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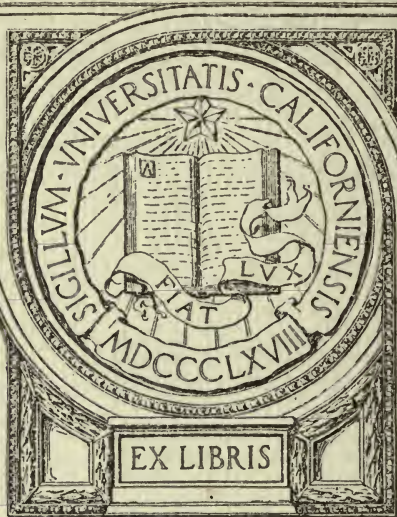
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# **RUSSIA : 1918**

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## **BOLSHEVISM** **IN PRACTICE.**

**1/-**

**BY W. DANIEL.**



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# RUSSIA : 1918

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## *BOLSHEVISM IN PRACTICE*

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BY W. DANIEL.

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## PREFACE.

THE publication of this series of notes on the events in Russia during the first year of the Bolshevik regime should prove of advantage all round in helping the general public to understand, from the point of view of the details of daily life, what is happening in Russia to-day. In perusing this little volume it is necessary to bear in mind the fundamental difference in character between our own and the Russian race, as otherwise the reader will fail to comprehend how the various changes of opinion, as here set forth, could possibly take place.

The urgent assistance and sympathy of the whole British race is necessary to help this great nation in dire distress, whose inhabitants were deceived and maltreated in the past as in the present, are thoroughly mystified by the enormity of what has occurred, and are utterly unable themselves to understand the series of events happening in their own country. Their very faith has been put up to blasphemy and declared to be a worthless relic of the old order of things, thus uprooting the beliefs of centuries; their characters have been unstablized by the ever changing and kaleidoscopic series of events; their lives, their very souls have become the playthings of a guilty minority, which jeers at the distraction of the mothers who by acts of murder show their inability to witness further the agony of their starving babes, and which claims as rightful recruits for prostitution all youth and innocence in the land.

Civilization has been uprooted in that unhappy country, the sufferings of all classes have never been so great, hunger, disease and unemployment stalk through the land, whilst one can safely predict that a continuation of the present methods of administration would eventually lead to the extermination of the entire population from the effects of starvation alone.

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# RUSSIA : 1918.

## BOLSHEVISM IN PRACTICE.

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### CHAPTER I.

**R**USSIA has been advertised very extensively during the earlier stages of the war, and latterly she has advertised herself to a remarkable degree.

No doubt after reviewing the whole series of events the average looker-on from the point of view of the daily papers will consider that he is none the wiser on the subject of that vast country, although he has daily had thrust under his nose at the breakfast table some phase of its people's activities, follies and peculiarities. The fact however remains that the bulk of the public are now well schooled to the idea that Russia presents a distinct personality of its own, a living force not to be ignored and a great possibility for the future.

Hitherto regarded in the light of a far distant enigma, little known, and from a business man's point of view somewhat doubtful, Russia now emerges as a serious commercial consideration, only awaiting the transformation to a state with pretensions to orderly civilization from its present state of chaos upon chaos, to become a great factor in international trade.

The language sounds strange to the average Englishman and would appear to be a barrier to commercial intercourse. Our commercial travellers may speak French and German, but of Russian the majority have hitherto been a little shy, yet there are a far greater number of Britishers with a knowledge of the Russian language than is generally supposed.

Money was ever easily earned by foreigners in the easy-going cities of Russia. The Jew had not the opportunity in most cases of bringing sharp competition to bear on his neighbour, whilst my Russian was mostly hardly in a fit state earlier than 12 o'clock midday to bring his thoughts to the serious consideration of business problems after his previous night's revelries and late hours. He can not be said to be a lover of hard work, and although often filled with enthusiasm and bright ideas, he has not always the necessary force of character to carry on his efforts to a satisfactory termination.

Thus whole industries have been initiated and brought to maturity by foreigners, whilst foreign agencies have thrived on the sale of goods manufactured abroad, and the foreigner has most often been found to occupy the leading commercial positions throughout the country. Russia can not by any means be said to be destitute of institutions for the technical education. The upper classes had every opportunity to acquire knowledge in all and every kind of the commercial sciences, but the fault lies in the fact that the system hitherto in vogue produces very few specialists, and practical men none at all. A man steps out into the world with very high honours acquired in all branches of engineering, for example, but take him to your factory and you will find that he has no particular knowledge of your particular machines. Our usual system, whereby a man serves his apprenticeship to some special branch of trade, whereby he obtains a sound practical knowledge of his departmental work, without, however, any special technical skill, will invariably prove to be of more commercial value in practice than all the products of great institutions for imparting to the youth the ethics of the thing in the abstract, as practised in Petrograd and Moscow. Our system saves itself more or less, as we usually have a combination in the few heads of our business ventures, whereas our brother Russian exceedingly seldom combines the necessary technical skill with a sound practical backing.

For this reason I suppose I, like many others before me, no product of Russia being available, found myself, after being invited to betake myself to Russia, in command of a cotton mill representing the investment of large sums of British money, on the eventful night when the Kerensky Government was overthrown. We waited expectantly for the issue of events from this latest of revolutions, having but recently been witnesses to the betrayal of Korniloff, with the attendant wild excitements and rumours incidental to the approach of that patriot's army to the capital.

The one possibility of saving Russia's honour, and the only escape from all her subsequent miseries, apart from Allied support, during this most difficult period of reconstruction, had been ruthlessly sacrificed by one man whose fanatical visions lack the very essence of capability, the whole being overshadowed by his own self-complacent belief in his cleverness and superior personality, which at a blow threw the young republic to the ground, a prey to the dark forces of enemy intrigue, Jewish vampires, and all the criminal classes of the country.

As a talker in public he was undoubtedly second to none in the country. He also imagined that success could only be obtained and held by compromise, that his own brains would prove capable of finding means to hold in check the ever-growing power of the Soviets, which had steadily sprung to life and were thriving under this self-complacency like mushrooms in the dark, surely but slowly

displacing the obstructing sods above and gradually rearing forth their numberless heads into the light of day. This day had arrived, and the presence of the Soviets had become a potent factor, claiming for themselves all power in all things, after long months of thriving on a reckless policy of inaction, compromise and futile rhetoric, crowned by the overthrow of the only living force capable at the time of establishing the necessary democratic dictatorship to preserve the integrity of Russia against the ravenous foe without.

The circle of ministers dissolved into the embrace of this new power; some endeavoured to prove their early recognition and assistance to this new force in the land, and others to save themselves in flight, whilst their leader became a fugitive from his own accomplices.

Gathering a decidedly lukewarm army about himself in the immediate provinces, he now endeavoured to do what he had denied Korniloff the possibility of doing some weeks earlier, and after boring them with long drawn-out and needless speeches, again lost the game through the eventual disgust and lack of confidence of all in a man of words and so essentially without deeds.

After that the Kerensky fiasco was definitely at an end, an exploded soapwater bubble, and Kerensky himself, as we see, eventually joins the Anglo-East End throng thriving on British democratic liberty, but none the less raising its voice in dissatisfaction against its good-natured protectors.

This second revolution, as the Bolsheviks call their successful overthrow of the Provisional Government, has many interesting sides to it, and its results may in fact be called the most unique and criminal record of any government, if government it can be called at all, ever known to exist.

The actual tactics of overthrow were not made conspicuous by any great amount of fighting, by plots and counter-plots, or the consummation of a well-planned *coup d'état*, but eventually resolved itself into a case of sheer force overcoming all resistance by overwhelming pressure, in much the same manner as a block of steel is rolled out into a steel plate, giving resistance, but powerless to resist the issue.

Kerensky and his government were, for reasons no doubt attributable to much propaganda amongst a class of man who had little to lose, and considered himself well occupied as a mercenary soldier with the resultant possibility of pillage and loot, very unpopular with the rank and file of Lettish troops. Immediately after his overthrow the main movements of a military character noticeable in the town, apart from the preparations of the Soviets to resist the re-entry of Kerensky into Petrograd, were the influx of these soldiers with all their military equipment, the majority appearing to have



come from Finland. These troops had no feelings of sentiment towards the population of Petrograd, and, for that matter, for anyone at all, and were for that reason very suitable for all acts of repression by the Bolsheviks, in which capacity they have succeeded in excelling in every part of Bolshevik Russia, indeed proving themselves the most reckless and merciless adherents to a regime of the most appalling infamy, to which belonged mainly those who derived some material advantage from its prolongation.

Just prior to his downfall Kerensky is believed to have assured the Allied representatives that he only needed the provocation of a rising to be able to crush this growing force of the Soviets once and for all. It is exceedingly doubtful if he himself believed this statement to be true at the time, but owing to wild rumours at the time of Mr. Kerensky's marriage to a well-known actress, at the most critical period, it would appear to an onlooker that this ruler was not clever enough to realise the situation as it stood.

All began very quietly in the capital, and Petrograd, in spite of the total absence of any visible organization for keeping public order in the public interest, continued its normal course for several weeks with no more alarming incidents than the lynching of thieves in the streets, and a growing danger to the evening pedestrian of being relieved of his property and clothes in the streets of the town.

The hooligan type, which benefited from this state of controlless inaction, soon became more daring, and it became necessary for the inhabitants of each house to organize for the protection of their premises at night against the intrusion of armed marauders. Thus one was frequently on duty for a night watch, with a loaded revolver at hand, in the vicinity of the main entrance of the block of flats in which one happened to live, and apart from this we employed soldiers, who had individually returned from the front with their guns, to patrol the street outside our own particular house at night.

The workpeople at this time, although collectively less violent in their behaviour than during the period of political inactivity preceding the second revolution, which had failed to give them the benefits they had anticipated, and had yet given them courage enough to endeavour to obtain their demands by force, the government having shown a lack of any policy which could be said to favour either side, showed a spirit of determined hostility towards their employers. They firmly believed that having been largely, if not wholly, instrumental in the putting into power of the Soviet government, they would now reap the full reward of their actions as promised by the plausible leaders of the movement, namely: peace, food in abundance, and workpeople's ownership of the factories, with the complete overthrow of the former managements, and a division of all profits amongst themselves.

## CHAPTER II.

THE first signs of Bolshevik organization now made themselves felt in the factories by the establishment of the new Ministry of Labour, over which presided and predominated labour men and the student class of Socialist. The establishment of Works' Committees in every factory now became a phase of factory life. The people appointed to the membership of these Works' Committees had hitherto been working members of the staff who had been the ring-leaders in all troubles, and the spokesmen in all disputes with foremen or managements. They now, however, claimed full recognition by the simple process of demanding a room as an office in every mill, and the payment of one member of the committee for every hundred workpeople, without any compulsion being put upon the members thus elected to do any work whatsoever apart from the looking after of the interests of the other workpeople.

The newly-established Ministry of Labour called meetings of all these committees on certain days of the week at headquarters, each trade being dealt with individually, and its members being instructed as to the steps they were to take in the immediate future with or against their employers, this after careful consideration and the most searching inquiries as to the conditions of labour prevailing at each factory. The organization thus far established can only be said, from the point of view of modern social democracy, to have been an admirably arranged and managed affair in so far as all disputes had to be settled by arbitration at the Ministry. The employers can, however, hardly be said to have had a fair chance, as the committees thus formed far exceeded in number the entire management and office staff, whilst the unhappy manager was also largely "up against it" as far as these latter are concerned. The workpeople also had the support of their Union delegates at all the cases in dispute, and needless to say that of the judges. Let us picture an unfortunate manager at one of these meetings. A large room filled with tables capable of seating from six to eight people. Round the table are seated, apart from the manager, two of the permanent officials of the Ministry, a Union delegate, and the remaining seats are occupied by his own workpeople, who also muster around the table in large numbers to substantiate each other's evidence, whilst the whole place rings with the sounds of shouts and arguments from the other tables in the vicinity, where similar proceedings are in progress. True, the manager could bring with him a secretary from the Masters' Association, which at that time was still in existence, but this individual counts for nothing, and is considered an intruder in a weighty matter of showing the manager how he should be treated in these revolutionary



times. A certain fairness was, however, shown in all cases where the manager put forward technical or financial reasons for refusing this or that demand. We may, however, safely say that in nine cases out of ten the Works' Committee returned triumphantly to the mill, and after calling a general meeting in the middle of working hours on full pay, and having explained the downfall of the management as it occurred, resumed its occupation of novel reading pending further disturbances. To say that the strain of paying these unoccupied individuals was too heavy a drag on the resources of the firm would be incorrect at the time, only because then it was still possible to demand any price for goods sold, and because competition was practically non-existent, all manufactured commodities being greedily swallowed up by the dealers.

However, many expensive innovations were simply ordered to be carried out at the works from the Ministry through the medium of the committee, thus giving a degree of power to the members which they had hitherto not possessed or obtained through their own violent actions and threats to the management. Thus in one case where I was present, simply because goods were being removed from the yard in what the committee considered to be a manner in defiance of their authority, the assistance of the local Red Guard was called in. These stormed into the office, the individual in charge levelling a revolver at the head of the manager and demanding an immediate reply as to whether he recognised the authority of the Works' Committee or not. The reply that such a course was inevitable under the circumstances was quite enough to cause them to withdraw, after the workpeople had also had their say in the matter by shouting all kinds of remarks as to their intentions of the moment and the future. Thus we have the establishment of a sort of joint control, which virtually consisted in a reign of terror over the manager, or an attempt to terrorise him into complete submission prior to steps being taken to relieve him of his post altogether. The effect produced was mostly successful in so far as the majority of the directors vanished completely, whilst others again, more far-seeing, if the opportunity offered endeavoured frantically to get their places of business closed before things had gone far enough to enable the workpeople to take over the financial control. The office staffs began to show open disloyalty, and to endeavour to obtain information about the business which had in the past in no way concerned them, even going to the length of questioning the authority of the owner to dispose of goods, the money received for goods, or even to receive cash payments. The so-to-speak armed intervention of the workpeople had heartened them to endeavour to get their share of the pickings, which endeavour they had in no way got the backbone to have attempted to secure for themselves had it not been for the insubordination established throughout the whole business by the Works' Committee, and their efforts took the peculiarly annoying form of

continual harping on the possible necessity of consulting these gentlemen, and the production of permits for one thing and another quite unsolicited, from them.

Meanwhile the new powers in the land seemed most concerned with the banks and the wine cellars. One morning, about the beginning of the month of December, the entrance to every bank was seen to be occupied by a number of the Red Guard, consisting of either soldiers or armed workpeople. These refused all admittance to the staffs and customers alike, declaring the banks to be closed for an indefinite period pending re-arrangement. People were astonished or annoyed according to temperament, and went away, however, expecting a speedy settlement of so vital a matter of the public business. As one having an office in the same building as one of the principal banks, having had to remove the books secretly from the mill premises owing to continual interference with the work, I was in full view of the daily developments and subsequent proceedings in the matter. The first day I was refused admittance to my office, but eventually gained admittance by a back door in a roundabout way. On the second day the bank staffs again appeared outside the premises, and after discussing the situation left for home. This took place day after day without intermission, whilst there suddenly appeared a Jewish commissar with several assistants, who announced himself to be in charge of the bank, and spent several hours each day in the manager's cabinet. This individual was, however, quite inaccessible, unless the guards were at the moment surrounded by a crowd and in such heated argument with a number of outsiders as to fail to notice your entry by stealth. Inside a surprising scene awaited the visitor. Cigarette ends, match boxes, and papers of all sorts were strewn around indiscriminately all over the floors and on every desk. On the counters slept, apparently comfortable and quite oblivious to their surroundings, numbers of Red Guards, gun by their sides and hat covering their eyes. The commissar showed much annoyance at being interrupted from his task of smoking cigarettes with his comrades, and brusquely replied to a polite inquiry that no business was possible and no money could be obtained, also informing me that the affairs of the managers of businesses did not concern the reforms of the Bolsheviks. Several more days passed, and the afore-mentioned Jew was seen to be rummaging in the books of the bank, assiduously assisted by soldiers and others. After much talk and insistence it became possible to gain admittance to the bank and to argue with them about workpeople's wages. The replies were somewhat evasive, but again after much endeavour it was finally agreed that subject to the production of a document issued by the Works Committee to the effect that a certain sum was necessary for immediate payment as wages, the account should be investigated in the bank books, and subsequently the document and cheque would be signed by the commissar, after which payment would

be made at the State bank. The trade in this species of document very rapidly increased, so that after several days it became impossible to get a cheque cashed without having previously occupied a position in a queue outside the bank from 3 a.m. onwards. Both private and State banks were only open for this sort of business, and for one hour only daily. The bank staffs were then invited to resume their work under the new owners, whilst the management were in every case completely ignored. The staffs declined to work under these conditions, and the resultant deadlock did not assist matters, except that the work-people had their first experience of going home without their wages on pay day. The banks thus continued to do no business at all, even being used as latrines and remaining in a filthy state, whilst owners used their last remaining resources to pay their obligations in the hopes of a speedy release from these difficulties. This was the situation without any alteration a month after the banks had first been occupied.

Other detachments, told off to destroy all the stocks of wine in the town, carried out their work whilst their Jewish brethren had been keeping an eye on the banks. This involved all manner of excesses, which continued without interruption for three months. A cellar would be surrounded and invaded, when a great smashing of bottles would ensue, and the invariable drunken orgy started by some members of the invading party. Then a split in the party, with heavy reinforcements on both sides, always resulted in a first-class shooting match with much waste of ammunition, lasting as long even as ten days in certain cases, during which the cellar was probably taken and re-taken many times over, whilst the inhabitants of houses above and round about went in fear of their lives, or laid in a stock of most excellent wines for a mere song, as the circumstances of the moment dictated. The resultant bodies were flung into the nearest canal or became buried in the snow, whilst bottles littered the streets for hundreds of yards in the vicinity, and houses took on the appearance of a small-pox patient as a result of the wholesale machine gun and rifle fire. Finally to prevent people from drinking the resultant mixture in the cellar, these places were pumped or baled out into the street, where French and German wines vanished together in the slush and snow.



## CHAPTER III.

**B**Y this time in almost every office a Clerks' Committee had been formed, which likewise began to try and assert its authority as supreme in all the affairs of the business. Their efforts, however, mainly consisted in malicious interference concerning the side of the business they least understood, and apart from this, appropriating to themselves, where possible, a greatly increased salary. In places where workpeople existed, such as factories, the attitude at first was mainly one of guiding and assisting the Works Committee in obtaining information as to the financial position of the firm, in an endeavour to bring about a vigorous control and watch over all cash payments and receipts, and in many cases took the form of taking over the safe with the avowed intention of safeguarding the interests of the workpeople. However, in general, the Works Committee were too afraid of allowing the finances of the firm to get into the hands of one branch of the new control in the persons of the clerks and, as a result, in these establishments the control remained in the hands of what was left of the management during the earlier weeks of the year 1918. In the establishments not having any workpeople, however, things took a very much more drastic course already at this early date, in fact, the worst and most foolish behaviour on record during the revolution, apart from actual bloodshed, stands on the debit side of the account against these gentry of the lower middle class. In many cases fanatics in the cause of anything savouring of anarchy, although they took exceptional care to be anywhere but in the streets during the overthrow of the Provisional Government and similar militant tactics, in some cases pure unscrupulousness guided these half-educated and semi-intelligent men and women to seize all that they could lay their hands on to enrich themselves at the moment, and thus causing the ruination of thousands of little businesses, built up by years of toil and hard labour of some fertile brain or plodding middle class man of the lesser intelligence group. I use the word "intelligence" in the Russian sense, which makes big distinctions between what is known as the intelligent or educated class, the lesser intelligent, and the semi-intelligent classes.

Businesses were seized and declared to be the property of the clerks. In many cases the former owner was driven out entirely, in others he could remain on sufferance at a salary less than or equal to the junior member of his staff. All funds were seized, and banking accounts only made payable to the order of the committee of control. Money was recklessly divided, if obtainable, and ruin speedily followed. The owner, one would expect from the point of view of English standards, to refuse to have any dealings with this rabble of outlaws, but, alas,



he hoped against hope for a change to occur, and having no court of justice or appeal, allied himself to these proceedings in a vain hope of being able to save something from the wreck before all was lost. Thus we witnessed many such establishments of the lesser order in a state when neither goods nor trade remained to staff or owner, which state of affairs usually culminated in a stormy meeting at which all the books were examined, the owner having to be present to be charged with a misappropriation of funds which most probably never existed. Then the assistance of a commissar would be called in, which only served to increase the chaos, and the owner could be pleased if he escaped without imprisonment. After that appeared a pompous advertisement in the official organ of the Soviets announcing the confiscation of that particular business, its goods, assets, etc., but nothing about its liabilities.

Turning to the officer class at this period, of which the personnel was very considerable, we find a state of affairs equally discouraging. On the night of the overthrow of the Provisional Government great numbers of armed officers were in Petrograd and Moscow, lying low, like everyone else except the troops, workmen, and the agitators concerned in the affair. Their numbers in Petrograd were at the time variously estimated at from 15,000 to 25,000, and at Moscow more. These mostly had fled from their units, or had found themselves at the front without men, and were in themselves a body capable of serious action, which might have had a great influence on the events of that time. However, when we consider how four workmen disarmed several hundreds of officers at one of the principal restaurants of the town, it is perhaps not surprising that nobody came forth to assist the few young cadets who vainly struggled against the establishment of a government of which no one knew the origin, and of which everyone felt distrust. Apart from these, a great number of officers had remained at the front, others got out of sight on the country estates, some succeeded in getting abroad, or even enlisted in the Red Army with or without their previous rank being known, and, of course, we cannot forget those gallant few who formed themselves into officers' battalions, and hurled themselves to death and everlasting glory against the German machine-guns, as the only honourable way out of an impossible *impasse*. However, the great majority no doubt "sat on the fence" and donned civilian clothes in the larger cities. All pensions, salaries and emoluments at once became a thing of the past. Families of the best classes were plunged into the most desperate straits, needless to say one and all joining in voluble, if secret, invective against the usurpers of power. Thus we see, in the early weeks of their dominion, the officer and industrial classes firmly and irrevocably opposed to the Bolshevik rule which, naturally, is only the logical outcome of events, but none the less marks the beginning of a whole series of revulsions of feeling, culminating in the state of affairs at the dawn of 1919. Of course, amongst a slow-thinking population of very badly-educated people there could be found many, even in the lower classes, who had

so far not reconciled themselves to revolution at all ; although undoubtedly at this period the majority favoured the plausible arguments of the Bolshevik agitators as the most likely thing to bring them all they desired in the future, of which bread, peace, and other people's goods were the principal attractions. It would almost be safe to say that at one time or another almost the entire population of the lower middle and working classes called themselves Bolsheviks until, in this way or that, the recognition of the fact that the new power did not mean a fortune to themselves individually forced itself into their outlook on the future.

Then we have the great bogus of the National Assembly. Had we not heard great things about the future of free Russia under the guidance of the elected of this vast nation—how all difficulties and disputes would fade before these coming legislators ; would not every one of the many parties be able to witness before its very eyes its actual status in the land, as proven by the number of the delegates assembled, representing the votes of the masses of the electors ; great hopes and vain belief in the honesty of our fellow mortals. Elections, of a sort, were held in due course under conditions laid down by the new powers, placing all manner of restrictions on electors and elected alike, so that a great proportion of the population went on strike, in the sense that they refused to vote one way or the other. None the less, the result of the elections did not apparently give satisfaction to those in control, and in any case there was no intention to allow so much as one member of another party to raise his voice in the affairs of the future of the nation. Hence, as we all know, the futile attempts of the few who eventually assembled in Petrograd to meet for a discussion of the situation. The majority were refused even admission into the hall of assembly, and the whole fabric of hopes collapsed in a farce, amidst the chagrin and bewilderment of all classes not firmly allied to the Bolshevik cause. A large number of people interested in politics, and great numbers of ardent Socialists belonging to the left or right Socialist parties, and Mensheviks, suffered a serious blow alike to their aspirations and pride over the squashing of the assembly, and thus we get a further large quota of the population estranged from any further practical sympathy with the Bolshevik cause.

A mention should here be made of the Mayor of Petrograd, who made superhuman efforts to carry on the municipal offices of the town—sanitary, medical, utilitarian and otherwise. A feeble old man, of about seventy years of age, Mr. Shreider was a true patriot, and declined to cease his efforts for the public good in spite of armed forces which forcibly closed his office, turned him out, scattered his assistants, and eventually threw him into prison. Why it was necessary to interfere with him, or at least why he could not have been replaced without this most unnecessary violence, is quite beyond comprehension, except that he also amongst his many activities attempted to obtain fair play at the elections, which may have been the cause of the subsequent

persecution of a fearless old man, who otherwise never concerned himself in any way with politics.

In January, further troubles came upon us in our great struggle to maintain our business on a stable footing. Firstly, all electric power ceased entirely, causing a complete stoppage of all tramcars; whilst power for lighting was only allowed for a few hours every evening, ceasing at 10 p.m. We had one department of preparatory machinery entirely dependent on the city power, and this brought the entire mill to a standstill in a few days, the workpeople meanwhile demanding that their wages be continued in full whether the mill worked or not, their attitude becoming generally still more unbearable, largely caused by the all round lack of money. Managing to secure the necessary plant to enable us to generate our own power, we once more overcame a difficulty which threatened us with serious consequences. Conveyances entirely failed in the streets, causing communication between the various branches of the business to become exceedingly difficult; everywhere snow upon snow, and nobody's business to shift it. Intermittent shooting, for no apparent reason, here, there and everywhere, causing one the necessity of making long detours in an endeavour to get from one place to another. Holidays taken by the workpeople unanimously everywhere, as if by instinct, on the slightest rumour of trouble in the town, which trouble only too frequently matured and resulted in such acts as the turning of machine guns on a procession of men, women and children carrying banners in the Lateiny Street in January, which banners were evidently displeasing to the Bolsheviks. To find the block of buildings which contained your office barricaded up in the morning, and to turn homewards again, was an all too frequent occurrence. Horses lay dead in some of the streets for weeks, and the hungry dogs devoured their semi-frozen carcasses. The mere mention of potatoes or bread sent one's cook into hysterics of weeping at her own inability to do anything in the procuring of such commodities. Whilst going home one night, at about 8 p.m., I saw a number of men engaged in firing a machine gun down an empty street. My road lay that way, and I did not care for the back streets just then, so I strolled up and enquired if they could stop whilst I reached the next corner. This they at once agreed to do. Apparently expecting trouble, they were keeping the locality clear by effectively keeping the people at home by indiscriminate firing down the road. Such was our daily life. Not very surprising that one wrote home at the time: "Suppose old England is as peaceful as ever, except for stray air-raids. It seems impossible here, and I feel certain that I shall embrace the first English policeman I see. The Front is surely quieter than this city on the whole. All the phenomena of war can be witnessed in and around its dirty streets."



## CHAPTER IV.

NO one at the time in Russia could have explained the situation exactly as to cause and effect of all the daily disturbances. The Russians are easily led and easily excited ; but on all and every occasion they take fate as they find it, and finish by being content in their own way, which is the only fact that made life possible at all. Every time all became quiet around the town all the shops would re-open if they had goods to sell, the shutters, however, ready on the pavement to be put up at a moment's notice. Of course the quantities of goods for sale were of the scantiest, but the continual influx of just enough to help one to be able to get along somehow had the peculiar effect of causing a wholesale search of premises to be ordered and carried out towards the end of the month, in an endeavour to discover hidden supplies.

Numbers of Germans and Austrians, in full uniform, had been making their appearance in daily increasing numbers, and at this time they increased to such an extent that it became quite a matter for astonishment where from, and how, all these people reached the city. Officers and men rubbed shoulders in the streets, although the number of German officers in uniform as compared with the Austrians was infinitesimal. The man in the street told them to go home, believing them all to be prisoners of war, and explaining that as far as they were concerned the war was at an end ; but the wildest rumours were afloat about the intended capture of the city by the Germans from within. In the face of the numberless enemy subjects one felt quite relieved to talk to some of the Bolshevik officials, to ascertain their view of the subject, in fact, I quite liked some of these extremists at the time, especially as no unnecessary bloodshed on a large scale had been caused up to date, and the only sincere ones were dupes, whilst the others professed to be, and were, rogues. Also at the time their absurd theories had not been carried beyond a point dictated by the wisdom of the " wait and see " idea.

About this time I had occasion to travel in the province, and saw a little of the *modus operandi* of the railway service under the banner of freedom. My route took me towards the German frontier, and my fellow-passengers were a motley throng of women and children, men and boys loaded with every conceivable article of household furniture.

It was generally understood that a train left in the evening, and being a bitterly cold night I went to great pains to discover a compartment where the windows were not smashed, and at last secured such a one, this being one of only three or four which were intact throughout the whole train. The backs of the seats were raised as if for sleeping,



and I hoisted myself on to one of these, knowing that the train would be crowded to overflowing. All plush and every fitting in the compartment had been removed, and even the layers of canvas or duck which cover the springs had been cut away. "What is the use of freedom," says the rural Russian if he cannot remove good plush going to waste in a railway carriage. In my compartment were eventually herded, one upon the other, a total of twenty-seven people, and the door was tightly shut. The train made no attempt to move until about 3 a.m., being scheduled according to the last time-table issued at 10 p.m. On the roofs of every carriage were innumerable soldiers lying huddled in furs in the bitter cold, whilst their luggage was tied to the ventilators on the top of the train, and hung over the windows at the sides in much the same manner as a camel is loaded for a trip over the desert. The temperature must have been well 15 degrees below zero, and according to rumour most of these deck passengers fell off and became buried in the snow. However, I cannot vouch for this, as I was unable to get out of my compartment until 11 a.m. the next day, and then no one remained on the roof, although a number of pieces of baggage still encumbered the outside of the train. During the night the air in the compartment became so stifling that I put my foot through the window, which proved to be fastened with screws, the Russians declining to open the door an inch to allow of a little fresh air coming in. No one asked for any tickets, and apparently this sort of train was run by the people for the people to commit suicide on, or otherwise, gratis. On the return journey I must say I found things better, and even the train was not quite so dilapidatd.

Having got back to town I found things quieter. They seemed to be short of ammunition, or saving it for the next best occasion. This, however, proved to be again only the lull before the storm. The Germans declared their intention of occupying the town, and incidentally let loose all the forces of chaos which resulted from the varied and mixed feelings with which people viewed this latest development. The British colony almost vanished in a week, or rather what was left of it; the exceptions being the Consulate and a few commercial men who, like myself, felt that things could be no worse under whosoever came next, and that time remained to disappear at the eleventh hour if necessary. A few old ladies and invalids also remained. The panic increased, hundreds of British leaving daily, also the Embassy staffs; whilst Russians also, amongst whom were all sorts and conditions, fled pell-mell, however possible, beyond the limits of the town, on foot, by cart or train, just as the opportunity occurred. The British members of mill staffs had become a thing of the past in a few days, and with them went the last shreds of all technical control except such scant attention as one or two remaining managers could give to such matters. At the stations every Englishman received the utmost courtesy from the Red Guards and all officials encountered during their departure. Their passports were not visied, as no one could b found to perform this

duty. The new government went hurriedly to Moscow, and with them went as much of the loot from the banks as it was possible to remove, and also that from the government offices which was movable and could possibly prove useful. These latter we were glad to see depart. Then followed another period of hopeless anxiety as regards the business; large bodies of people, apparently officially, mined a number of the most important factories for blowing up prior to the German entry, during which process several heavy explosions occurred, wrecking property all around the vicinity. At our mill we were visited by a mining squad, but I painted a lurid picture to the workpeople of the resultant misery which would accrue to themselves in the event of the destruction of the factory, and having got them into a suitable state of frenzy on the subject, set them on to the unwelcome guests with the desired result. It must here be explained that every factory had its quota of Red Guards from amongst its own employees. These were supposed to guard the mill or take duty in town on mill pay, and even came to work at the mill with rifle ready at hand. It will also be noticed by the foregoing that a large section of the population were distinctly hostile to the idea of a German approach to the capital. No one knew the true facts of the situation—were they invited to take the place, or not? Apparently not. Anyway, the many Germans in the town continued to stroll around in their uniforms, whilst the papers were announcing that the Germans were advancing on every hand by express train. The disorders resulting from the situation, and the general panic, gave a huge impetus to the hooligan class. I personally witnessed a lady and gentleman dragged out of a sledge in the early evening on the Nevsky by a large party of roughs, and forcibly carried, protesting, towards an open courtyard door. What there occurred I do not know.

Opposite our mill an establishment known as a Red Guard staff had been established under the command of a villainous-looking sailor. These people gave me endless trouble, but none the less served the purpose of keeping us from molestation by other hooligans. These people filled their own yard with guns of all calibre, and out of every window protruded machine guns. At any hour of the day or night shells and bullets buzzed over and around our premises, making it very dangerous to be anywhere but under cover, and even then one had no guarantee of security. Long envied as a most suitable ground for expansion, the houses of mill foremen and others in our yard were one day occupied by these gentry of all arms and declared to be their property henceforth. As this would have spelt the end of any further peaceful work at the factory, one had to resolve on a more or less desperate move, and finally I personally led a detachment of our own Red Guard into the stronghold over the road and demanded the clearance of our premises. This resulted in endless talk, threats, and unpleasantness, but fortunately not in a free fight, as I rather feared. The office staff arranged a counter demonstration against me with the

aid of some soldier friends ; however we carried the day, and the place was duly evacuated solely because of the hostile attitude of our own workpeople to the invaders. After that it was necessary to fill the houses of the departed foremen with our own workpeople, and thus the peace was preserved for a while.

February was drawing to a close and a hitch seemed to have occurred in the German plans. So far no occupation of the town, but the threat of it remained an unpleasant prospect hanging over our heads all the time, for many weeks to come. As late as the 20th of March the occupation of the city still seemed a certainty, and towards the close of that month the general cussedness of everyone about the place made one almost wish the Germans would clear out this hornet's nest, in spite of one's disgust at so important a prize falling into their hands. In these days everyone seemed more concerned with the evacuation of all movable property than anything else. Of course from our point of view this seemed an admirable thing, but when one looked the actual facts in the face, the loss and chaos which ensued simply astounded one. Valuable machinery was literally ripped out of factories, packed anyhow, and left standing for weeks in the open under all manner of weather conditions. Some was placed on railway trucks and hauled away, never to be seen again. As soon as the navigation of the river opened barges were hastily loaded, and these distributed their contents all over the countryside beneath the stars. This also applied to the contents of government offices. I visited an establishment having to do with the collection of taxes situated in a large three or four storey building. Here cases were to be seen in the street, in the halls, and in the yard ready packed and apparently quite abandoned. Inside was an indescribable litter of books, papers, typewriters, broken furniture and all manner of stationery, but not a living soul amongst it all. I wandered into what had previously been the directors' cabinet and indiscriminately turned over documents relating to the affairs of firms whose fate had already been greatly similar to that of the contents of this office, in so far as a most complete state of disorganisation can possibly go.

At the mill we were in receipt of an official notice to be ready to evacuate all our machinery in 24 hours, later being visited by an official whose business was supposed to be the arranging of details of transport. One felt in no mood for these people at the time, and ignored the notice, using very impolite language to the man in question ; after which I heard no more of the matter.

An outstanding feature of the whole state of affairs at the time was the difficulty of concentrating on the quiet continuation of the work under such conditions, of coming to any vital decisions such as the purchase of such raw materials as might be available, and of finding the money should one come to the reluctant decision to buy. To close down was out of the question at the time, if only from the point of view of losing the support of the workpeople, who in the long run served



to keep things together by giving the necessary backing to the management, if somewhat unconsciously, whilst themselves again inclining to lean on the manager for support throughout this crisis owing to the threat of unemployment and the fear of the Germans. Was ever business carried on under such trying and such varying conditions? A change of management had really been the best possible move on the part of those responsible, giving the new man a chance to start on a more democratic basis, with full recognition extended to the Works Committee and Unions alike, taking advantage where he could of the changing circumstances and giving way where he must, unreservedly, to the wild and extravagant demands that were made, coaxing and persuading to obtain the line of action necessary at the moment and following out an elastic and tactful policy suitable for the day, but changeable to-morrow. A man was necessary who could take a pretty series of adversity with a smile and still be an optimist; who could say all goes well because we still have a factory, and that is the main issue at the moment; what occurs incidentally is all in the way of trivialities, both unavoidable and anticipated, but seldom pleasant. An Englishman could always console himself with the reflection that he had a homeland to retreat to, whereas the unhappy Russian was fated to live in the nest he had made for himself. Sympathy can, however, in every case not be said to be deserved by the Russian in general, the lower classes having spoilt themselves by their general doings and the upper classes by doing so little.

April saw the end of any immediate threat to Petrograd, although 24 hours would have been enough to have taken the place in at any time. The rout of the Red Army in Finland also had its effect on the capital, as the limit of the advance of the Finnish-German army could likewise not be gauged, whilst hordes of all the scum of Russia were driven pell mell from beyond the borders of that little country back into the capital. Poor Finland! For months vainly struggling against the terror in their midst, at that date far worse than anything known in Petrograd, she at length called in the assistance of the enemies of the Allies and herself, to help her wash her territory of the Bolshevik evil, and only succeeded in exchanging one robber for another.

## CHAPTER V.

**N**OW for a short while we have a more settled state. True, German missions and consulates, and even Embassies, invaded the country, but the Bolshevik had now decided that provided he obeyed orders he was apparently free to rummage in his own nest. At once this feeling became reflected amongst the labour at the works, these now casting about themselves for guidance in fulfilling their interrupted task of taking everything in their own hands from the hated capitalist.

As if from nowhere, up sprung an establishment known as the Soviet of the Peoples' Property. This place will stand out in the history of this Bolshevik year as one of the constructive if somewhat aimless examples of their organisation. Its very name implies what its functions were intended to be, particularly when one remembers that it was dealing with the industry of the Northern Commune or District as a whole, of which before the revolution a very infinitesimal part belonged to the State. A large block of buildings, comparatively new and eclipsing our Home Office in size, its very appearance was no doubt calculated to inspire awe in the breasts of workpeople embarking on a venture of control for themselves and not for the State, as represented throughout by a limited few, which was not the idea of profit-sharing as entertained by these latter. Every trade here again had its representative section, each section its series of rooms, which included the president's cabinet, council chamber, the first secretary's room, and rooms for other clerks, statistics, records, etc. To the position of textile president was appointed a workman who was known to be a former textile worker, his first secretary and most of the staff were Jews. Similar conditions prevailed in other departments. I said that this institution sprang up as if from nowhere, because the first intimation of its presence was brought to my notice by a letter in large type addressed to the Works Committee, and commanding delegates to attend a conference at the council room of their section. This was shown to me, and in answer to my inquiry as to what sort of business might be going forward there, I was informed that it was a case of having to account for the fact that no Control Committee had thus far taken over the control at our place. These institutions were usually not taken seriously by me at first, as I found that many again faded into nothingness and took no further action when very peremptory demands were taken no further notice of. However the Soviet of the Peoples' Property rivetted one's attention at once. The addition of a Control Committee to a Works Committee had to my knowledge already become an accomplished fact at a number of works. Cash or other payments were no longer being made by most of our old customers except by kind permission of a council of labourers seated in the

director's cabinet. The keys of the safes were in the keeping of this same council. All orders going out received their signature of approval instead of the signature of the manager, and all those received were returned if not duly signed by some Workpeople's Committee from the particular mill or factory. Managers and the technical advisers had their salaries severely cut, and were told to quit if they did not like it. Letters referring to delay in delivery or other complaints reached me via our Works Committee to whom they were addressed. One began to despair of the future. However, new times demanded new methods, so I called together a meeting of our Works Committee prior to their attendance at this new office. I explained that I was prepared to carry on if they intended to let me alone, and would do my best for them, but otherwise if they gave the word of their intention to run the place it was all up as between us, and off I went to England. To my surprise they agreed that they were quite incapable of carrying on by themselves, none of the very fiery spirits however had remained with us after an initial spring cleaning at the first signs of trouble after the revolution. I pointed out that I had supplied them with rubber stamps bearing the inscription of Works Committee, also those for the use of the president of that committee and his secretary, and that they obtained from me full particulars of any transaction about which they had a mind to inquire, and full recognition in the guarding of their own interests. Hence we parted on the understanding that this move was to be resisted, and I rightly regarded this period as the crisis in the affairs of the place. We often spent the evenings gardening side by side, and generally the understanding between us was quite friendly. They showed a most reasonable attitude, and expressed the opinion that they saw no reason why a change should be necessary, as in their opinion I was more capable of running the show to their own advantage than they would be themselves, and this attitude was reinforced by my reminder of a very unpleasant financial outlook. The meeting duly took place, and like most Russians they were convinced again by the other party and came back to announce in a hesitating manner that a control of some sort must be established. Hence there only remained one more move in the game. I promoted them all then and there to be the control committee in name, their functions to be as before, for as they said, if something of the sort were not done a commissar would be sent to control them and us. The necessary rubber stamps were ordered to give the affair a proper aspect, but the committee now protested loudly, not against their functions being restricted, but against having to take part in these proceedings at all. However all went well for a while. It is necessary to point out here though that this state of affairs was absolutely exceptional, due to the lack of any intelligence amongst them and the absence of any agitators in our midst. Also this acquiescence did not mean that they intended to let me have too much of my own way, in spite of their reluctance to take on the role of Control Committee individually. Cool argument beat them every time, and this it was very necessary to bear in mind.



If they could have found the opportunity to get excited on all and every occasion of dispute things would have taken a different course. We will now leave the Soviet of the People's Property and its effects for a time, to refer to the contemporary events.

The strike of bank and government office employees against the Bolshevik rule had become a farce and was falling through entirely. Landlords refused to pay the outrageous levies of taxation demanded in the early months, and as a result each issue of the Soviet paper contained daily columns of some two or three hundred houses and shops confiscated. Each house had its house committee, consisting of the tenants of several of the flats. During long days of virtual imprisonment at home, owing to the happenings in the streets, many debates had taken place. Tenants generally refused to pay any rent, as money could not be obtained, and in the working class quarters many landlords or their agents were lucky to escape with their lives after very bad handling. In many of the better class districts the landlord could not be found at all, and all and sundry decided not to pay the tax levies. After the confiscation of a house the tenants, both rich and poor alike, were still less inclined to pay rent to anyone at all or taxes either; the former because they now argued that the property must be their own and the latter on principle. If not, why confiscation? Thus for six months there were very few cases of anyone paying rent at all. On all sides, if the subject was mentioned, the question was: To whom? Thus people deriving their incomes from this source, their agents and representatives, were all left without the means of carrying on in the usual way. The house employees, such as porters, liftmen, firemen, coal carriers, etc., could likewise not obtain their pay from any source, and after their insolent behaviour of the last few months, the tenants were the last to desire to help them. Hence their departure to seek employment in the Red Army or to return to their native villages in the country, was viewed by many with secret feelings of joy, in spite of the enforced inconvenience, and these people departed in no friendly mood towards the Soviet authorities. Distress now became most acutely felt by very many classes of the people. Bank employees were compelled from sheer hunger to go and seek reinstatement in their former positions, whilst all manner of petty government officials offered their knowledge and services to the Bolsheviks, from a tax-collector to the railway and postal staffs. Officers in hundreds, no longer in uniform, took posts as clerks to all the newly-formed Soviet institutions such as the Smolny, the financial control bureau, of which more later, the Soviet of the People's Property, the municipality, and even in the divisional Soviets. This was a great triumph for the Maximalist cause, and was mostly brought about by the excessive cost of the few available provisions, which had made life quite unsupportable for them. The women folk of the most aristocratic families of the country sold potato cakes and oilcake pancakes on the Nevsky for a living, these being eagerly snapped up by

people who had money enough but could not find the food to buy, during this, the worst period of famine before the meagre harvest, and prior to the great and absolute famine of the last months of the year from October onwards. Potato flour was foraged for in the country and made into some sort of cakes as the only possible means of support for these ladies and their starving children, whose fathers, in many cases in prison or being eagerly sought after by the Bolsheviks, were in headlong flight across country to Siberia, the German occupied zone, or the South. The disgraceful peace of Brest-Litovsk had been signed, and the Germans now appeared in full control of the strings behind the Soviets, whose lease of life, if German threats could be depended on, was entirely dependent on their strict obedience to all German orders. Houses hitherto confiscated or occupied, which turned out to be the property of Germans, were hastily evacuated, and any damage done made good, whilst those not so protected were taken wholesale daily by the Red Guards or their friends without anything being allowed to be removed by the rightful owners. Also levies of warm clothing and blankets were at this time persistently made for the troops at the front, although which front or where was never stated, peace having been settled according to the Government organ. In this connection we viewed with much pleasure the departure of the staff from opposite our mill, the house turning out to be German property, these gentry of late having helped themselves to cartloads of wood at frequent intervals, in spite of strong opposition from our workpeople, having also set the remainder on fire during much indiscriminate firing, and having confiscated a quantity of furniture out of the mill office, their only explanation being that it was necessary to them and that they had more guns than we. After this departure I inspected the premises and saw a condition of ruin and filth unimaginable to our English folk at home. The walls of every room inside were literally riddled with machine gun fire, the paper hanging in strips, the ceilings had collapsed, cupboards which were fixtures had been torn from the walls, statues ripped from their pedestals in the halls and used as targets, windows and doors broken everywhere, and a most thorough state of ruin prevailed. Not a stick of furniture was left behind, but none the less, this being German property, an attempt was made to put back the place into something like its original condition.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE banks now began to resume the appearance of their former activity, the menace of a German descent being now over, and things having given place to other forms of excitement. At first one hopefully inquired if cheques would now be cashed, and received the reply "If signed or countersigned by the Works Committee on the special form provided." One had a great number of accumulated cheques on hand, and requested that these be placed to our credit, but received a flat refusal. Enquiring what one should do with these, I was told that I could open an account with each at the bank on which it was drawn. I presented a draft from the south of Russia and was laughed at. People naturally declined to have anything to do with cheques, and would only sell goods for cash ; but where control committees existed cheques were ordered to be passed on in payment, and the owner could then do what he liked with these. Fortunately I had accounts at a good number of the banks, and used others to obtain wages on, the procedure being somewhat as follows :—A form had now been published demanding a lot of information : the amount of the cheque presented, amount paid last pay day, number of workpeople and staff, cash balance remaining in safe, etc. This was signed by the Works Committee and passed into the hands of the Divisional Soviet, who verified the number of workpeople and reduced the amount by several thousand roubles. The paper then had to be called for and taken, together with the cheque, to the financial control bureau, which had been established in the premises of a former bank now considered superfluous, and there deposited for a further three days. At the end of these three days my representative informed me that I should be visited by a member of the control, and pending that visit nothing could be done. After two more days this individual arrived and first demanded the opening of the safes so as to enable him to count any cash found there. Then he proceeded to verify the cash balance in the cash books, and finally presented me with four sheets of foolscap very closely typed, full of questions relating to the financial position of the firm for years back, payments made to employees discharged months ago, amount of remuneration of managers, directors and office staff, etc., etc. On the first occasion the man sent was a very ignorant individual, and the information he received was in accord with his capability of discovering it to be otherwise. As he himself made a note of the debtors in the place of the creditors, and vice versa, he also helped in his own confusion. Two days after his departure the cheque was eventually returned to me marked as payable, but a note informed me that no more cheques from that source would be considered. Then the cheque and the attached form had to go to the bank on which it was drawn, and after quite a



full day's strenuous effort was again marked as payable, this time at the State bank. The following day this remarkable cheque was actually cashed. Thus my first effort at cashing cheques under this reconstructed banking system gave me something to think about, and the prospect of a fortnightly repetition of this pantomime was not in any way heartening. Anyway, for several times after that the financial control passed my cheques without any further visits to the office. According to a decree every person was now compelled to accept cheques in payment for anything, but the majority preferred not to sell anything. One needed money urgently, and it became necessary to think out a plan for obtaining it. There remained the possibility of obtaining goods from the controlled firms for cheques, and selling again to such small dealers as remained active for cash, and this had to be done at some risk. Also cash books were falsified and a complete set of false books kept, in which many entries failed to appear regarding sums received, but none referring to expense were forgotten. The shortage of fuel, owing to the money conditions under which no one would carry on, led to large requisitions by the Soviet of the People's Property on behalf of controlled firms. To obtain a share of this plunder I led my Works Committee to the fore, and got my quota of the stolen property in return for cheque payment.

Later, banks again began to collect cheques and place these sums to your credit, the individuals in charge having come to a better knowledge of the subject by this time; commissions amounting to large sums were charged however for this service, although all the banks were now known as branches of the State bank. A sum beyond the small allowance to private individuals could be obtained from bank officials by the simple expedient of giving 50 per cent. of the amount required to that official. Also a sum of 5000 roubles was sufficient to have a sum much larger written in your pass book where no sum had been paid in at all. The bank safes, in which were stored the securities of the firm, were closely inspected; all gold, cash, and in many cases jewellery being confiscated alike from firms or individuals. In the case of paper money this sum was put to your credit in your bank account.

Later these safes were again opened in the presence of the owner, if he appeared, and this time all securities were confiscated. In my case, I was relieved of considerable quantities of share certificates, both English and Russian, for which I received a receipt. The faces of some of the private owners who were being despoiled at the time were a sight never to be forgotten. Two days after this I was visited at my flat by a Jewish commissar who was in charge of that particular bank, and the following propositions were made to me:—

- 1.—To sell me back all confiscated share certificates at 10 per cent. of their nominal value.

- 2.—To sell me all share certificates in a hitherto unopened safe at 5 per cent. of their nominal value.

3.—For 2000 roubles to prevent this second safe being opened at all.

All these ideas I, of course, declined to be a party to.

Meanwhile, Asiatic cholera had been raging in the town, and lurry loads of coffins were a daily sight in the streets. Even bodies were removed in luries without any covering whatever, and medical assistance stations were established in all the principal streets to render first aid to sufferers which might be too late if left till the person reached his home. Grave-digging became a serious problem, and led to thousands of the better class people being ordered individually to appear for burial duties. Offices were established for the purpose, and the president of each house committee had to appear in person with a list of all the inmates of his house. Then he received little slips which he had to deliver to all the men in his house whose names appeared on the list. My most reliable man at the mill was afflicted with a slight attack of this grim disease, and I had to replace him at repair work in the mill, being very badly able to spare the time from the office. Whilst thus engaged, and at the busiest time, I received such a slip to appear for burial duties, and needless to say informed them that an Englishman did not usually undertake other people's dirty work, after which I heard no more of the matter. Mainly owing to a very fortunate cold spell of weather, the disease was got under at a time when it threatened very serious consequences, owing to the under-nourished state of the population.

After a very troublesome time with the Works Committee I again found a change taking place. Lack of food, delays in the payment of wages, and the threats of a German occupation had so disheartened them that they became quite childish in their attitude towards the management once again. The office staff had been threatened by myself, and were quite overawed by the workpeople, and inclining to the belief that things could not remain thus had ceased all hostilities to myself and continued their work in a quiet, sulky manner. Also just at this time the doings of their unions, and the publications of their trade union journals, had found extreme disfavour with the powers of the land, and these went so far as to publish a decree excluding all office staffs from any further "benefits" of the revolution, and ordering all managements to refuse them any further advances in wages from that date. This of course had the effect of placing them at the mercy of everyone, and having made themselves very unpopular all round they soon paid the penalty of their crimes by seeing every labourer's wage soar well above that of a clerk of many years' service.

## CHAPTER VII.

ONE began to feel that from within one had now very little to fear, but any satisfaction one might have derived from that turn of events was easily overshadowed by the increasing pressure from without. At last even the workpeople were beginning to realise that all the vain promises of food and peace had produced nothing of the sort. Red Guards were being hurried off in all directions to suppress risings against the Soviets from Archangel to Odessa, labourers, thrown out of their employment by the ruin of the firms to which they had belonged, were compelled to join the Red Army, having no other alternative for obtaining food, whilst the hordes of soldiers still returning from various fronts formed many unwilling detachments from sheer lack of anything better to do. The Germans were making great progress in their activities of bringing every industry of the country to a standstill, no doubt in order to have everything at their mercy when the appropriate time arrived, and they were also obtaining a great amount of information they desired about the various important industries of the country. Their unwilling but obedient servants, the Bolsheviks, explained this state of affairs when questioned by saying that it was necessary to break down the entire sequence of affairs in order to begin again on their own lines. This policy of destruction could not, however, be openly carried out with that intention, as the workpeople, though steadily losing ground, had still a considerable amount of power in the land. Nevertheless, by the end of August they also had fully realised the situation, but by that time they had lost all influence; their power, their work, their arms, their all had gone.

Thus at the time when I most needed the Committee to support my demands, or to make demands in their own name on behalf of the firm, they resigned in a body and refused to continue to act, bringing me all the rubber stamps and equipment and offering to sign any number of blank papers or forms in advance as a sort of compromise. This I could not permit, and we thus had a complete reversal from the situation of a few months previously, when we had to struggle against the entire power of control being handed over to them. This likewise was by no means the universal attitude, although very general at the time. In many mills of importance the Committee had been seen to be weakening for some time, and these had been replaced by professional agitators, from the government school for agitators, and even members of the actual Soviet government appointed to keep their eyes on events.



An attempt to keep the workpeople quiet was made as soon as the harvest was ready. From every mill and factory a quota of men and even women was ordered to go and fetch the corn for themselves and their fellow-workers under Bolshevik control. These detachments were armed and incorporated "temporarily" in the Red Army, it being already nothing new to see women engaged in this most unladylike occupation. They were put under Red Army leaders and set out in great good humour. However, sad was the tale related by the returning stragglers, and great the dissatisfaction. True the harvest was obtained in many districts, and loaded into trucks at the disposal of the government, but at what a price! Farmers were paid nothing and left nothing for the winter. In desperation they fetched from their lofts and outhouses the machine guns and rifles they had laid aside since the time when they had straggled home from the war, and then commenced a disorganized defence of their house and property, which resulted in such an appalling slaughter of men, women and children, together with the burning of their homes and complete devastation of thousands of villages, as will sicken the world by its horror when the full facts become generally known. For months this sort of thing continued, particularly in the districts close to the German occupied zone. Then large numbers of these provision detachments were driven forward to fight in other parts of the country against Czecho-Slovaks, Cossacks and all the other miscellaneous armies collected in various parts of that huge country.

To continue the tale of our relationship with the Soviet of the People's Property. This we had come to regard in the light of a sort of glorified trades union, however, it was necessary to note all of the many decrees issued under its signature. When applying for a permit to send goods to Moscow from the Nicholas Railway Station, which formula had become necessary owing to the restricted services to prevent hopeless congestion at the collecting depots, I was referred to the above-mentioned Soviet. Having sent the clerk who had the matter in hand to that place, I received the reply that the permit would not be granted, so I gathered together the orders for the goods, all from large factories, and started out to visit these people personally. A sleek-looking young Jew was the man I got hold of, after fruitless arguments with others, this man occupying the position of first secretary to the section. Here I was told that I should be aware of the fact that speculation was now prohibited, and that I should on no account receive a permit. This, needless to say, rather dumb-founded me, and I went on to explain that the goods we had made were absolutely necessary to the factories concerned for their continued production, were mostly ordered by various control committees, and had been manufactured by Petrograd workmen, for which labour they were paid their wages. This availed nothing, and I enquired on whose behalf the so-called Soviet of the People's Property might be working, as it could not possibly be in the interests of the work-

people, and only went to further unemployment by restricting our trade to the Petrograd district, and thus cutting the work at the mill by one-half or more. So receiving nothing but evasive replies, I asked to see the President, but was informed that that was impossible, as he was engaged on important business. After that I demanded point blank to know if the game was to shut up the mill and throw the workpeople out of employment, which I pointed out was the German game of complete disorganization of all industry. This assumption of mine likewise met with irrelevant and evasive remarks, but no denial, so informing them that send the goods to Moscow I would, and that they should hear further of the matter, I retired out of it. The following day I sent the Works Committee, together with a number of workmen, in all about twenty persons in a suitable mood for a good old row, promising them double pay if they stuck to their demands and refused to leave the premises without having obtained satisfaction. Also on my return from this Soviet I found waiting for me a deputation of five workmen from the Moscow district, bringing credentials as delegates of a large Moscow factory. These demanded goods, and of course I related my experiences of the morning, pointing out the impossibility of fulfilling their demands under such circumstances. Eventually I despatched them all five to this Soviet in no very conciliatory humour. The upshot of this was that the Soviet in the first place demanded to know who I was personally, and then asked for a certificate signed by our Works Committee, and also the Divisional Soviet, to the effect that the goods were necessary to the consignees. A few days later I again attended with the document, and was received in a very different spirit, but was none the less informed that this certificate must now be signed by each of the Divisional Soviets in the districts to which the goods were consigned. This of necessity involved weeks of waiting, as letters had to travel thousands of miles to outlying districts round Moscow, and I must admit I quite lost my temper and suggested that dealing with lunatics and German agents was a thankless task. My five visitors had departed, and were duly informed of this latest by telegraph, and also the other factories concerned. After several weeks the document returned to me, but the goods had long since departed under pressure and threats all round. After obtaining the permit, however, it was still necessary to apply to the railway permit office, but this place was well known to us as a rogues' centre where a little money went a long way. The annoying part of these proceedings lay in the fact that this sort of thing would occur at intervals, and seemed to be in no way the outcome of a regular course of procedure.

At about this time we were in receipt of a very lengthy printed form from this "People's Property" bureau, consisting of one long string of questions, which by a moderate estimate, if conscientiously filled in, could not take less than two months to complete in the time

the staff had available for such work. The questions amongst many others included : Date of all buildings at the factory, and a complete list of all rooms with their dimensions, and materials of construction ; number of machines in each room with their dates, and the production on same, covering many years ; engine and boiler particulars, with the fuel consumption for years back ; wages paid for all classes of labour covering many years, etc., etc., without end, and more remarkable still, a question as to when we proposed to close down the works. All this mass of information, it was only possible to conclude, was bound direct to Germany. Apart from this we received weekly forms to fill in giving particulars of production, materials bought and used, wages paid, fuel used and bought, &c. It practically amounted to a separate staff having to be maintained to satisfy the ravenous desire for information by this and other departments ; the others including similar statistical particulars demanded by the Ministry of Labour, which had become entirely subservient to the Soviet of the People's Property, also fortnightly returns of all wages paid had to be dispatched to the workpeople's insurance bureau, and the fortnightly tale of financial status to the so-called " financial control " office. One of these establishments, in fairness to the constructive efforts which were made by the Bolsheviks, must be mentioned. This is the one dealing with the workpeople's insurance, and which was styled the Petrograd Workers' Socialistic Insurance. This place was also established on grandiloquent lines in large premises, with hundreds of rooms and dozens of departments, where we later found the most utter confusion to apparently prevail. This department took over all the older semi-official establishments dealing with workpeople's sickness and unemployment insurance, in connection with which a fortnightly contribution had been paid on a basis of 50 per cent. from employer and 50 per cent. from the employee. The new bureau at once cancelled the employee's contribution, and the employer was ordered to pay in the equivalent of 10 per cent. of all wages paid, being later increased to 12 per cent. and then 14 per cent. All records of sickness, discharge, and engagements, earnings, etc., had to be regularly forwarded, printed forms being issued for the purpose, in which was demanded detailed particulars of all wage calculations. This bureau was also in use to assist to carry out the decree that all fines were to be abolished and no one discharged by the management. This magnificent establishment also paid sick benefits to a very limited degree, no case coming to my notice of more than one month's pay being allowed in cases of total disablement from further employment ; this resulted in the firm being appealed to for assistance, and this was usually given in spite of the outrageous amount taken for insurance. With reference to the discharge of undesirable individuals, this matter could only be overcome as follows : A statement of the case made to the Committee, after which a proclamation was drawn up which stated that by the united desire of all the hands such and such a party was discharged.



This usually came off, and was signed by all concerned. A more difficult matter in a lot of the works was to prevent the taking on of new and probably undesirable hands by the Works Committee, but this difficulty in our case was overcome, well prior to the resigning of the Works Committee *en bloc*. In many cases, however, when the mills were on the point of closing for lack of money and raw materials to carry on with, people were engaged wholesale by the committees from amongst their friends, merely to enable these to benefit from the paying-off scheme, whereby each received wages in advance for a considerable period, which varied from 2 to 6 weeks or 3 months, according to the period at which this occurred. In any case the committee, by decree, had to be kept on with full pay indefinitely. Works closed down in rapid succession all the year round, the exceptions being two of the large ironworks where the workpeople had become a thorn in the side of the Bolshevik government, which necessitated work being found for them to keep them quiet, and also the limited few cotton mills, of which a few succeeded in running into the new year of 1919. It is of considerable interest to relate one's further experiences in connection with the cashing of cheques. The usual formula began in the usual way, i.e., cheque and all particulars on the attached form being sent in to the local Divisional Soviet. This was promptly returned and a detailed wage list demanded, together with particulars of the salaries of management, etc. Then after a few days a labourer from the Soviet called at the mill office with a few Red Guards and demanded to see the safes. Being told that these were in town he set off there, and I was informed by telephone. Hence all spare cash was cleared out and his arrival awaited. On arrival he announced his intention of looking through the safes to see if we had any money there, this being the prevalent idea at that establishment as to the correct method of checking the accuracy of cash book balances as returned to them. On one occasion I visited the so-called "financial department" of this establishment, and found in a bare room, with a table and three chairs as furniture, three labourers seated, of the roughest sort and quite evidently not even aware of the uses of a cheque; of course, as I had anticipated, they had not the faintest notion of anything at all in the financial line. Outside the door stood a Red Guard sentry, and the entrance to the premises was heavily guarded by people who strictly inquired the business of anyone appearing to be of the middle or upper classes. The representatives of this institution, having searched the two safes, left the premises without further talk. After several days we received back this form duly signed, and presented it in due course to the financial control, Nevsky 12. Again a lapse of several days, and the girl at the office door, which was kept strictly locked, with an additional high barrier inside to prevent any too speedy entry of undesirables, announced a visitor of Jewish appearance from Nevsky 12. It was at once necessary to throw all the money, kept in a bundle for the purpose, into a corner and then

to admit this person. A shifty-eyed Jew, evidently of no particular intelligence, strutted in with a bundle of papers under his arm and hat on, struck a dramatic attitude, and demanded that both safes be opened. This was complied with, and he was shown a collection of books and papers. Satisfied on this point, he now demanded the cash book. The false one was produced, the ledgers being never brought nearer than two months prior to current date, so as to obviate any great risk of detection. The cash balance was next struck, during which no word passed between us. Satisfied that all was in order as compared with the form we had submitted, he seated himself, and lighting a cigarette commenced to chat, also announcing that he had a roll of papers to fill in which would probably occupy himself and me for the space of at least three days. These papers turned out to be twelve sheets of foolscap, with printed questions on them, and relating to cash balances for each month from the start of the year and other questions galore, with estimates of wages and expenditure for the future, most of which information had already been dispatched to their and other departments in more than one example, and all of which made one wish heartily to be able to kick this intruder out of the office. The difficulties and waste of time experienced in so many ways made one feel desperate. However, here again diplomacy was necessary, especially as many of the questions were not the kind we liked to answer at the time, and he proposed to ferret out the answers himself. So an invitation to lunch followed, together with vodka, wine and a good cigar, after which we came to an understanding whereby I should return him these forms ready filled in at the end of three days, during which he would betake himself away and drink the two bottles of vodka I had made him a present of. A present of cloth was also promised in the course of negotiations, and all went off well, as the money necessary was duly received about ten days later, being a month after pay-day, the workpeople however having received their pay from cash reserves, and the next cheque being already at the stage of the Divisional Soviet fiasco.

The reason for all this additional stringency was the ever-greater shortage of cash at the banks, owing largely to the number of large cheques cashed for the commissars, which these had received in the course of all manner of bribery for failure to arrest, interfere, appropriate, etc. Taxes became a source of income to the individual instead of to the State. The various needy ex-officials whose services had been enlisted presented claims, which after lunch were settled on a small percentage basis in favour of the inspector. This refers, however, only to those taxes which had been in vogue prior to the Bolshevik usurpation, and not to the extraordinary taxes levied by them through the Soviets.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WITH reference to the general conditions about the town about midsummer, as already stated things were quieter on the whole. Shooting matches in the streets had become quite infrequent, whilst the evening daylight had quite damped the efforts of the hooligan element. Of police, of course, there had been none since the advent of the first revolution, and strangely enough these now were very little missed, providing that one remained indoors during the dark hours, the exceptions being usually such occasions as would in our country call for the reading of the Riot Act or the declaration of martial law. The Isvobschik plying for hire in the streets had decreased to an enormous extent. Horse meat had become the principal article of diet months ago, apart from the continual dying of horses in the streets from under nourishment and the Bolshevik requisition from among the remainder for their military purposes. As many as three or four could be seen lying dead or dying at any time of any day on the Nevsky Prospect. Traffic, as the result of the closing of factories, etc., and the horse shortage, almost vanished from the streets, whilst petrol from August onwards had become a commodity exclusively reserved for the automobiles of the commissars, and mainly those commissars of the Extraordinary Commission for the fight with counter-revolution. Theatres had been in full swing still in the spring, but later such performances as were continued were carefully avoided by all cautious people owing to the wholesale arrests of audiences, which were frequently marched hundreds strong from the theatre to a place of confinement, to be sorted out at the pleasure of their captors, usually resulting in a very leisurely proceeding which caused months of imprisonment to many innocent people.

Picture houses fared likewise, all the young women being marched off on several occasions to the barracks of various Red Army units and there set to wash dirty clothes, etc., and being finally released from two to three days later. The main occupants of the streets during both afternoon and evening were sailors, together with all manner of girls dressed surprisingly gaudily considering that there was an entire lack of any purchasable clothing. No doubt thousands of girls were driven by hunger and lack of work to seek the company of sailors as a means of obtaining enough money to buy any available food at the enormous prices prevailing. These gentlemen always appeared to have plenty of cash, the rumour being that in order to keep them quiet they were thus handsomely provided for. The river was packed with cruisers, destroyers, mine sweepers, merchant ships



and auxiliaries, which arrived in one continual stream from the time of the defeat of the Red Army in Finland onwards. Not enough river frontage being available in the town, many of the lighter craft took up permanent station along the villages by the river as far as Schlusselfberg.

All ex-officers had been ordered to register themselves by a recent decree. Probably half obeyed this decree, and in August a round-up of the remainder took place, resulting in the disappearance of very many of these gentry to spend long weary months between fortress walls, and in only too many cases never again to know the joys of being a free citizen. Many died of starvation or disease, many more were shot during the wholesale massacres following on events at the end of August, and those who had registered themselves and were mostly in Bolshevik employ fared little better, for these were also ruthlessly gathered together and imprisoned under conditions far worse than any experienced under the old Tzarist tyranny. The general population of the town had decreased to little over three-quarter million from between two and a half to three millions. One of the main reasons why the Bolsheviks were able to maintain their power was the everlasting exodus from the towns of the huge numbers of unemployed. Unlike England, all the workpeople in Russia have a village of origin, and migrate to the towns for periods of work only, being brought up in their villages, where they spend all their unemployed and leisure time, and finally their old age. Food conditions being better in the country, this exodus was vigorously maintained, and prevented what would have been the inevitable outcome of such events in any other country, namely, serious trouble with the industrial workers of the towns. A few lines from a letter of mine at the time are worthy of note :—" You are no doubt wondering what is actually happening over here. That question is as difficult for anyone on the scene to answer as for anybody else. Each day brings further surprises, and the truth is, just chaos upon chaos. It is, however, very sickening sort of chaos, as every effort seems expressly designed to ruin more and more, or rather all that is left to ruin. Half-a-hundred different committees worry themselves and others about controlling the remaining businesses out of existence. There must be more committees than people in Petrograd. Business can only be carried on by trickery and defrauding the so-called government, and one runs a continual risk of worse than mere wordy warfare over the matter."

All newspapers, with the exception of the three Government organs, had been suppressed and their presses confiscated and staffs ejected. Apart from this the only papers available were the entire list of German dailies, which arrived as regularly as clockwork, three to four days after their publication, presumably via Stockholm and the boats from Sweden. Other foreign papers had not been seen throughout the entire year. The landing of our forces at Archangel

to protect our stores, and as part of the general policy of defence against German militarism, evoked fierce articles against the Anglo-French "Imperialists" in the government papers, and the Army was declared to consist entirely of capitalists. American participation in this affair was hardly ever mentioned, and the representatives of America can only be said to have been treated with the utmost courtesy right up to the time of their departure, which was in the main attributable to judicious propaganda on the part of certain so-called Red Cross officials and others, together with an impartial attitude on the part of the officials who remained in a country where the powers in the land were not recognised by the Allied governments. In any case, the British were in the most unhappy plight of all, a definite policy of molestation being adopted against them early in August. Numerous arrests were made amongst the British colony which had remained or had returned, great care, however, being observed that none of the officials were molested. Those arrested were mostly of the owner class, and their detention at the time varied from a few hours to about eight days. In the case of one English mill manager, 2500 workpeople struck work, and he was at once released. Many laughable events occurred during these arrests. The Bolsheviks, themselves new to the proceeding of arresting foreigners, were a little timid. In some cases the individual refused to get up in the middle of the night, and was left till morning; in others where the individual was away the servant was told that he must report himself for arrest in the morning, and in one case where an Englishman produced a huge Union Jack, and declared that he would wave it all the way along the street, he was left alone. The Consulate was at this period seeking permission to leave the country with such of the civilian Britishers as wished to go. This was never granted prior to the deplorable events of the 31st of August, although the American Consulate and others left peacefully enough on August 30th, via Finland.

At this period the most notable organization in the town was the Extraordinary Commission for the fight with counter-revolution and speculation, situated in the building formerly occupied by the police as headquarters, in the Gorochovaia Street No. 2, the institution being usually simply known as "Gorochovaia," and presided over by the famous Uritzky, the Petrograd counterpart of the Moscow Pieters of ill fame. This Uritzky was an elderly, ferret-eyed Jew of very unprepossessing appearance, and judging by the reputation he was fast gaining as the signer of wholesale death warrants, and the guardian of prisons and barracks full of innocent captives of the upper and officer class, a very unpleasant customer. Our Naval Attaché was told by him during a business visit that he himself expected to be murdered in due course, but would see to making things as unpleasant and dangerous as possible for the Britishers before that occurred. Happy thoughts! I personally had a trio of officer friends

in prison at the time, and another friend of mine was arrested and kept for months for no other reason than that the telephone girl at the exchange had in mistake connected him with Gorochovaia. He was asked his number and arrested 15 minutes later. Several civilian friends of mine were variously employed at cleaning stables, slow starvation in prison, or waiting to be shot with their names on a list of hostages. Comrade Uritzky laboriously prepared a long list of his prisoners who were to be shot in the event of his being murdered. Meanwhile Comrade Jukoff, a Russian and ex-member of the crew of a British merchant service vessel, at present Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Northern Commune, made great acquaintance with the British, but most probably for reasons of his own. The other two most prominent at the time were Zinovieff, alias Apfelbaum, a most despicable liar and a Jew, and Lunacharsky, who was a true fanatic and extremist of superior education and manners. Zinovieff narrowly escaped being murdered on two occasions, the first being when the commissar Voladarsky was killed, and the second during the epidemic of attempts on the lives of these people at the time when Lenin was shot through the chest and Uritzky met his richly-deserved fate. Messrs. Lenin and Trotzky after February paid but rare visits to Petrograd, and of these there is little doubt that Lenin is the true fanatic in the extremist cause, using Germany to gain his ends, as far as Germany did not use him for hers, whilst Trotzky rules the roost with an iron fist—unscrupulous, bloodthirsty, and a remarkable type of the criminal stamp, showing untiring determination and extraordinary shrewdness of character. Thus it is not a surprise that we had the persistent reports of the desire of Lenin for compromise with the Allies, whilst Trotzky replied to this with a threat to confine him to his quarters. Trotzky in Petrograd in October said: "We have gone too far to ever make it up with the Allies."



## CHAPTER IX.

THE shooting of Count Mirbach, the German Ambassador, had of course nothing to do with the Bolsheviks. It was entirely a continuation of the old policy of assassination of the Right Socialist Party as already practised in the days of the Tzar, probably prompted by a resentment of the German support of the Lenin-Trotsky regime and a false desire to please the Allies. The successor of Count Mirbach was so persistently harrassed by these people that he left the country again after a stay of only ten days. To these can, of course, also be traced the attempts on the lives of Lenin, Trotsky and Zinovieff, though it is exceedingly doubtful if young Konigessen, who murdered Uritsky, belonged to this party. All these occurrences within the space of twenty-four hours goaded the Bolsheviks to fury, and brought about the crisis in our affairs, together with an appalling slaughter of the innocents. Uritsky's lists of hostages were dispatched by Bokki, his successor, according to all reliable accounts, at the rate of 1500 in one day. A huge pit was dug and the shooting continued without interruption, and upon the refusal of the sailors to carry on the execution Chinese labourers were used for the purpose, who shot their victims in the arms, legs, and so forth according to chance, and these were then buried alive, howling for mercy enough to allow of them being killed prior to burial. There is also no doubt that barge-loads of officers were sunk on their way to Kronstadt, or their victims thrown overboard tied together, in which condition the bodies were washed up all along the beaches of the little summer resorts lining the gulf. Banners bearing the inscription: "A thousand heads for one," were paraded along the streets. Arrests were made indiscriminately all over the towns of anyone of former standing or even of respectable appearance. As for ourselves, well, I think the tale of the raid on His Majesty's Embassy is fairly well known. Motor cars filled with armed men and commissars drove up outside the premises, the guns of destroyers were trained on the building, and numbers of wildly excited men rushed wildly up the stairs with a revolver in each hand, whilst those outside shot up and down the streets. No warning was given at all, and in view of the prevailing hooliganism it is hardly surprising that our Naval Attaché rushed out and fired at the advancing throng, himself falling a victim to British prestige, his blood staining the steps of a British Embassy hitherto considered to be ex-territorial in all civilised countries. Visitors and officials alike were marshalled together with hands in the air, whilst the intruders continued to shoot about them and likewise keeping up sharp fusilades in the street. Of the dead and wounded there can be no doubt that more than one was shot

by their own party, and according to reliable advice there were several victims later found in the yard of whose killing it is quite impossible to say, except that no Englishmen were in that locality at the time of the raid.

Thus a fair haul of Britishers were marched off through the streets to Gorochovaia, where they found the British Consul, who had already been arrested the previous day in the street. There I joined them during the night, being arrested with much ceremony and show of force enough to capture a gang of desperate outlaws, being driven to the prison in a car whilst a commissar sat behind me with the usual armament of two revolvers to one man. Several English women were also arrested and placed in a separate room at Gorochovaia, although their Russian sisters in other prisons were not so fortunate. Our party included the English Chaplain, a number of French civilians and officers, and the Japanese Consul, although this latter was liberated in 24 hours. When we were finally marched away to the fortress after several days our party consisted of 65 all told, with us being several Russians connected with the British, namely a young prince aged eighteen, a student, and a number of Embassy porters. At Gorochovaia things were at least lively and entertaining. Two rooms were reserved for the detention of prisoners, formerly the sleeping accommodation of about a dozen policemen in the old days. In these rooms the number of captives varied from about 70 to 300. A number of old beds stood around on which filthy straw mattresses harboured untold quantities of bugs and lice, also several wooden tables and stools went to make up the entire furniture of the place. The floor and everything was most indescribably dirty, a cloud of dust being in the air at all times owing to the continual coming and going of many people, who were called out for enquiry usually in the early hours after midnight, or walking about to obtain a little exercise, and the general bustle occasioned by so large a number of men unavoidably scrambling for drinking water when it was brought, etc. A window looking out on to the yard presented a most entertaining view of the coming and going of armed bands in motor cars by day and night, but mostly by night, arriving back with or without prisoners, in some cases with much loot and other confiscated property, and even displaying to some Englishmen the arrival of their own household effects, mainly such things as war trophies, typewriters and correspondence. After twenty hours' confinement a disgusting soup was presented for consumption, consisting of greasy hot water, containing fish bones and numerous maggots floating around. Everyone had to eat out of the same basin, if eat at all he would, and also received a very few small oven-dried crusts, the leavings from the Bolshevik officials' table. At Gorochovaia this was repeated every day at one o'clock, and this was all the food provided, although herrings could be obtained by bribing the guards, also several other dirty and unappetizing things. The air in this room was stifling,

the continual traffic allowed of no sleep, whilst a sleeper on the floor swallowed such quantities of dust as to become absolutely ill, the luxury of a table or a form being only possible to a few. Fellow prisoners included all conditions of humanity ; old aristocracy, officers, business men and shopkeepers, labourers of other Socialist parties, a few actual criminals caught in the act, an entire Divisional Soviet, a few sailors, students and ex-commissars, late pedestrians, and quite a number of priests of the Russian church. Also the old father of the murderer of Uritzky was of the chosen, whilst his mother, grandmother, and a number of young sisters could be seen through the window. A maid-servant of one of the Englishmen was also arrested with him, and retained for two and a half months, no charge being preferred against her. On arrival at this place we were taken before a sleek, long-haired Jew, and told various absurdities, apart from the fact that we would be shot, such as the fact of our undoubted participation in the murder of Uritzky, and we were also questioned as to which political party we were members of. Of course the reply to this was none at all. We were then marched back to the general room. Wives, friends and neutral diplomats enquiring as to whether we might be supplied with food from outside were told that we were already all shot, and if not that we soon should be, and in any case did not need any food. Each day large parties of Russians left for various prisons or unknown destination under a heavily armed guard. On the third day our turn came. An "iron guard" as they called it, was provided, and we were formed into ranks four deep in the yard, the while the commandant of the prisoners rushed about in a manner reminiscent of a dog barking at a motor car.

We sallied forth and were met outside by the anxious gaze of hundreds of women and children, wild-eyed and half distraught ; vainly seeking for missing husbands or mothers amongst the unfortunates brought forth from this den of infamy. I later learned that those in the women's room were mainly the wives of officers whom it was desired to find and thus coerce into giving themselves up. A weary tramp through the streets of the town lay before us, past the now deserted Embassy and over the Troitsky Bridge into the probably most celebrated fortress in the world, that of Saints Peter and Paul. I had never been in this place of evil repute as a sightseer, and found it very interesting, but one's interest suffered a little damping as we were very doubtful to what fate we came ; perhaps to be dispatched, perhaps not, but in any case to no pleasant state. We were advised by other prisoners at Gorochovaia to take with us a herring each, and if possible an empty bottle. I filled my bottle with water and was very glad of it before long. Once inside the main courtyard we were officially handed over by a disreputable little Jew and then inspected by the Lettish commandant. Then we waited for two hours, after which we were taken round many corners and along alleyways, until we finally passed in through an iron grid into a corridor



full of cells, the door of each cell being fitted with a small opening through which silently stared as many haggard and white-faced prisoners as could get room to look out. The corridor smelt evilly and was filled with a kind of damp fog, and the impression gained from the sad sight of those dark eyes silently gazing from sunken sockets in dozens of deathly pale faces was one the recollection of which will remain vividly before one for the rest of one's life. We were later during long weeks of incarceration in this clammy damp atmosphere to become hardened to the sufferings of one's fellow-mortals, but at the time the shock was greater as we were comparatively fresh from the ordinary decencies of human life. Past very many such cells we were marched, and at length a halt was cried. The cells opposite which we stood appeared to be crowded, but none the less each door was opened and five of us thrust in, after which the door was slammed and locked, and we were free to consider our unhappy position. Imagine a cellar with circular roof and a very small, much-barred window near the top, having stone floor and stone walls down which coursed drops of water in much the same manner as is often observed on window panes in rainy weather. This was our home. A damp mist pervaded all, and all was wreathed in gloom. In my cell, which had been constructed and used for one prisoner during the old regime, were already fifteen occupants, and now there was a total of twenty people. There was not room for so many to lie on the stone floor. We had to sit up so as to provide enough space for all, and leant against each other to avoid the wet stone wall. One felt a feeling akin to paraliziation of the mind at first. The brain refused to act in response to the thoughts coursing rapidly through one's mind. Then one gradually became accustomed to the idea of one's surroundings, and one began to take stock of one's fellow-prisoners. These proved to be an interesting and very despondent crowd. Two well-known princes, an aged and white-bearded general, two naval officers, and the remainder all young army officers who had been employed at work in the various Bolshevik institutions.

## CHAPTER X.

THE attitude of the guards at Gorochovaia had been very disquietening, in so far as each relief at once asked where the murderers were and displayed the utmost hostility, appearing to have been systematically worked into a passion prior to being allowed to come to their posts. Here, however, it was otherwise. They showed the utmost surprise at Britishers being thus incarcerated, and expressed the belief that the Bolsheviks would not have dared to do it had they not decided on worse to follow, or, in common parlance, "to go the whole hog." Our fate in this respect was of course a matter of speculation which interested us very considerably. Of shooting we had heard enough, and the realization of the gloomy suggestion of the guards would not have surprised us in the least. According to all accounts there was a split in the Petrograd Soviet over this. Some were for doing away with us and others against, the former party being conceded to in so far that seven members of our party were condemned to death, which sentence was duly put off until such time as better reason prevailed. An attempt was, however, made to get the guards to carry on with the job unofficially, and owing to inflammatory placards, newspaper articles, etc., of the worst sort we could quite expect something of this sort to occur at any time, and thus kept handy the empty bottles which we possessed, this being the only means of defence available to show that Britishers will anyway die fighting.

Coming back to the subject of our fellow-prisoners, we learned that these had been four days without a morsel of food of any sort being given them, a pleasant prospect indeed for the future. We gave them our herrings and settled ourselves somehow for the night. At three o'clock a.m. a considerable disturbance occurred, which sort of thing we were to get very accustomed to before long. A number of people were taken from various cells and a few minutes later a number of shots rang out, announcing the end of these unfortunates.

The following day no morsel of food reached us from any source. We swore and joked in turns, and shouts of "Are we downhearted?" were greeted with loud "No's!" from other cells, the sounds being audible along the corridor owing to the small openings in the main doors of the cells. This caused much annoyance to the guards. The following night, at about 2-30, it being pitch dark, as all lights had gone out at midnight, a basin of soup was passed in through the trap door. The hole being roughly 9" x 6", the size of the bowl can well be imagined, this being intended for the whole twenty prisoners and no facilities for eating it being given whatsoever. Needless to say,

one did not see or taste this soup, whatever it might consist of. Another day passed, and in the evening again a basin of soup was passed in, this time whilst the light was still on. With the assistance of an old sardine tin a little of the mixture was duly tried, and found to be but dirty hot water with a trace of cabbage in it. We thus were forced to the conclusion that the future held no good in store for us. However, at daylight the next morning a great commotion again occurred; everyone being ordered to be ready to leave the prison. We stood up and waited, this being the sole necessary preparation, and eventually the doors were unlocked, the prisoners being marshaled two deep in the corridors. We ourselves suffered from headaches, and apart from weakness an indescribably dizzy feeling, making it very difficult to stand up, but the sight of many of the others was pitiable in the extreme. They assisted each other out and along, some even crawling out on hands and knees, too weak to stand, whilst yet others were quite incapable of coming out at all. Such needless suffering caused us feelings difficult to describe, except perhaps as growing anger forcibly suppressed, combined with silent vows of vengeance in the future. Into barges for Kronstadt was the order. This meant, in other words, to the wholesale execution ground. However, at the last minute the order was given for all the British and French to be returned to the cells, the Russians enviously saying that we were saved at any rate for that day, and many of them hiding themselves among our party and thus regaining the cells. Thus that morning there were from three to four hundred loaded into barges, these being towed away by a tug, whither God knows, but we never saw or heard of them again. The guards declared these were sunk on the way, as it saved so much trouble in the disposal of such a crowd. With heavy hearts we were again put in cells, this time fifteen to a cell, and our so-called party separate from all others. In our cell we were all Britishers, and glad we were of this.

Apart from the stone floor, the furniture consisted of one iron bedstead bolted to the floor, with no sort of mattress or clothing on it, and an open latrine, over which was a tap with a supply of Neva water, which, as is well known, contains all the germs in creation, including typhoid and cholera. Here I was destined to remain for two months before being moved again. We methodically set about cleaning up all rubbish and dirt with our hands, and someone sacrificed a handkerchief with which we mopped up the floor, all dirt being purposely slung through the trap door into the corridors for the edification of our captors. Then we considered the situation, and decided that things looked black indeed, but in the course of conversation with the guards on duty outside we learned that it was sometimes possible to receive parcels from outside. This set up new hopes, and we decided to endeavour to set up communication with the outside world, towards which end serious conversations ensued with the purveyor of the doubtful soup that evening, and much cash



changed hands. As a result an intimation of our plight reached those outside, and it was explained that we lacked all the necessities of life.

The guards here also offered us a few herrings at outrageous prices, also now and again cheap cigarettes, matches and apples. These we bought and were very glad of. By getting one's head through the opening in the door a conversation could be established with the adjoining cells, but the guards objecting strongly to this, it was necessary to arrange a series of whistles, each being the signal for attracting the attention of one particular cell. This enabled a hurried message to be shouted and one's head quickly withdrawn before the guard could reach the door, each being in a recess and thus out of sight. Hot water was occasionally allowed to be supplied by fellow-prisoners, who were allowed into the corridor for the purpose, also prisoner labour was used for sweeping out other parts of the place and for making soup under strict supervision. The air in the corridor being, however, somewhat worse than the actual cells, this occupation, if affording a little exercise, did not improve matters much. At times one nearly choked in the cells, the abnormal breathing resulting from the condition of the air being very hard to bear at times. We had been prisoners for about ten days when, owing to the untiring efforts of the Dutch Minister and his wife, who had undoubtedly saved our lives, parcels were handed in to us, and great indeed was our need. By degrees a regular service of parcels, twice weekly, was established, and one gradually obtained the most necessary articles, such as tooth brushes, blankets, soap and clean linen, medicines, etc. Also later books and all manner of little things contributing to make life bearable were obtained, disinfectants being a great necessity amongst our many wants. The commandant becoming accustomed to this twice-weekly delivery, characteristically ceased to have the parcels searched, most things going by precedent in that place. This fact was soon communicated to the outside, and such things as newspapers, Russian and German, were soon imported, also shaving tackle and even wine. At length the floors of our cells became covered with the various belongings sent in by solicitous friends and helpers.

About five times during our confinement we were allowed by sympathetic guards to walk in the corridor, in contravention of the orders of the commandant. On these occasions we played leap-frog, and greatly astonished these gentry by our unbroken spirits. In our cell we had a regular routine of washing oneself and the cell, dinner, an afternoon sleep, and even bridge. I also kept in touch with the business, and ordered the workpeople to endeavour to get me released, which could not harm anyway, but had no effect. The general prison life conditions were however very terrible. Within a day or so of the big dispatch to Kronstadt an influx of four or five hundred people had filled all the cells to suffocation point again. Great distress prevailed

amongst the Russians, and we frequently supplied these unfortunates with all manner of things which might alleviate their sufferings, mainly food. People frequently died of weakness and starvation. A request for a doctor was met with a laugh, whilst if a man died during the night the guards would inform the others that the rubbish could not be cleared up before 8 a.m. In this connection, in one of the prisons in Petrograd, a body was kept by the other inmate of a cell made for two, until the guards detected the smell, with a view to the other occupant being able to obtain the dead man's meagre ration in an attempt to keep his own body and soul together.

After much trouble, our benefactor managed to obtain permission for a doctor to visit our many sick. Colds and coughs were inseparable from the entire community owing to the continual living in wet clothes, but a number of old Englishmen of about sixty years of age simply crumbled up under these conditions of confinement. This led to a visit by a hospital official to the Russians, so as not to give the impression that the British were receiving preferential treatment. He selected eighty of the worst cases for removal to hospital prison elsewhere. I was in a position to view the departure of this party. A more pitiful sight I have never seen in my life. Old men, some of whom must have been over seventy years of age, tottered aimlessly along, apparently too far gone to realise further their surroundings. Others had become completely demented under the treatment accorded, whilst one and all showed the worst symptoms of neglect, weakness and starvation, and holding each other up and guiding each other by the hand, this truly God-forsaken crowd of humanity moved off. Each night between the hours of twelve and three much shouting occurred in the search for the unhappy ones who were to be the victims of that night. To endure the sound of the succeeding shots became increasingly difficult, and one lay awake at times for hours afterwards, trembling with sheer overstrung emotion of the nervous system, not having any excitement to counterbalance one's presence at the slaughter of these innocents.

In the next cell were a number of hooligans of the Red Guard, incarcerated because having killed a prisoner in the street they had thrown his body in the river, instead of bringing it as proof that bribery had not played a part in this little tragedy. This man, whom we can imagine as the father of young children left at home to starve, was thus bayoneted because too weak to walk he had dropped on the road whilst being taken from one prison to another. These Red Guards, it may be mentioned, received every day substantial rations and were liberated after about a week in the fortress.

Great are the crimes of these Bolsheviks, and just as great will be the reaction in its day : forces of hatred and revenge, which when let loose will know no bounds and flow well beyond the limits of the present horror, and thus again will the innocent be engulfed in this sea of despair, greater than any known for centuries or in the darkest ages. Times like

these, when men would gladly sell their lives to ensure a quiet resting place from persecution for those they love, their wives and children ; when mothers ruthlessly slay their babes to save them further agony ; when all the evil forces of Satan are given their fullest swing and satisfaction, cannot fail to enact a bitter penalty, both from sufferers and tormentors alike, before the restoration of an ordered future. The very soul of Russia cries for help, nine-tenths of the people long to be rescued from the evil by anyone at all ; but still the destructing forces grind relentlessly on, gaining further impetus from such opposition as is met and crushed, forcing further tyrannical acts from those who even would stay their hands when nearly overcome by the horror of their own deeds. Armistice, Peace, League of Nations are idle words to this great nation wallowing in its distress, cut off from all mankind. Many a wretched prisoner, to say nothing of office staffs and workpeople, enquired " When will your armies arrive ? " In despair they look to the nation they honour most. What hope could one hold out to them. Perhaps the cry of : " Settle it amongst yourselves." What irony !



## CHAPTER XI.

**A**T length the British officials in prison were exchanged for the Bolshevik agents in England at the time, and these were summarily turned out of Russia, this event marking the half-time of our confinement for the majority of the civilian prisoners amongst the party. Further weary weeks went by, during which feelings of impatience and resentment alternated with those of utter disgust, which prompted uncivil remarks and replies to guards and other Russians alike. We also sang hymns of hate composed on the spot, but these were not eloquent enough to express our feelings, which certainly could not have been gauged by those around us, who only saw in our cheerful attitude a glimpse of the character of an insuppressible nation. During this latter period a species of riot occurred in the town, in which the principal actors were sailors. These demanded the resignation of a certain naval commissary, and after several speeches requisitioned a band from the Marinsky theatre with which they marched to the quay and adopted a threatening attitude in the vicinity of the commissary's ship. This led to our fortress being surrounded by machine guns, and a threat being delivered to the sailors that if the trouble spread all prisoners would be killed. In the papers the trouble was hailed as the result of British propaganda. The sailors dispersed after asserting that the meeting had no connection with any move against the Bolshevik government, and finally denouncing the pro-German propaganda and attitude of official Soviet Russia. None the less large numbers were at once arrested on their dispersing, and eighteen fine young fellows of the left Socialist party were incarcerated in the fortress in the next cell to the one I was in at the time. During the night these were taken out and all summarily shot, an incident which put the final touch to any belief I might have had in freedom for the masses, as practised in the form of a monopoly on the part of one party against all others. In connection with this incident, Zinovieff published a warning in which he stated that the recent Red Terror, as he characterised the wholesale murders of the past months, were but a feeble effort to what would follow any recurrence of such scenes as this recent episode of the sailors' demonstration. Of course he had in mind a threat on the part of the Kronstadt sailors' executive in which they had offered to come and throw him and his party out of office, should the persecution of sailors continue for non-adherence to Bolshevism. Strange, however, that the matter remained at the stage of threats.

Very soon after this I was transferred again to the headquarters at Gorochovaia 2, and there put in the company of spies and agitators, with a view to my entrapping myself, evidence of some sort being

greatly wanted by the government to justify their actions, and I being thought to be in possession of more information than I had disclosed. All searches of Englishmen's houses, during which a few English ladies were badly knocked about, had failed to disclose anything of evidence in the nature likely to prove any activity against the Bolsheviks. Instead of supplying anything in this line, I was enabled to make great acquaintance with a famous murderer of ex-ministers, who was at this time the commandant of the prisoner section, and endeavoured to open negotiations for my release by bribery. The workpeople again made an effort, prominent Bolsheviks were entertained at my expense by a charming lady, and spurious correspondence with a woman in the town was allowed to fall into Bolshevik hands, whilst my lips uttered many pardonable lies to the headquarter agents in an endeavour to make the most of my stay at this place.

The woman Jacoblevna, then the head of Gorochovaia 2, was in my opinion an evil-looking old vixen and eminently worthy of a brick round her neck before being pitched into the Neva for her foul deeds and indiscriminate slaughter.

My fellow prisoners were more interesting than ever. They included officers removed from the immediate localities south of the Allied Front, many of the town robber class who had been rounded up by one of their own gang—this individual being given his life for his services and no doubt being enlisted in the service of the State, as robbery was undoubtedly a State monopoly and a nationalised trade. The others were apparently all shot without trial or ceremony, and in the case of a gang of nine brought in together the sum of 600,000 roubles was taken off them. Peasants were in prison for resisting the Red Guards when those gentry were "requisitioning" food, others for bringing food into the town themselves, this being called speculation. Workmen from the town for holding speeches demanding freedom were in great numbers, and a few naval officers caught trying to reach the British lines, whose fate was undoubtedly sealed as far as this world goes. The great Putiloff iron works were well represented, being always hostile to Bolshevism to the tune of 10,000 men. A Jew also caused me some amusement, being rather an exceptional race to find represented here, although a good many of these were also robbed and persecuted. This man was simply told that no charge was preferred against him, but that his money to the extent of 200,000 roubles was necessary to Bolshevik aims. His avowal that he did not possess so big a sum simply earned him three weeks in the fortress. After that he had just returned, and was now offered release for 100,000.

At length my turn came, and to my surprise I was given a slip stating that I was released. It seemed too good after seeing so many others released from their miseries in a different way, and not knowing how many were in the plot, I made great haste to get outside, landing in the kitchen during the process, and only gaining the street after much hunting around, during which I found that no one apparently took any

further interest in the holder of such a slip, although I took good care not to meet any of the principals, the locality of their rooms being fairly familiar to me.

Home again, washed and clean, a sleepless night due to the reaction on one's nerves, and great rejoicings on the part of the office staff and workpeople followed, who viewed one's release as a blessing which would bring in its train a relief from the unhappy situation into which the business had fallen, threatening closure and the entire cessation of wages. One member of the staff had absconded with certain moneys, whilst all the others had received very much less than was due to them. The Works Committee, with many flattering remarks as to the happy way we had worked together in the past, and much denunciation of the Bolshevik rule, which had brought them to the brink of ruin, suggested that they had feared I might disappear subsequently to my release, and implored me to remain by them. Disappearance had become something in the nature of an epidemic rather than a habit on the part of all and sundry, each for reasons best known to himself, but in every case attributable to the prevailing anarchy.

I found food conditions appalling. Not a potato could be bought, even at the most fabulous prices, although the harvest time could barely be said to be over. The markets had all been closed, accused of speculation, and positively nothing remained except the very meagre ration of bread when obtainable, which mainly owing to the infrequency would not have sufficed to keep alive a pet dog. This was the position in November already. Quite naturally the last shred of sympathy for the Bolshevik cause had now vanished ; beginning with the industrial classes and following on with the officers, the shop keepers, the porters and the others of the Socialist parties, the clerks, largely the peasants, and finally the workpeople, all only prayed for release. Now however there was no release from within. All resistance had long since been effectively crushed, house to house searches had delivered up great stacks of arms, the workman to obtain the necessary food to keep alive had been compelled to accept service in distant parts in the Red Army, which he had helped to create and had lived to hate so well. The only hope of delivery could at this time be said to be one from without the Bolshevik area, although the saying that even a worm will turn may apply here if given enough time, for in Russia the seemingly impossible occurs, and occurs frequently at that. Anyway, with an almost total lack of food and complete stoppage of all industry it is difficult to see how a nation can continue without some force or other showing itself in the interests of common sense.

True, the workpeople could live in any fine flat of their choosing in the best quarters of the town, and there was nothing to prevent them donning the former owner's evening dress, but this was unfamiliar and felt to be uncertain ground, so that in most cases after pillaging the contents, the flat was again evacuated by its temporary tenants,



We now come to the turning of the tables on our friend the enemy. With great headlines the papers of the regime announced that the German Government had levelled an ultimatum at them on the subject of reparation for the death of Mirbach. The following day a declaration of war was announced, which may or may not have been genuine, but was in any case a matter of little concern to anyone. Then, the following day, the entire German Consulate Staff was arrested, to the number of about a hundred, with the active co-operation of German soldiers (presumably ex-prisoners of war). Then in larger type still was announced the revolution in Germany, and encouraged by these signs the campaign against the local Germans was vigorously pursued, all civilians of the Central Powers being rounded up, as far as it lay in the power of the Bolsheviki to find them. These were carted off to the famous Gorochovaia 2, and later to the fortress, and the government announced that the German people had rebelled against fighting the Russian proletariat. I heard Germans being marched to prison protesting loudly that they were citizens of Berlin, and smilingly cogitated on the saying that he who laughs last laughs loudest, although at the time I was disposed to keep very quiet and made myself scarce as soon as possible, an English passport being likewise a pass to prison, and once arrested again amidst all this chaos, well, who knows what next. Then was witnessed the strange sight of British and German officers assisting each other to escape, no doubt unique in the annals of the war.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE much-discussed great holiday at length arrived, and great had been the preparations of the government to celebrate the anniversary of the inauguration of this strange freedom. For days past gangs of men had been busy putting up huge hoardings and scaffolding to which were attached huge banners bearing inscriptions such as : " All power to the workers," " Away with the capitalists and imperialists," etc. Ugly and crude paintings were hung out all along the main streets, depicting a peasant pushing a hand plough and a labourer hammering nothing on an anvil ; whilst large placards depicting heaven knows what in the way of futurist representation adorned the most important buildings and large corner houses. On these latter were painted trams, houses and aeroplanes all jumbled up together at all angles, including upside down, and suspiciously suggestive of sarcasm on the part of the artists, appertaining to the present state of affairs in the Soviet Republic, but otherwise strongly resembling a possible scene after a boiler explosion in a populous district. All tramway standards were draped in red, and many hoardings carried nothing at all in the poster line, being half finished or in excess of requirements. The combined effect was ridiculous in the extreme.

The papers did not fail to remind all and sundry that Bolshevik rule was now one year old, a reminder hardly necessary to the majority, who dated all their troubles from the Bolshevik accession to power, and the effects being visible on every hand. About five thousand paupers from hundreds of villages had been invited to attend, being promised lodgings and food. Instead of this number, from fifteen to twenty thousand made their appearance, all manner of unemployed taking the opportunity of travelling free to the capital and being feted there. The last surviving hotels were at once requisitioned, and all this mass of humanity accommodated anyhow in the finest buildings of the town. Bitter complaints were heard on all hands of the feeding and overcrowding, unhappy paupers having to wait hour after hour in queues in the most drenching rain to obtain an inadequate supply of the most indifferent food. Apart from the paupers, the crowd, in the shape of the workers, were intended to demonstrate and form the well-known processions marching around to the most dirge-like of tunes as in January, on May 1st, and in August. These however had had about enough of such affairs, and apart from the rain were not at all sure that the whole show would not end in a shooting match on a grand scale, as had so often happened before, and thus stayed discreetly at home. On several mornings placards had been found posted all over the town which read : " Away with the Bolsheviks." These had disquietened the few would-be enthusiasts, the others being too

heartily sick of starvation and unemployment to do anything at all. Even the paupers were not in a mood to demonstrate en masse as an unqualified sign of their approval of the regime, the attitude being mainly one of taking advantage of such circumstances as were favourable to themselves without requiring any effort on their behalf. The weather was wet and miserable throughout, and misery was the outstanding feature of the whole "festivities." All others having failed them, at the eleventh hour the proceedings were turned into a species of military parade, the Red Guards and former army units serving as before, of which many exist intact, having refused to disband and even being officered by their former junior officers, were marched around the town with bands playing and bayonets fixed. The appearance of these troops can be said to have been exceedingly good, although their appetite for fighting was known to all to be practically nil. By order of the government all their uniform buttons had to be covered with red material, and all ribbons of the coveted St. George's cross removed. Ask them their opinions, however, and it would be found that nine units out of ten were completely indifferent to the government as regards loyalty, mostly failing completely to understand the meaning of all the changes and, as formerly accustomed, quietly obeying orders to march against this or that district, with the exception that they nearly all declared that the first time determined resistance was met with they would throw down their arms and see if more food was to be obtained in the opposition camp. Having grown suspicious and careful of their Bolshevik masters they wish, however, to be assured that once they take this step they will not again fall into the clutches of these gentry, knowing only too well the butchery that would result. Thus we have the tragedy of thousands of ignorant men, in no way fanatics of any sort, fighting stubbornly for a cause in which they have no faith at all, but unable to decide to cast in their lot with any of their numerous adversaries because of lack of leadership and the unfortunate spasmodic efforts which have so far characterized the opposition, and which are naturally not calculated to inspire much faith in the final downfall of the tyrants of the moment. During the holidays following the anniversary the children from all the schools were marched in long processions down the Nevsky Prospect and other streets, singing revolutionary songs. Horrors! What a sight! the very recollection of which makes one's heart ache. Imagine a dull overcast day, cold drizzling rain, with a wind chilling one to the bone. In this hundreds of pale-faced children, their emaciated faces pinched and drawn into premature lines by untold suffering and starvation, meekly marched along singing these prescribed songs in a manner which told of the despair filling even their young souls. Badly clad and worse shod, they trudged through the muddy streets wet and shivering, during the intervals of song never a happy smile, much less a childish laugh or even the aimless chatter of children of their tender ages. And what songs; for all the world like the wail of departed and tormented spirits. The



contrast when I reached Finland was also one of the things I shall never forget in connection with this series of events of 1918. It was a cold frosty morning, in a decent train calling at all the little stations between the frontier and Terijoki, seeming to be expressly run for the purpose of carrying the children to school. Hundreds of round-faced chubby boys and girls getting in at every station, their laughter ringing from end to end of train and platform alike, chaffing each other and the guards, frivolous and full of life as one remembered children in our own happier land in happier days. All this a mere handful of miles from Petrograd and all its miseries, and to think that only nine months previously the same pest held sway over these happily released young people.

Certain people and papers profess to exercise their thoughts as to the cause of the anti-semitic disturbances which have been a feature of the re-occupation of various districts of middle eastern Europe by sane rulers. When it is remembered that the people mainly responsible for all poor Russia has suffered are for the most part Jews with changed names it is perhaps hardly surprising that the greatest pacifist has in those parts become fiercely vengeful against those morally responsible for all this trouble, and without whose intellectual powers the whole show would long since have collapsed.

The great holiday was over. Sightseers and pedestrians there had been practically none in the streets for three days. People turned out from their houses again, but no work to return to in the majority of cases, only the incessant hunt for food to be continued in the ever-increasing cold. The troops were to a great extent rushed off to the Finnish border to meet an expected attack from the Germans in occupation in Finland. These had not been affected by the revolution in Germany, and carried on much as before to the date of their leaving that country. There was great talk of a Bolshevik advance into Finland, and at least half of the troops imagined that that was their errand, the Bolsheviks at the time apparently being undecided as to the appropriate time for re-establishing themselves in that now orderly country. Of German troops they were, however, always afraid, and there was the possibility of them bringing about Swedish intervention, which would have probably meant the loss of Petrograd to them. Numbers of their troops were sent scouring the woods between Petrograd and the frontier to apprehend the large numbers of Germans who, in terror of their lives, had fled pell mell into the forest and were trying to reach Finland.

In this way a number of English and many of the better class Russians were captured whilst on a similar errand, mostly to be released again on payment of large sums of money to their captors prior to their arrival at Gorochovaia 2.

The nationalization of women had been experimented on in the provinces, Petrograd and Moscow not being affected by the decree,

a copy of which I now have in my possession in England, being a cutting from the official organ of the Lenin-Trotsky regime. Alas ! people were even to loose their souls in this social upheaval. Never was freedom less free or tyranny more tyrannous, even in the days when the double eagle was still the Byzantine crest. The most charitable explanation of the nationalization of women decree is that certain commissars in the towns mentioned had their eyes on some particular women who had refused their overtures, and thus had got this decree put into print, but from experience it is far more likely that but for the damaging effect of this decree to their propaganda it would have been exploited to the full.

During my incarceration a new system of upholding the Maximalist end of the stick had been inaugurated, namely the "committee of paupers" system. As already explained, many paupers had been invited to the holiday festivities. These were mainly the hotheads of the villages and the spies of the government, whose duty it was to report all moves tending to show defiance to the Bolsheviks, for which they received a salary. Several such belonging to a village were formed into the paupers' committee for that village. This was extended to the factories, where an additional committee was formed of people known to be loyal to Bolshevik rule under this name, their duties likewise being mainly to act as spies and informers as to the tendencies of the others ; these were largely recruited from amongst gatekeepers or installed as such. In all houses of the town a register of inhabitants was kept more strictly than before, and this was forcibly handed over to the new committee, known as the "house committee of paupers." After the disorganization of the summer months the so-called porters had again established themselves or been appointed by the Soviets. These formed the committee, together with anybody employed in the nature of a domestic about the house. Apart from this duty of spying on the inhabitants no other work was done by the porters at all. Thus anyone arriving at a house during the evening was strictly questioned as to his business, and should he not leave by a reasonable hour a visit to the flat was made, and he was requested to sign his name and all particulars. In a town where it was frequently necessary to hide one's self from undeserved arrest, this can be imagined to have been an exceedingly annoying procedure. No one can accuse the present rulers of Russia of lack of organization in such directions as suited their particular purposes. Brilliant use was made of every bit of available material and no change ever ignored.

Now we come to the final scene in this tragedy of a nation, as far as it concerned myself at the moment. Sleeping in different places every night owing to the danger of re-arrest, on no account being out or about after 8 p.m., and avoiding the very sight of Red Guards who might be on the hunt for Germans and other foreigners, these now being blamed in the papers en masse for all the evils in the land

in language more infamous than ever proceeded from an East End coster, became quite an intolerable mode of existence. The entreaties of workpeople, etc., could not assist one to control a nervous system already rudely shocked by many months of overstrain, anxiety and hardship. Permission to leave officially was granted to no one of less than 48 years of age, and one at length found oneself amongst the "outlaws" and other refugees in the forests of the far North, which were already firmly in the grip of the grim Northern winter. Disguised as a peasant, many days of wandering through swamps and semi-frozen rivers, nights of shivering in clothes saturated to the skin, encounters with Red Guards and commissars complete the tale, all however ending satisfactorily with the final crossing of the frontier into Finland, where one arrived with a feeling of extreme relief akin to the usual happy ending of a fairy tale in so far that one had hopes of "living happily ever after," anyhow, at all, if only not so. I talk of happiness, but I doubt if any of the recent arrivals from there can obliterate from their minds the thought of the misery left behind.

Recollections of women, children and old men of the upper classes repairing roads under Red Guards with fixed bayonets, of the desperate situation of everyone except the chosen few, of the unhappy workpeople thrown out of employment and unable to get food otherwise than by joining Trotzky's hordes under the Red flag; scenes never to be forgotten.

A more misled, intimidated and unhappy crowd than the workers of the factory one cannot imagine. All badly educated owing to their scandalous treatment at the hands of the Tzarist regime, utterly unable to comprehend the ever-changing position of themselves and others, in fact, quite incapable of understanding who in all the chaos is responsible for their misfortunes, believing this man to-day and someone else to-morrow, they are the most to be pitied, and their position should appeal to the hearts of the great British nation as one requiring the utmost indulgence and all our powers of assistance.

What high hopes had not been indulged in by every Britisher in their midst after the fall of the old autocracy. Visions of a regenerated and reinvigorated Russia were conjured up, only again to be dashed to the ground by the overthrow of all freedom, which has left but the ashes of a great nation. Russia has again to be re-born from amidst these ruins, and in this great task the British nation will no doubt bear an honourable part in nursing the infant republic to maturity, but the citizens of Russia must learn to forget and forgive, remembering the good old British maxim of "Live and let live," and using this as their watchword for the future

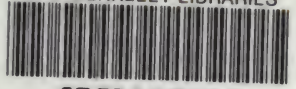
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