

flower designs, on white and chequered backgrounds, with the masses of snow in the road before them, and bright-kerchiefed women and peasants in ruddy sheepskin coats passing by, they seemed less like futurist paintings than like some traditional survival, linking new Moscow with the Middle Ages. It is perhaps interesting to note that certain staid purists in the Moscow Soviet raised a protest while I was there against the license given to the futurists to spread themselves about the town, and demanded that the art of the revolution should be more comprehensible and less violent. These criticisms, however, did not apply to the row of booths which were a pleasure to me every time I passed them.

In the evening I went to see Reinstein in the National. Reinstein is a little old grandfather, a member of the American Socialist Labor Party, who was tireless in helping the Americans last year, and is a prodigy of knowledge about the revolution. He must be nearly seventy, never misses a meeting of the Moscow Soviet or the Executive Committee, gets up at seven in the morning, and goes from one end of Moscow to the other to lecture to the young men in training as officers for the Soviet Army, more or less controls the English soldier war prisoners, about whose Bolshevism he is extremely pessimistic, and enjoys an official position as head of the quite futile department which prints hundred-weight upon hundred-weight of propaganda in English, none of which by any chance ever reaches these shores. He was terribly disappointed that I had brought no American papers with me. He complained of the lack of transport, a complaint which I think I must have heard at least three times a day from different people the whole time I was in Moscow. Politically, he thought, the position could not be better, though economically it was very bad. When they had corn, as it were, in sight, they could not get it to the towns for lack of locomotives. These economic difficulties were bound to react sooner or later on the political position.

He talked about the English prisoners. The men are brought to Moscow, where they are given special passports and are allowed to go anywhere they like about the town without convoy of any kind. I asked about the officers, and he said that they were in prison but given everything possible, a member of the International Red Cross, who worked with the Americans when they were here, visiting them regularly and taking in parcels for them. He told me that on hearing in Moscow that some sort of fraternization was going on on the Archangel front, he had hurried off there with two prisoners, one English and one American. With some difficulty a meeting was arranged. Two officers and a sergeant from the Allied side and Reinstein and these two prisoners from the Russian, met on a bridge midway between the opposing lines. The conversation seemed to have been mostly an argument about working class conditions in America, together with reasons why the Allies should go home and leave Russia alone. Finally the Allied representatives (I fancy Americans) asked Reinstein to come with them to Archangel and state his case, promising him safe conduct there and back. By this time two Russians had joined the group, and one of them offered his back as a desk, on which a safe-conduct for Reinstein was written. Reinstein, who showed me the safe-conduct, doubted its validity, and said that anyhow he could not have used it without instructions from Moscow. When it grew dusk they prepared to separate. The officers said to the prisoners, "What? Aren't you coming back with us?" The two

shook their heads decidedly, and said "No, thank you."

I learnt that some one was leaving the National next day to go to Kharkov, so that I should probably be able to get a room. After drinking tea with Reinstein till pretty late, I went home, burrowed into a mountain of all sorts of clothes, and slept a little.

In the morning I succeeded in making out my claim to the room at the National, which turned out to be a very pleasant one, next door to the kitchen and therefore quite decently warm. I wasted a lot of time getting my stuff across. Transport from one hotel to the other, though the distance is not a hundred yards, cost forty roubles. I got things straightened out, bought some books, and prepared a list of the material needed and the people I wanted to see.

The room was perfectly clean. The chambermaid who came in to tidy up quite evidently took a pride in doing her work properly, and protested against my throwing matches on the floor. She said she had been in the hotel since it was opened. I asked her how she liked the new regime. She replied that there was not enough to eat, but that she felt freer.

In the afternoon I went downstairs to the main kitchens of the hotel, where there is a permanent supply of hot water. One enormous kitchen is set apart for the use of people living in the hotel. Here I found a crowd of people, all using different parts of the stove. There was an old grey-haired Cossack, with a scarlet tunic under his black, wide skirted, narrow-waisted coat, decorated in the Cossack fashion with ornamental cartridges. He was warming his soup, side by side with a little Jewess making potato-cakes. A spectacled elderly member of the Executive Committee was busy doing something with a little bit of meat. Two little girls were boiling potatoes in old tin cans. In another room set apart for washing a sturdy little long-haired revolutionary was cleaning a shirt. A woman with her hair done up in a blue handkerchief was very carefully ironing a blouse. Another was busy with stewing sheets, or something of that kind, in a big cauldron. And all the time people from all parts of the hotel were coming with their pitchers and pans, from fine copper kettles to disreputable empty meat tins, to fetch hot water for tea. At the other side of the corridor was a sort of counter in front of a long window opening into yet another kitchen. Here there was a row of people waiting with their own saucepans and plates, getting their dinner for tickets. I was told that people thought they got slightly more if they took their food in this way straight from the kitchen to their own rooms instead of being served in the restaurant. But I watched closely, and decided

it was only superstition. Besides, I had not got a saucepan.

On paying for my room at the beginning of the week I was given a card with the days of the week printed along its edge. This card gave me the right to buy one dinner daily, and when I bought it that day of the week was snipped off the card so that I could not buy another. The meal consisted of a plate of very good soup, together with a second course of a scrap of meat or fish. The price of the meal varied between five and seven roubles.

One could obtain this meal any time between two and seven. Living hungrily through the morning, at two o'clock I used to experience definite relief in the knowledge that now at any moment I could have my meal. Feeling in this way less hungry, I used then to postpone it hour by hour, and actually dined about five or six o'clock. Thinking that I might have been specially favored I made investigations, and found that the dinners supplied at the public feeding houses (the equivalent of our national kitchens) were of precisely the same size and character, any difference between the meals depending not on the food but on the cook.

A kind of rough and ready co-operative system also obtained. One day there was a notice on the stairs that those who wanted could get one pot of jam apiece by applying to the provisioning committee of the hotel. I got a pot of jam in this way, and on a later occasion a small quantity of Ukrainian sausage.

Besides the food obtainable on cards it was possible to buy, at ruinous prices, food from speculators, and an idea of the difference in the prices may be obtained from the following examples: Bread is one rouble 20 kopecks per pound by card and 15 to 20 roubles per pound from the speculators. Sugar is 12 roubles per pound by card, and never less than 50 roubles per pound in the open market. It is obvious that abolition of the card-system would mean that the rich would have enough and the poor nothing. Various methods have been tried in the effort to get rid of speculators, whose high profits naturally decrease the willingness of the villages to sell bread at less abnormal rates. But as a Communist said to me, "There is only one way to get rid of speculation, and that is to supply enough on the card system. When people can buy all they want at 1 rouble 20 they are not going to pay an extra 14 roubles for the encouragement of speculators." "And when will you be able to do that?" I asked. "As soon as the war ends, and we can use our transport for peaceful purposes."

There can be no question about the starvation of Moscow. On the third day after my arrival in Moscow I saw a man driving a sledge laden with, I think, horseflesh, mostly bones, probably dead sledge horses. As he drove a flock of black crows followed the sledge and perched on it, tearing greedily at the meat. He beat them continually with his whip, but they were so famished that they took no notice whatever. The starving crows used even to force their way through the small ventilators of the windows in my hotel to pick up any scraps they could find inside. The pigeons, which formerly crowded the streets, utterly undismayed by the traffic, confident in the security given by their supposed connection with religion, have completely disappeared.

Nor can there be any question about the cold. I resented my own sufferings less when I found that the State Departments were no better off than other folk. Even in the Kremlin I found the Keeper of the Archives at work in an old sheepskin coat and felt boots, rising now and then to beat vitality into his freezing hands like a London cabman of old times.

Left Wing Pic-Nic Sunday, August 24th, 1919

at EASTERN BOULEVARD PARK
formerly Hoffman's Park
Eastern Boulevard and Fort Schuyler Road,
WESTCHESTER, N. Y.

Oriental Dances by Miss Katayama
Vladimir Resnikoff, Russian Singer
and many other attractions.

A RED PICNIC — A GREAT TIME
FOR A RED CAUSE

Picnic starts at 10 A. M.

arranged by the

LEFT WING SECTION SOCIALIST
PARTY OF THE BRONX.

Tickets in advance 30c At the gate 35c.
Directions: From E. 149th St. take West-
chester Av. car and change for Fort Schuyler,
get off at the Park.