

elect one of their number as chief of their guild. The list of the candidates is made up by the men in consultation with the commander. The Crew is informed of the results of the elections. If during seven days no protest is raised upon the part of the crew against any elected person he is regarded as confirmed in his position by the personnel of the ship.

Every seaman has the right to refuse the post to which he has been elected, provided he gives the motive for his refusal. The final decision as to the acceptance or rejection of this refusal is left to the Central Committee of the fleet, to whom must be submitted a detailed record of the case.

There are three tendencies in the present democratization of the fleet: (1) The formation of specialized groups like divers, and mechanics into corporations or guilds. This action exhibits a syndicalist viewpoint. In the medical force the professional union of physicians and feldshers (assistant surgeons) presents its candidates to the different ships. They are then confirmed in their position by the different crews, and the results of the election are communicated to the Central Committee.

(2) The concentration of much power in the executive heads. This begins with the chief of War-Marine Department, and runs down through the commanders of divisions, flotillas, divisions of ships of the second, third and fourth rank, airships, coast defence, hydrographical expeditions, etc.

(3) A wide provision for the use of the recall in the individual ships and in the fleet at large. One-third of the members of the crew may raise the question against any one in authority. It is the same in a specialized group. If for example, the electro-technicians are dissatisfied with their chief, one-third of their number can raise the question of his recall. If two-thirds of the contingent vote for the recall it is directed by the ship's committee, together with a report of the chief of the unit to the Central Committee for final confirmation of the decision.

As there are fleets on the different seas and rivers, the next body above the central committees of the different fleets is the All-Russian Convention of Fleets. They elected first of all a Marine Council of twenty members, which exercises a general supervision over the building of new ships, the inspection of wharves and barracks, and the new courses in the naval colleges. The most important function of this Marine Council is to sit as a part of the great central governing body of Russia—the Soviet of Workmen's Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies in Moscow.

The second superior body by this All-Russian Convention of Fleets is the Supreme Marine College of three. The chief of this is ex-officio a member of the Council of People's Commissaires. The sailor Dybenko was the first to hold that office. The second member of the Supreme Marine College was Modest Ivanov under whose direction were the departments of the Naval Ministry in the great Admiralty Building in Petrograd. Here is his letter to the editor of the Revolyutziyony Flot:

Citizen Editor:

Having received numerous letters containing threats even of death, and not having the time or the opportunity for answering them, I consider it my duty to explain why I entered the Supreme Marine College.

I must tell you who I am. I am Modest Ivanov, forty-two years old. I took part in three wars which Russia conducted. I was at Pori, Arihar, have been wounded twice and have decorations for active service, including the sword of St. George. I am an Academician. At the moment of the March revolution I was commander of the cruiser "Diana" and on leave of absence at Kronstadt. I was not there subjected to any violence or insult. In reply to a telegram of the crew and the officers of the "Diana" I arrived immediately at Helsingfors and went to the "Diana," where I was received most heartily by all. On May 14 I was elected by the second detachment of cruisers ("Rossia," "Grombol," "Diana," and "Aurora") and appointed at the request of the crew chief of the detachment. I retained the post for six months, accomplishing all the time certain responsible tasks. During this period there was not a single case of insult to an officer on the part of the crews. The commanders were also elected, and the sailors and officers lived in perfect friendship.

But I saw clearly that the officers were lagging behind the progress of political thought in the country. They were becoming more and more separated, losing contact with the crews, that is, with the people. My opinion is, that the fault lay in the difference between the staff of the commander of the fleet and the highest democratic organization in the fleet, that is, the Centrobalt. At the most critical moments (Kornilov's attempt and the separation of Finland) the voice of the commander of the fleet and his staff was not heard. The position of the officers became acute. They were in a cul-de-sac. Owing to certain events (my conflict with the former Minister of Marine Lebedev) I knew that the crew, that is, the people, trust me, not as a leader of any political party, but as a naval officer, Modest Ivanov, who stood up for the power of the people in the person of the committees, and whom the sailors knew by his service in the fleet during the course of twenty-four years. After the revolution of November, on the 27th, I received from the Centrobalt a telegram demanding my consent to be put up as a candidate for the Supreme Military College. I was given one hour in which to decide. I consented immediately. My candidature was unanimously confirmed by the Centrobalt, and afterwards the All-Russian Convention of Fleets, the first in the history of the world, elected me finally and promoted me to the rank of rear-admiral.

You ask me why I entered the Supreme Marine College. I will give you a precise answer: I hoped and still hope to find a common language between the sailors and the officers for the creation of a future, maybe a national fleet. . . . Most of you write that my name will be nailed to the pillory of history. . . . I answer: "Let it be nailed, but let Russia

have in the future a great commercial national fleet, as she has a military fleet."

(Signed) Member of the Supreme Marine College and Manager of the Ministry of Marine, Rear Admiral. Modest Ivanov.
January 19, 1918.

In spite of all the terrible vicissitudes through which the fleet passed since Modest Ivanov wrote these words, he has retained his faith in the integrity of the sailors, and the reports of the Fifth Congress of Soviets show him still the ardent believer in their great adventure of democratization. But as a class the officers still cling to the hope of a return of the old order. After the decree of democratization they met at their club and in a resolution declared that the decree would inevitably lead to the complete disorganization and ruin of the fleet, that it compelled the officers to be on the same footing with soldiers in the common rights, and that they would recognize only the decision of the Constituent Assembly.

How has all this affected the efficiency of the fleet? Many experts will testify that they find in the fleet the inevitable effects of the destruction of the old discipline—a considerable lowering of its technical efficiency. Others assert that after going through three years of war and two revolutions the fleet was in as good condition as any in the world. This seems a partisan view. As to its moral efficiency, there is no doubt that it was superb. The battle of the Moon Sound Isles furnished a good test-case. Outnumbered by the German squadron and outdistanced both in speed and gun-range, these revolutionary sailors fought a brilliant engagement with the enemy. Even their worst detractors have admitted that the fighting morale of the fleet was unsurpassed. The fervor of the sailors would probably have assured the success of the experiment in democratization if the officers instead of "sabotaging" had given enthusiastic support to the undertaking. But they are technically fettered by the habits of their class and by the ingrained prejudices of their tradition. Though some strove to make the democratic gesture and to repeat the shibboleths of Socialism their hearts were not in the task.

To insure success, behind the democratic machinery there must be the enthusiastic democratic spirit. The sailors, realizing this, have made ready for the training of their commanders out of the ranks of the workers. They founded a university in which hundreds of sailors were taking courses, ranging from the most elementary to the most advanced. In the meeting of the Educational Committee, when they were organizing their curriculum, I bluntly asked the chairman from what school or university he came. He blushed and hesitated, then said: "No university; no school. I am almost one of the dark people. But I am a revolutionist. We know that our greatest enemy is ignorance, and we are going to begin right now to kill that foe." By his ardency he persuaded several members of the University of Helsingfors, many officers, and several co-operating scientific and educational societies to join in this work. While the regulations demand that "all persons appointed to commanding posts must have corresponding training, theoretical and practical, attested by certificate from special schools," in the present exigencies seamen who are particularly skilled and who can pass practical tests before the commission appointed by the Central Committee are allowed to hold certain posts. The Sailors' University provides a shortened theoretical education for them.

The world-wide rise of the working class forcing a new social reorganization is based not solely upon the demand for the necessities of life but on the claim for a larger participation in some of its amenities. Coming down the main street of Helsingfors one night I was commenting upon the absence in this part of the usual bands of sailors rolling down the street. Suddenly we were brought sharply up before an imposing building which had the dimensions and appearance of a great modern hotel. The door opened and we heard strains of music. Entering, we went along a richly carpeted stairway and through curtained doorways until we came to the dining-hall. There, in a room set with potted plants and mirrors, with hundreds of lights shining upon the glistening napery and silver, were the diners, listening to the orchestra playing Chopin and Tchaikovsky interspersed with an occasional ragtime piece from the American conductor. It was not the usual hotel assemblage of adventurers, speculators, bankers, and politicians, with their retainers and their women, but the seamen of the war fleet of the Russian Republic. The game and smoking rooms were crowded, while through the halls and corridors streamed a procession of laughing, jesting, arguing sailors in their suits of blue.

The hotel bore in letters the sign Matrosski Kloob (Sailor's Club). When it was opened ten thousand sailors immediately joined, paying their dues of two marks a month and organizing their club on the Russian Soviet plan. Every fifty members of the club chose one delegate. That made about 200 members in the central committee, from which was chosen the presidium of twelve. Eighty-five per cent. of the sailors are literate—a proportion surprisingly high among the Russian proletariat. The club accordingly boasted a much-used magazine room, the nucleus of a library, and an excellent illustrated weekly journal, Moryak (The Seaman). The motto of the organization was: "A welcome to all sailors of the world."

After hoisting the red flag of revolt one of the first acts of the revolutionary fleet was to abolish all outward signs of the hated old regime. Those ships which carried in their names reminders of the old autocracy were rechristened and came forth from their baptism of paint with names fitting the new republican order. By this ceremony the "Emperor Alexander II" became the "Dawn of Liberty" (Zaria Svobody); the "Czarevitch" became the "Citizen" (Grazhdanin); the "Emperor Paul the First" became the "Republic" (Respublika). Such changes were easy to make, but they were not merely superficial. They are symbolic of a change in reality. They are the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual fact—the democratization of a great fleet. Many changes in the technique have been and will be made, but it will always be a democratic fleet. Just as the fervid revolutionary spirit of the seamen made this democratization and consequent socialization possible, so this socialization in its turn reacting upon the psychology of the seamen. They have a deep feeling of communal ownership. When the ship's boat carried me away from the "Respublika," Averichkin with a gesture that took in all the gray ships riding at anchor in the bay, and with a gleam of pride in his eye, exclaimed: "Our fleet! Our fleet! And we shall make it the best fleet in the world. It will always be ready to fight for liberty and justice"; and then, as if looking out beyond the gray mists which hung above the bay and beyond the red mists of the world war, he added, "until we make the international revolution and the end of wars."