

# In the Home of the Revolution.

## RUSSIA DAY BY DAY.

By D. IVON JONES

Dear Comrades,

It is a long while since I wrote a general letter to "The International." For a change I have had the pleasure of reading Comrade Bunting's feelings during the first few days of his sojourn in Moscow. What strikes the Communist at first unfavourably is the large number of shops and cafes, forgetting our own agitational slogans of the past, that shops and cafes are not the places where the workers are exploited. Moreover, a rudimentary knowledge of the Russian alphabet reveals to us by the signs above the windows that all the swell stores are government or municipally owned.

### THE CONGRESSES.

I have not seen Comrade Bunting's report of the Fourth Congress, nor was I present, but only read the "Pravda" reports and partook of the intense interest in its proceedings in common with the Russian comrades with whom I daily discuss the problems of the revolution down here in the Crimea. We all agree that an International Communist Party has emerged from the Fourth Congress, with a firm international discipline. Every Russian Communist closely watches the progress of the brother parties abroad just as we do, only more so. Here one realises to the full that after the conquest of power there is no cessation of propaganda, agitation and organisation. As a matter of fact, these three stars of the Communist burn brighter, he propagandises, agitates and organises on a higher plane and with a mightier weapon, the weapon of the state power. Lenin has said that the chief use of the revolutionary proletariat is to enable it to bring home its ideals to the more backward masses who under capitalism are bound in the gigantic fetters of the daily press and the capitalist state institutions.

### THE UNION OF SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLICS.

And so the Tenth Congress of the Soviets has also come and gone, and the First Congress of the Union of the Soviet Republics has been held. The familiar letters, "R.S.F.S.R." will no longer stand for the whole of the Soviet Republics. Owing to the formal separate existence of some of the Federated Republics, such as Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Ukraine, etc., giving a handle to our enemies on the diplomatic field, and dividing the power of the proletarian state, a movement started two or three months ago to convert the Federation into a Union. For the purposes of this Union, R.S.F.S.R. (the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republics) was deemed to stand for the Central Russian Republic proper, with its newly affiliated provinces in Siberia right up to Vladivostok. In addition there stood the White Russian Soviet Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, and the Trans-caucasian Federation of Soviet Republics (including Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Soviet Armenia), although in actual fact the R.S.F.S.R. hitherto stood for the whole lot.

There was another reason for the change, and this reason is the most heartening of all to the comrades abroad. At first the idea took the form of a proposed East European Asiatic Soviet Republic, and there were other proposals of a similar grandiose nature, showing that the Russian comrades had in view not merely the consolidation of the present Russian Federation, but the inauguration of a State form which would automatically absorb in the one State apparatus any and every other country where the proletariat captures power, say, Germany or Poland. The proposal, first emanating from the Trans-caucasian and Ukrainian Soviet Congress, was full of this spirit. Hence the proposal took the simple form of a Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. —NO NAME. An old Ukrainian Communist, in moving the merging of the Ukraine in one Soviet Union, capital at present in Moscow, said that if not he, then his children would see the day when the capital would be in London.

So now we have the S.S.R., or the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. I don't know how the new name will appear abroad, but reading from the "Pravda" the word Russian does not appear on principle. Each Republic, for the separate Republics still retain subsidiary functions, is free to withdraw from the Union when it pleases, in theory, but the Communist Party is everywhere, and no

Communist Party is free to withdraw from the International and still remain Communist. The declaration of the first Congress of the Union of Soviet Republics is phrased in massive language suitable to the inspiring motifs of the occasion. I enclose a poor attempt at translation in case the official translation may not reach you.

It seems to me as if the formation of the S.S.R. were a challenge to the whole capitalist world. It declares the whole world divided into capitalist and Soviet States, and the Soviet Republic refuses to limit itself by a name or a boundary, but claims the whole world as its inevitable heritage. Such is "Bolshevik Imperialism"—the emancipation of the proletariat of the whole world.

The Republics of Bokhara and Khiva do not come into the Union. These far-flung outposts of the Soviet Republic are not Socialist Republics; they figure in the Congress as "Narodni" (People's) Soviet Republics, and send fraternal delegates only. Here is a purely Mussulman population, with hardly any proletarian. When they produce enough young Communists to convert themselves into Socialist Soviets they will automatically join the Union. At present their existence is a tribute to the elasticity of the Soviet form of State apparatus.

### THE UNION CONGRESS OF SOVIETS.

The Soviet Congress only meets once a year. There were 1,657 delegates, the proportion of Communists being more overwhelming than ever. There was not a single Menshevik or Socialist Revolutionary. The great trial definitely killed these parties in the eyes of the people. There was one Paoli Zion and one Universal Anarchist!! The Congress elected its Executive Committee of 371 members. It heard the annual reports from the various Commissions, all concerned with the patient work of reconstruction. Lenin did not appear, although he is the Premier. Kamenov, Vice-President of the Council of Commissions, gave the report instead. Kamenov is taking all the administrative work from Lenin's hands; he is a brilliant administrator. Lenin recedes more and more into the study and the committee. The marvellous stability of the Soviet regime and the unity of the proletariat as a ruling class obviates the need for his constant appearance in the grueling work of debating and speechifying. The Premiers in the capitalist governments might well envy his position. Indeed, the Congress meets as much for an exchange of views in the informal gatherings as to hear the reports of the People's Commissions. There is not much debate, and what there is on minor points; because, although the Soviet Congress meets only once a year, the innumerable smaller Soviets, provincial, county, town, and village Soviets, meet constantly, and constantly express the temper of the masses, constantly create and recreate the economic and political life of the country, so that nothing remains for the Congress to do except to put a peg, as it were, to mark the advance made, and put another peg forward as the task for the coming year. Meanwhile, what corresponds to the parliament of capitalist countries, the Central Executive Committee, meets for a week or two three or four times a year.

### DISARMAMENT.

The Conference on Disarmament between Russia and the Border States ended in smoke. Russia greatly incommended the other parties by starting off with a blunt proposal for 75 per cent. disarmament. But they had only come to talk. They pleaded that the first thing to do was to pass a motion of moral disarmament. The rest of the Conference consisted in manoeuvring to put the blame of their refusal on Soviet Russia. "Pravda" came out with a cartoon showing the poor Angel of Peace (very much emaciated) crushed under a volcano containing resolutions to "morally disarm"!

I was talking with a Red Commander a day or two ago. He said that a Red Army Congress had resolved to get every Red soldier of write home to his parents about the rejection of the Soviet's disarmament proposal, and urging the necessity of helping the government by promptly paying the tax in kind. Said my informant, "It is interesting to read these letters, with their naive optimism: 'Dear father, or 'dear mother,' as the case may be, 'you

will not know me now. I can read and write, and I know such a lot more, and I want to explain to you how we must adopt up-to-date farming as they teach us here, and a lot of other things,' etc., etc. The soldier under the Czar's autocracy left his family amid general weeping and wailing. To-day, the young peasants join the colours singing revolutionary songs and carrying red flags. This Red Army is one great people's academy.

### RETRENCHMENT.

Apurpose of this, it is worth referring to Lunacharsky's report to the Soviet Congress, showing an enormous decrease in the number of public schools since the advent of the New Economic Policy. This was the only report showing retrogression. The cutting down of the Education Budget has been forced upon the Soviet Republic by the imperative need to balance the general budget out of income instead of new emissions of paper money. Our enemies may jump at the fact that education was one of the economies, hence it is necessary to fully explain.

The results of War Communism showed that Socialist institutions cannot be built on a ruined industry. Free trams, free theatres, free housing, free trains, free schools, etc., are very nice, but somebody must pay for them. Owing to the deliberate destruction of the money system there were no sure means of knowing who paid for them, and who deserved to get them. To be sure, there was the general compulsion to work. But this only meant that the millions of non-proletarians must attend a factory in order to get bread. But devoid of the proletarian spirit, there was no means of compelling them to do their bit, while hundreds of thousands of proletarians gave their lives at the front. Hence it was seen that the first job was (1) to rebuild the ruined national economy, (2) train up a large class-conscious proletariat in a rejuvenated industry. For this purpose the money system was reintroduced under proletarian state control. This we have no longer free housing, free trams and free trains, but we have again a class-conscious proletariat, and the loafers and speculating petty bourgeoisie have found their own level. Thus, under the incentive of the controlled money system and the protection of the Proletarian State, industry will grow and more and more absorb all domains of economic life. With it the class-conscious proletariat will also grow, and more and more absorb the other sections of the people. This is the purpose of the New Economic Policy. At certain stages, without the dislocation of revolution, more and more spheres will pass into Socialist economy, and the incentive of the money system will be gradually and imperceptibly replaced by the incentive of a fully developed class solidarity.

### BALANCING THE BUDGET.

The first necessity is to pay the overhead charges on industry (and the State apparatus is nothing more or less than overhead charges) out of the legitimate surplus from production, and not from surplus that should go to renew and extend industry. The money system is a sure index of how far the proletarian state is living within its means. Hence the job is to get down to the bedrock of a balanced budget, even at the expense of the children's education. From this bedrock (the stabilised rouble) the new Socialist economy will begin to rise. Meanwhile, for all the youth at 21 who cannot read or write the army, under Trotsky's guiding genius, is an extra education department.

But a growing feature of the recent developments in Russia is the increase of initiative on the part of local Soviets. And what Lunacharsky's department cannot provide, some local Soviets are beginning to impose as a task upon themselves in the form of extra local taxation. This local initiative was evidenced lately by several town Soviets, such as Nijni Novgorod, voluntarily turning over a fine surplus on their local budgets into the State budget. Where else can you find such solidarity? Thus these lean days in the children's education will quickly pass, and they will teach the local Soviets to be more self-reliant.

### PROLETARIAN ADMINISTRATORS.

In this random manner one can go on discussing Soviet Russia indefinitely. To all revolutionary pro-

letarian it is of perennial interest. But we must halt here. I will only mention one feature of the present life of the Republic, how the new generation of proletarian administrators and managers is rising everywhere and coming to grips with the great task of reconstruction. For several weeks a competition has been running in the "Pravda" for the best and worst factory managers. The workers send in reports about their managers, and a committee sits to adjudge the award. Day by day we have accounts of the heroic efforts of the proletarian managers as told by their fellow-workers, and occasionally a report comes in about a "bad egg." I have just been reading the report from one textile factory. Here letters were received from 350 workers, men and women, who veritably regard their manager as a teacher and a leader. One writes: "I only wish I shall work with him till I die!" He is their delegate to the Soviet, he presides at the factory meetings, he gives the example when any rough work has to be done, he has saved the factory from ruin by his initiative and leadership. Here is his photo; a strong, homely proletarian face with a touch of the Russian sadness in it. Here, reading these accounts of the life of the factory and workshop, one sees, behind the garish display of new traders and speculators, the winsome features of the great society of the future taking shape; and ere long it will be strong enough to turn everything into its own likeness.

## CAVIARE.

I see that the "Judicial" Commission on Martial Law have made a lame attempt to link up the Rand Revolt with Moscow by publishing extracts from my letters. It is a rabid piece of capitalist propaganda, but it has missed fire. In publishing the extracts they are giving wide publicity to some of our propaganda too.

However, by tearing sentences from their context they have endeavoured to give the impression that we Communists are living on the fat of the land here in Russia while the workers are starving. This notion of the starving Russian workers is very hard in dying. It is up to the Communists to kill it, as it is the one argument left against the Russian Revolution. The "Judicial" Commission Report quotes "caviare" as an article of our diet. That was a year ago, when butter, sugar, and cheese were scarce, hence my remark that "caviar," which we generally associate with luxury, was plentiful, because Russia is the home of the sturgeon. The point I wish to make is this, that the Russian comrades try to give their comrades from abroad of the best. But the workers in Moscow and Petrograd are to-day better fed than the delegates for years ago. And taking into account the generous hospitality of the Russian comrades, this is saying a tremendous lot.

Professor Varga, coming to Moscow from Central Europe and witnessing the great anniversary demonstrations, when the workers marched with innumerable flags, marched TWENTY ABREAST for hours and hours past Trotsky's flag-staff, declared that the Moscow workers were better fed and better clothed than the workers in Central Europe. While the condition of the workers in capitalist countries is declining their condition in Russia is steadily rising. To-day the enthusiasm of the workers for the Communist Party is unprecedented since the great October days, and they are joining the Communist Party in increasing numbers (and only the workers can join now). To-day the Red Army soldier receives meat; a year ago it was a bare bread ration. Meat and butter and sugar has again become part of the irreducible minimum of a worker's diet. The time is not distant when the workers, even in Britain, will envy the table of a Russian worker, and there are large categories of British workers already far below his standard. We need to down this idea that the dictatorship of the proletariat means starvation. No! It means a fight against starvation.

D. IVON JONES.

Crimea.