the "impossible"—and accomplished it. The same courage and determination characterize its attack on the problem of industry. Seval Zimmand told me a story of a meeting which he had an opportunity to attend in the Ural industrial district. It was a conference of engineers, factory managers and trade union leaders presided over by Bogdanov, the Commissar of the Supreme Council of Public Economy. After discussing all features of the situation with the engineers and managers, and hearing their reports, Bogdanov said, "I know that it is hard to improve the industries in the Ural. But the industries of the Ural can be improved and the industries of the Ural must be improved."

There, in one word, is a definition of the Communist Party of Russia—the party of **MUST!** While others say, "It is impossible," and, "We had better wait," or, "It can't be done," the Communist Party says, "It must be done!"—and the Communists go ahead and do it.

REVIVAL OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE

Russian industry, on the whole, in 1922 registered a general increase of production of more than 100 per cent. This brought the standard of production up to 25 per cent of the pre-war condition. This condition is bad enough, but the Russian workers lived through a worse one, and they have begun to make headway.

Russian exports in 1922 were six times greater than the year before. In 1921 the exports were only 5 per cent of the imports. Last year they were brought up to 25 per cent. All the light industries, that is those which produce for the market, improved remarkably last year and are now in pretty fair shape. The heavy industries, that is the coal, iron, steel and oil industries, whose product goes mainly to the other state industries—only about ten per cent of it being sold in the market—recover more slowly. Here the problem is a colossal one. For a long time after the revolution, all these basic industries were in the hands of counter-revolutionary armies. The iron region in the Urals, the coal, iron, and steel in the Donetz Basin—the Pennsylvania of Russia—and the oil fields around Baku, were all held by hostile armies. When the Red Army recaptured these territories, the industries were in ruins.

The Soviet government bent itself to this task and in 1922 made substantial headway. Coal production was increased 25 per cent over 1921, naphtha 20 per cent, cast iron 42 per cent, while iron and steel production in 1922 doubled that of the year before. In 1913, before the imperialist war began, the Russian railroads loaded 30,000 cars a day. In 1918, at the low tide of the revolution, when the blockade was still in effect and hostile armies surrounded Russia with a ring of steel, the number of railroad cars loaded daily dropped to 7,590. By 1921 this figure was brought up to 9,500. In 1922 the improvement was continued and 11,500 cars were loaded; this is more than one-third of the pre-war volume.

THE UPBUILDING OF HEAVY INDUSTRY

Russia's great problem to-day is the problem of heavy industry. The leaders of the Russian revolution recognize this and are concentrating all their energies on that task. The Soviet government is saving on everything in order to help the heavy industry. All state appropriations, even those for schools, are being reduced for this purpose. When some sentimental people complained that the reduction of school appropriations was a backward step, Lenin answered that the chance for Russia to become a really civilized and cultured nation depended on the improvement of the heavy industry. That is the foundation.

The Soviet government last year made a profit of 20,000,000 gold rubles on its trading activities. That is the equivalent of ten million dollars, and the whole of it was given by the government as a subsidy to heavy industry. Likewise a considerable portion of the tax collected from the peasants and from the Nepman engaged in commerce goes for that purpose.

One way of attracting outside capital, which has attained some

degree of success, is through the formation of so-called mixed companies. The Soviet government goes into partnership with private capitalists in commercial enterprises, such as putting up part of the capital and sharing in the management and the profits. Lenin told us that by this means a large number of workers are enabled to learn from the capitalists how to carry on commerce; and the Soviet government retains the right to dissolve the companies later.

SOVIET WORKING CONDITIONS

The wages of the Russian workers kept pace with the improvement of production, increasing in just about the same proportion. Wages are not yet up to the pre-war standard. The Russian shoe workers today get 33.3 per cent of pre-war wages. The metal workers get 42.9 per cent, the textile workers 42.1 per cent and the wood workers 57.9 per cent. Wages vary according to the conditions of the various industries. The foodstuff industry is pretty well on its feet and the bakery workers get 81.9 per cent of pre-war wages, while the tobacco industry pays 73.1 per cent. These figures do not tell the whole story. Because the workers, under the Soviet government, get many special privileges such as cheap rent, food at cost, etc.

The Russian worker, after five years of the revolution, is not as well off materially today as he was under the Czar. But his condition is now steadily improving and the political and spiritual gains of the revolution are beyond calculation. There is no sentiment among the workers for a return to the old regime. To those who measure everything in terms of concrete, immediate material gains, and who ask the Russian workers what they have to show for their five years of revolution, they answer: "The revolution is not over yet."

Trotsky pointed out at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International that the French standard of living, ten years after the great revolution which smashed the feudal system and opened the way for the development of the capitalist mode of production, was far below that which prevailed immediately before the revolution. Revolutions destroy before they can build anew; and in this destruction the people suffer. But the destructive phase of the Russian revolution is already past and in five more years, at the present rate of progress, there is no doubt that the material conditions of the Russian workers, as well as their spiritual, intellectual and political conditions will be far better than ever before.

Since private industrial and commercial enterprises exist alongside of state enterprises, the question naturally arises—and it cer-

tainly is a most important question—what is the relative strength of the two. This question is answered by the figures on the number employed by each. The state controls all means of transport, including the railroads and in this transportation industry 1,000,000 are employed. The State Trusts—these are corporations organized by the state for the commercial and financial management of the various industries under its control—employ 1,300,000. And in non-trust state enterprises another half million workers. This brings the total of state employees up to 2,800,000. Private enterprises employ only 70,000.

There is little danger in this ratio. The danger is still lessened by the fact that the state holds all the big and important industries which are the bases of power while private capital is confined to smaller factories and to commerce. The average number of workers employed in state enterprises is 250 while private plants have an average of only 18.

TRADE UNIONISM IN RUSSIA

Practically all the workers employed in both state and private undertakings are organized into the Russian trade unions. These trade unions are organized according to the industrial form; there is but one union for each industry. The membership of the Russian trade unions is three millions. Before the revolution the total membership of all the trade unions of Russia was only 1,385,000.

The trade unions have played a great part in the revolution. During the period of "War Communism" they were closely united to the apparatus and took upon themselves a number of government responsibilities. But under the New Economic Policy they have completely separated from the state machinery and have reorganized as independent bodies, having for their main functions the defense of the interests of the workers in the factories.

Strikes were never prohibited by law under the Soviet government, but during the period of the civil war the Trade Union Congress voluntarily decided to forego that method of struggle. Under the New Economic Policy, however, the right to strike has been reaffirmed. Strikes are discouraged and do not occur very often. Boards of conciliation, courts of arbitration and mutual agreements are first resorted to, and as a rule all controversies are settled by these means.

I never saw a strike in Soviet Russia and never heard of one taking place while I was there. But comrade Melnichansky, the head of the Moscow trade unions, told me of a few that had occurred under his jurisdiction. In those cases all the methods and forms of industrial warfare familiar to European and American

labor movements automatically developed, such as strike committees, pickets, strike benefits, etc. There had been rare cases, he told me, when unscrupulous employers had tried to operate the struck plant by means of ignorant peasants recruited from the villages. The government gave no favor to this "freedom of contract" so popular with our own government. And a visit from the pickets usually sufficed to convince the strike-breakers that they had better go back where they came from. I asked comrade Melnichansky if they had encountered any strike injunctions. He laughed and answered, "My dear comrade, you must understand that this is not America!"

THE FIFTH TRADE UNION CONGRESS

I attended the Fifth All-Russian Trade Union Congress. It is analogous to the national convention of the American Federation of Labor, but it was quite a different looking delegation from the sleek, fat, over-dressed "men of labor" who meet once a year under the chairmanship of Gompers. There were more than a thousand delegates present at this congress; and I saw only one man who appeared to be overweight.

The Congress was held in the Moscow Labor Temple which, in the old days was the Nobles Club. It is a gorgeous place, with marble pillars, crystal chandeliers and gold leaf decorations. One could imagine that the "Nobles" had many a good time there in the "good old days." But, in the words of the comic strip artist, "Them days is over." The workers are the ruling class today and they have taken all the best places for their own purposes.

I saw something at that Congress that never yet happened in America. Zinoviev and Rykov came to the Congress to make a report on behalf of the government. I thought how natural it was, in a country ruled by the workers, for the government to report to the trade unions. It is just as natural as it is in America for the government to report to the Chamber of Commerce. The same principle applies. Governments have the habit of reporting to those whom they really represent. The old proverb says, "Tell me whose bread you eat and I'll tell you whose song you sing."

The Soviet government is a labor government and it makes no secret of the fact that it is partial to the working class. It doesn't pretend to be fair or neutral. They frankly call the government a dictatorship. "It's just like your own government in America," they told me, "only it is a dictatorship of a different class."

"Otherwise the two governments are much alike," they said. "They are both dictatorships. But there is another difference. The Russian government says it is a dictatorship and makes no camou-

flage about it. The government of the United States pretends to be fair and democratic, to represent both the workers and the capitalists, but whenever you have a big strike the government soon shows whom it belongs to."

Ninety-eight per cent of all the delegates to this Fifth All-Russian Trade Union Congress were members of the Communist Party. Those figures constitute another answer to the question: "How does the Communist Party keep in power?" When more than a thousand trade union delegates come together from all parts of Russia, and more than 98 per cent of them are Communists, it is a pretty reliable indication, I think, that the Communist Party has its roots very deep in the basic organizations of the workers.

ZINOVIEV'S SPEECH

Referring to the fact that wages of the Russian workers had been increased 100 per cent during the past year, keeping even pace with the increased production, Zinoviev laid before the Congress the program of the Communist Party on the question of wages and production. He said the two must go forward together, hand in hand.

"Every country in the world," he said, "outside of Russia has built up its industrial system at the price of an impoverished and exploited working class. The capitalist countries have built a marvelous industrial system; they have erected great structures of steel and stone and cement; they have piled up wealth that staggers calculation. And alongside of all this they have a hungry and impoverished working class which made it all. For all their toil and accomplishments the workers have reaped a harvest of poverty and misery."

"Russia," he said, "must not go that way. We are a working class nation and we must not forget that the interest of the workers must be our first concern, always. We will strain all energies to increase production, but here at the beginning let us lay down an iron rule for our future guidance; that every improvement in industry must bring a corresponding improvement in the living standards of the workers in the industry. We want to build a big industry and we want to build it quickly. But we also want to build a bigger and better human race."

THE WORKERS AND THE RED ARMY

Between the trade unions and the Red Army there is a close and fraternal unity that does not prevail between the labor movement and the army of any other country in Europe. The trade unionists regard the Red soldiers as the protectors and defenders of the labor movement, and they treat them with the highest honor.

There is a reason for this attitude. When some of the industrial districts of Russia fell into the hands of the counter-revolutionary armies the first thing the White Guards did, after dissolving the Soviets, was to break up the trade unions, shooting or jailing the leaders; it was something like West Virginia. And when the Red Army reconquered those territories, the trade unions were immediately reorganized under the protection of its bayonets. This is the reason for the brotherly solidarity between the unions and the army.

THE MIGHTY RED ARMY

It was not surprising, therefore, that the Red Army should send a representative to the Trade Union Congress. General Budenny, the head of the famous red cavalry, was there and he was given a tumultuous reception. For several minutes they applauded and shouted for General Budenny. He was embarrassed and had difficulty getting started. His speech consisted of only one sentence, but it was enough. Drawing himself up to a military posture, he clicked his heels together and saluted the delegates and said, "Comrades, just tell us what you want us to do, and we'll do it!"

The Red Army is a new factor in the international situation, and a very important one. The diplomats cannot meet today to partition off the earth without asking, "What will the Red Army do?" The Red soldier is present at all the councils of the war makers. He puts his fist on the table and says, "I am in on the war game in Europe from now on!"

The Red Army is something new under the sun, a proletarian army, made up exclusively of workers and peasants, with most of its officers drawn from the working class. It proved its mettle in the long and successful struggle against the interventionist armies. It has a morale, spirit and discipline unknown to the military history of Europe. There is not an army on the continent of Europe that, man for man, can stand up against it.

When I was in Russia the size of the Red Army had been reduced to 800,000 men. Since I left it has been still further reduced to 600,000. But that is not its full strength by any means. The standing army of 600,000 is only a skeleton around which five million men, already trained for service, can be quickly organized. The Red Army is a powerful military machine, but that is not all. It is a school, the greatest school on earth. The great bulk of its soldiers come from the peasantry; and 80 per cent of the Russian peasants are illiterate. But in the Red Army they are all taught to read and write. Last May Day they celebrated the liquidation of illiteracy in the Red Army. Trotsky made the statement that on

that day there was not a soldier in the army who was not able to read and write. The Russian Bolsheviks have taken an instrument of destruction and utilized it for a great constructive purpose.

THE SPIRIT OF THE RED SOLDIER

I visited some Red Army camps and learned something about the spirit of the soldiers at first hand. I had read something about it and wished to check up on what I had read. I asked Trotsky about it and he said, "Go to the camps and see the soldiers themselves. Then you will understand it." I asked him why the Red soldier has a different attitude toward the government from that of the other soldiers of Europe, and he answered, "The attitude of the Red soldier toward the Soviet government is determined by the attitude of the Soviet government toward the Red soldier."

That is the secret of it. That is the reason for the intense loyalty of the Red soldier which the old school militarists cannot understand. The Red soldier is respected and honored in time of peace as well as in war. He is not heroized as he marches off to battle and then chased up a back alley when he comes home. He is not given a medal when he is needed and refused a job or a handout when the war is over. In the working-class society of Russia the Red soldier has a place of dignity and honor. In Russia the soldiers and the workers are the real "people of importance."

RED ARMY EDUCATES THE PEASANT

I saw another phase of the educational work of the army in one of the camps. It was a moving picture show attended by about two thousand soldiers. It was a moving picture of large-scale grain farming in Canada. Most of the soldiers in the audience were peasant lads. They had come from the villages and their idea of agriculture was founded on the primitive, individualistic methods they had always known. Most of them had never seen a farming implement larger than a one-horse plow. Here on the screen before them was flashed a picture of modern farming on a big scale, with tractors, gang-plows and great threshing machines; a single working unit covering hundreds of acres at a time.

They drank in that picture very eagerly. As I watched them I saw another picture. I saw those peasant lads going back home when their service in the army would be ended, with their newly acquired knowledge and their vision of the great world outside their little villages, telling their friends and their old folks of the great farming machinery which the city worker will manufacture for the peasants and which will be the means of developing large-scale communal farming instead of small-scale individual farming; and

which will transform the individualist peasant of today into the communist peasant of tomorrow.

I found the Red soldiers pretty well informed as to what is going on in the world. They spoke of the prospects of revolution in Germany with the air of men who had read and talked much about it. That is part of their education. Trotsky keeps them fully informed about international developments; and there are special Communist detachments in all regiments who carry on a constant propaganda for internationalism.

INTERNATIONALIST PROPAGANDA OF THE RED ARMY

Capitalist journalists write a great deal about the intense national patriotism of the Red Army. These stories are usually written by journalists who sit around in Moscow hotels and cook up stories about it, and, as a rule, they are very far from the truth. As a matter of fact, the main effort of Communist propaganda in the army is to overcome tendencies toward Russian national patriotism and to develop a patriotism to the international proletariat. Since the army quit singing "God Save the Czar" it has had no national official hymn. The official air played in the Red Army is "The Internationale." Internationalism is the watchword.

This was impressed upon us very vividly by a speech we heard at the graduation exercises of the school of Red Cavalry commanders at Moscow. A number of international delegates attended those exercises and spent the entire day with the young students who were just finishing their studies. For several hours we watched them perform hair-raising feats on horseback and late in the afternoon we had dinner with them in the mess hall. After dinner the delegates from the various countries each spoke a few words of greeting to the graduates and then they put up one of the graduates to respond. He was lifted upon the table from which we had just eaten our dinner, a young Communist lad who only a short time before had been taken from the factory, put through an intensive course of instruction and on that day was being turned out as a Red commander.

"Comrades," he said, "we greet you as comrades and brothers in the same army with us. We do not want you to think of us as soldiers of Russia, but as soldiers of the international proletariat. Our army is a working class army and the working class of the world is our country. We will be very glad when the workers of Europe rise in revolt and call on us for assistance; and when that day comes they will find us ready."

It is not only the Red soldiers in Russia who are internationalists. Internationalism permeates the entire working class. When

the Russian workers rose in revolt five years ago and struck the blow that destroyed Russian capitalism they were confident that the workers throughout Europe would follow their example. They have been waiting five years for the international revolution and they still believe it is coming. Nothing has been able to shake that faith. They believe in the workers of Europe as they believe in the sun.

THE WORKERS AND INTERNATIONALISM

Ah, the faith of those Russian workers! It is so strong that it communicates itself to others. All of us who saw and felt it came away with our own faith surer and stronger. One afternoon I heard a band playing in the street outside the hotel where I was living. I looked out the window and saw a big parade marching with banners flying. I took a Russian comrade with me and we followed the parade. It wound up at the Labor Temple with a mass meeting. There were enthusiastic speeches, the band played the Internationale and the crowd sang it. It was a demonstration of the bakery workers of Moscow for the bakers of Bulgaria who were out on a general strike. And those bakery workers of Moscow, from their meager wages, raised a fund to send to their comrades in far away Bulgaria to cheer them on in the fight.

On the fifth anniversary of the revolution the delegates of the Communist parties and Red Trade Unions were the guests of the proletariat of Petrograd. A great throng of workers met us at the station. We symbolized to them the international labor movement and they gave us a warm and generous welcome. Red Army troops were drawn up before the station, the streets in all directions were packed with workers who had come to greet us, and from every building and post flew banners, proclaiming the fifth anniversary of the Russian revolution and hailing the international revolution.

THE PETROGRAD DEMONSTRATIONS

That day we saw a demonstration of the workers of Petrograd. I shall never forget it. They had built a special reviewing stand for us before the Uritsky Palace and we stood there and watched them march by in detachments according to the factories where they worked. They carried the same old banners which they had carried five years before, many of them torn by the bullets that flew during the decisive battle.

I never saw before such an outpouring of people, nor such enthusiasm. The parade commenced at 11 o'clock in the morning. Hour after hour we saw them come in wide streams across the square. The afternoon wore away and turned to dusk. It was six o'clock and we grew tired of standing and had to leave; and still

the workers of Petrograd were coming by the thousands, carrying their revolutionary banners and singing "The Internationale." All the workers of Petrograd marched that day to show their solidarity with the international proletariat and to prove to us that they still believe in the revolution they made five years before.

The next day, as though to show us that the Russian revolution and the Internationale has not only spirit and solidarity on its side, but military power also, they let us see a parade of the Red Army.

It was a cheering and inspiring sight to see the Red soldiers on the march with their rifles over their shoulders and their bayonets shining in the sun. They marched in perfect step, with heads erect, the picture of physical prowess. As they passed the reviewing stand they all shouted, "Long Live the Communist International!" and we shouted back, "Long Live the Red Army!"

In the reviewing stand that day were delegates of the Communist parties of other countries; and beside us sat the diplomats of foreign governments in Russia. It is the custom to invite them whenever there is a parade of the Red Army. They say that when the diplomats see the Red soldiers march, it cools their enthusiasm for another war against Soviet Russia.

Before we left Petrograd we made a pilgrimage to the Field of Mars, where in one great grave are buried the victims of the November revolution. Five years before it was the scene of desperate battle. The air was torn by rifle-fire and the cries of those Petrograd workers who had risen in revolt and staked their lives on the issue. On the 7th of November, five years before, the workers of Petrograd fought there the battle of the human race and of the future. Many of them fell, never to rise again.

THE MEANING OF OCTOBER

We stood there, with heads uncovered, in a cold, drizzling rain. The once noisy battlefield was quiet. There was no sound but the soft music of the Funeral Hymn of the Revolution, and the very ground, once spattered with the blood of our heroic dead, was banked high with flowers, placed there in gratitude and love by the delegates of the Communist parties and Red Trade Unions of all lands.

Those Petrograd workers put their lives in the scale. They had lived lives of misery and oppression, but they were possessed by a daring vision of the future when the lives of all men will be better and fairer. They were the heralds of a new day in the world when there will be no more masters and no more slaves, and they gave their lives to hasten on that day. There is an end now to their labor, their struggle and their sacrifice. They rest

beneath the Field of Mars and their mouths are stopped with dust. But still from the grave they speak, and their voices are heard all over the world. They lighted an everlasting fire in the sky which the whole world is destined to see and follow.

Those Petrograd workers struck the blow which shattered the capitalist regime in Russia and put the working class in power. But they did more than that, because the Russian revolution did not stop in Russia. It found its way over the borders. It broke through the blockade and spread all over the earth. The Russian revolution was the beginning of the international revolution.

Wherever there is a group of militant workers anywhere in the world, there is the Russian revolution. The Russian revolution is in the heart of every rebel worker the world over. The Russian revolution is in this room.

Comrade Trotsky told us, just before we left Moscow, that the best way we can help Soviet Russia is to build a bigger trade union movement and a stronger party of our own. Recognition by other governments will be of some temporary value; but the real recognition Soviet Russia wants is the recognition of the working class. When she gets that she will not need the recognition of capitalist governments. Then she can refuse to recognize them! For, after all, Soviet Russia is not a "country." Soviet Russia is a part of the world labor movement. Soviet Russia is a strike—the greatest strike in all history. When the working class of Europe and America join that strike it will be the end of capitalism.

February 1923

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