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Union of Socialist Soviet  
Republics

# REPORT OF IRISH LABOUR DELEGATION

(Appointed on the Invitation of the  
All-Russia Trades Union Council)

DUBLIN:

Published by the Dublin Trades Union  
and Labour Council

1929

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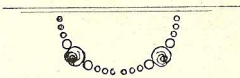
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## FOREWORD

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[The Irish Delegation—together with the delegates of the Council—consisted of Miss K. N. Price, of Dublin; and Messrs. W. McMullen, T. Geehan and H. S. Ward, of Belfast; T. Waldron, Trades' Council, Bray; E. J. Tucker, National Society of Brushmakers and P. Holohan, Irish National Society of Woodworkers, Dublin—to all of whom we wish to express our indebtedness for their assistance and their co-operation in preparing this Report.—THE DELEGATES FROM D.T.U. and L.C.]



## REPORT

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IN submitting this Report of our visit to the Russian Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, it is necessary to give a brief survey of the events leading up to the 1917 Russian Revolution and the present position. The Revolution rose immediately out of the conditions produced by the Imperialist War (1914-18), which was a struggle for markets, for trade, for spheres of influence and world domination by the capitalist Powers. The Russian army—subjected to frightful casualties—and the Russian workers, after enduring terrible war-time privations, broke away from the Allies, and refused to fight for any Imperialist aims. They wanted the War to end on a basis of *no annexations and no indemnities*, which would have meant the freedom of all countries from the crushing burdens which Allied statesmen, in the interests of their capitalists, imposed. In Russia the people demanded *Peace, Bread and Land*. After the Czar was overthrown, Miliukov and Kerensky wanted the Russians to go on fighting for the Allies, but they refused and, as a result, in October, 1917, the Bolsheviki were returned to power by the overwhelming masses of the people.

It was the Twelfth Anniversary of this Bolshevik Revolution which was celebrated in the presence of the Irish Labour Delegation.

### Under the Czar.

Russian society, previous to 1917, did not differ substantially from other capitalist countries, except that it was weaker and more backward. The workers, as elsewhere, were regarded simply as raw material, cannon fodder for the army, producing machines in the factories to turn out profit for the privileged few. Russia had a large land-owning class, which can be compared to the Irish landlords of the 18th and 19th centuries. Peasant tenants and labourers were crushed under the tyranny of agents appointed by absentee landlords who spent the money wrung from their toil in riotous extravagance. When serfdom was abolished and the peasants secured the land, they had to pay heavily for it through "Redemption Funds." This crippled

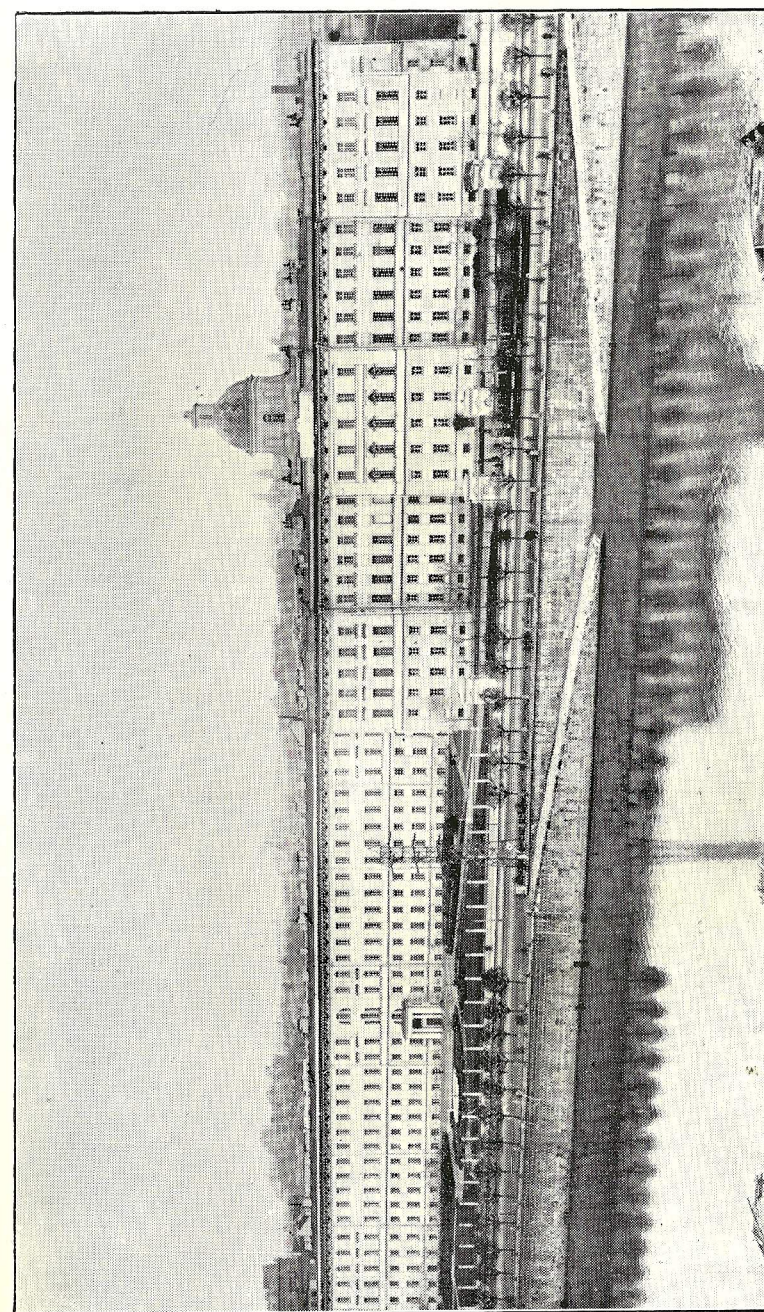


the small farmers, and the whole village was made liable for any individual who could not pay. Village money-lenders, who usually controlled the village shop, and were nick-named "benevolents," flourished on the misery of the people, like the "gombeen men" in Ireland. At the time of the Revolution the peasants seized the land, including the large estates, and stopped all payments. In the same way, workers in the towns seized the factories.

### New Civilisation.

The Russian Revolution, therefore, was not a mere change of flags or personalities. It established a new civilisation, based on the idea of All Power to the Workers, which is a menace to capitalist society all over the world. The capitalist Powers attempted to destroy Russia by force. Great Britain alone spent £100,000,000 in supporting various Russian bandits who attacked the Soviet Republic. Huge military stores and much ammunition were given to the "White Russians" after the Imperialist War, only to be captured by the Red Army. Germany, France, Poland, America, and Japan, as well as Great Britain, have actively supported the enemies of the workers' rule in Russia. Thus the first Workers' Republic, from the very beginning, as is natural, was faced with the united opposition of all the capitalist states. The White adventurers whom they supported indulged in orgies of torture and rapine. But all around these robbers the Russian peasants rose in revolt. They swept all this capitalist filth out of their country with the iron broom of Revolution, and since then it has lain festering in drunkenness and debauchery in various cities outside the frontier. The Russian workers had to cleanse their country before they could proceed to build it up.

Not until Russia is seen can it be realised what a vast territory is under Soviet rule. Russia occupies one-sixth of the entire surface of the earth. Its population comprises over 150,000,000. It is organised into six federated republics, which contain fourteen smaller republics and seventeen autonomous regions, where instruction is given in sixty-two separate languages. Russia has carefully fostered the various national cultures within its bounds and has produced books in these different tongues, thus showing that it has no desire to oppress any nationality or section. This vast portion of the human race has been deliberately isolated by the capitalist governments and Press of



Palace of Labour, formerly College for the daughters of the aristocracy.



the world, so that to get reliable information we have had to go as a working-class delegation, invited by the Russian Trade Union movement.

#### **Control from Below.**

We first came into contact with the new idea of control from below on the Soviet ship which carried our Delegation from London to Leningrad.

We saw at once that the Russian seamen had good quarters and good food, the same as supplied to officers and passengers. We were told the crew appointed the caterer, and could choose the menus themselves. They have a large room, equal to the saloon, where they have their revolutionary library, their Red Corner, with a bust of Lenin, and a piano, wireless and gramophone. They sleep two to a cabin, the cabins being light and airy. When off duty no distinction is made between officers and men, whom we watched playing chess and draughts together. The captain, whose appointment has to be ratified by the Trade Union, is purely a navigator. All questions of discipline are handled by the Ship Committee, which has on it a representative of each department, and of which the stewardess was chairman when we were on board. This Committee has full power of dismissal, but this is never exercised, we were informed, for the first or second offence.

The crew work eight hours a day for four days in four-hour shifts, resting on the fifth day. The Trade Union dues amount to two per cent. of their wages. The wages are : for the captain (who was not in this case a Party member), 250 roubles (1 rouble, equal to 2/-) a month ; first officer, 180 roubles a month ; second officer, 150 roubles, and third officer, 130 roubles a month. Seamen are paid 115 roubles a month, while the stewardesses receive 90 roubles a month. In addition to pay, the men are supplied with dungarees, oilskins, sea-boots, etc., as well as bedding. It may be mentioned here that no member of the Communist Party in any position can accept more than 225 roubles a month. This applies to the men in the highest positions in the State. Also for those who are surprised that the stewardess—paid less than any of the others—has such a responsible position on the Committee, it may be said that in many Soviet factories the leading committee members are working at the hardest tasks, and come straight from their work to settle questions of working conditions. They are proud of being workers and representing



their fellows. This Committee system on the ship runs right through the Soviet institutions—factories, pits, hotels, hospitals, etc. A ship is perhaps the most difficult place to carry it out, but we saw it working admirably. What needs to be stressed here is the spirit of freedom and of manhood possessed by everyone. All meet on terms of equality, not of superiority and subordination. And the result is a better, more human spirit. In this, the Soviet ship is a model of the Soviet State.

#### October Revolution Celebrations.

Arriving in Leningrad, we found great interest in the Irish Delegation and in Irish problems. The Chairman of our Delegation addressed a huge meeting along with delegates from other lands. He prefaced his remarks with a few words of Gaelic, and these, together with his whole speech, were broadcasted over Russia, with the result that in many places we were asked about the Irish language and Irish problems. At Leningrad and Moscow gigantic celebrations of the Twelfth Anniversary of the Russian Workers' Revolution took place. Here we gained an impression of the popularity of the Workers' State. From 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. the great procession poured past the platform in four columns marching ten deep. Numerous tableaux represented various aspects of the Revolution—these showed the Imperialist war danger, models of engineering, carpentry, model farms, looms, statistics of decreasing illiteracy, of improved production, and tractors. Every side of Soviet production connected with the *Five Years Plan* was represented. Enemies of the State were symbolised as Drunkenness, Dissipation, Frivolity (represented by a grimacing lady Charlestoning), and Superstition. Out of hundreds of exhibits there were three small tableaux which could be classed as anti-religious, and the point of these was to ridicule the priests of the Orthodox Russian Church, who always used their influence on the side of oppression and against the workers. In this relation the history of the Russian Orthodox Church in its connection with politics should be noted.

This procession and the speeches aroused wonderful enthusiasm. It should be mentioned that at one of the meetings a resolution was passed declaring sympathy with class-war prisoners in Ireland, England, India, and Gastonia, U.S.A.

In the Czar's palaces in Leningrad and Moscow, we saw a profusion of riches heaped up by the nobility out of the wretched-

ness of the people. The "amber room" of the Empress Catherine—a room completely covered in amber, is an example. We saw too, that art treasures are taken great care of by the Soviet Government. Some of the buildings in Leningrad strike the observer as being dingy and rather dilapidated—they want painting and brightening up, although they are of great architectural magnificence. The people are dressed serviceably, but without any Western fashions, style, or elegance. Nobody is interested in style or show in dress. All are dressed simply. Leaders, such as Madame Lenin and Lozovsky, of the Red Trade Union movement, whom we met, were dressed in the ordinary working-class garb. Fine clothes are not unavailable, but they are not in demand. As all are dressed plainly, there is no snobbery or grading by clothes. People have a greater sense of equality in a State where Ministers are dressed like working men and women and receive the same pay. As far as the buildings are concerned, we were told that they will be painted when there is time and money to spare. They are too busy just now, and necessities must come before luxuries. For those who are prepared to work, the fear of insecurity has been removed. There is enough for all to live on, not luxuriously, but simply; and this leads to a sense of freedom and equality. The Russian worker certainly regards himself—as he in fact is—as the master of the State. With the development of the *Five Years Plan*, the standard of life is being raised for the whole population.

#### The Five Years Plan.

It is necessary here to enlarge on the *Five Years Plan*, for we heard of it and saw it in operation all over Russia wherever we went. On November 9th, a representative of the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions, named Akulov, explained to the delegates the Russian idea of the *Five Years Plan*. Russian industry in the Czarist days was extremely backward. After the Revolution, only about one-fourth of the industries were in working order, and these produced about 25 per cent. of the pre-war output. When all the enemies of the Soviet order were defeated, the country was faced with famine (in 1921). After this, Russian industry progressed steadily until the beginning of 1928, when industry was restored to its pre-war level. The *Five Years Plan* is an attempt to start from that point and make a great leap forward industrially. Russia has to do all this with her own resources. Capitalist countries naturally do not want



to help. They only advance a few credits at a high rate of interest because they want Russian orders for machinery, etc. The Russian workers are giving out of their scarcity to build up their own Socialist Russia. They are prepared to sacrifice and work hard for the future. They are doing this, not only willingly, but with enthusiasm. The commanding positions in Russian industry, as in the Government, are occupied by workers, who alone have a vote and a voice in affairs. Seventy per cent. of the directors of undertakings come from the workshop and the Russian Trade Union movement.

The Five Years Plan is a series of concrete definite proposals for increasing the output of industry and establishing new industries. It has been worked out by experts and has been adopted with acclamation by the Eighth Trade Union Congress, which called for a quickening of the pace of the Plan. All over the country now there is Socialist contest or competition to see which district or industry can get ahead of the Plan and do in four years what was estimated to take five. The first year of the Plan is already over. The aim was to increase production in that period by 21.4 per cent. Actually, during the first year of the Plan, output has increased 24 per cent. Wages have been increased by 9 per cent. to 9.5 per cent. on former rates. Hours have been reduced and substantial reserves have been put into industry. It is planned to increase the real wages of the workers directly by 66 per cent. when the Plan is completed. Besides this a special fund equivalent to a minimum of 5 per cent. of the wages is to be set up for the education and training of the workers' children. There is also a fund already in existence, consisting of 10 per cent. of industrial profits used for the construction of houses, clubs, child welfare centres, nurseries, night sanatoriums, rest-homes, etc., which will increase as the Plan prospers, and profits increase.

The workers have free social insurance against sickness, unemployment, old age. The Five Years Plan will almost double the fund available for this. It is important to note here that the benefits of the increased production are to go directly to the workers. This accounts for the popular enthusiasm we found everywhere for the working out of the Plan. Every advance in production means a corresponding advance in the prosperity of the workers. No capitalist country dare make the same claim.

Each worker has a day's holiday every fifth day, which gives

him seventy-seven rest days annually, apart from his twelve days' holiday. This continuous work, with short hours, means that the unemployed can be absorbed. Everywhere we found Soviet workers tremendously interested in their machinery. They dragged delegates out to see their repair shops. In the factories it was the young workers at their machines who welcomed us. They received us with the same pride that a man shews his friends round his new house. "It is ours," they say, "it belongs to the workers. We are building the new civilisation. No more unemployment—no more misery." That is the note throughout Russia—a note of energy, enthusiasm, and devotion.

The delegates saw the Plan in action in factories and on the land. They have each forwarded a report in detail as to this, for the Delegation split up in order to make the best possible use of its time.

It may be mentioned that among other factories we saw a large tobacco factory and a bakery. The workers at the tobacco factory get one month's holiday per year with pay, because their work is classed as unhealthy. Other workers get twelve days, with pay. Also the girls in tobacco factories are given a litre of milk per day. In this tobacco factory we found a factory Committee of seventeen, with four sub-committees, dealing with production, with the cultural side, clubs, libraries, sports, etc., with wage-fixing, the safety of the machines, provision of overalls and so on.

We also saw a remarkable Blind Institute, where sixty-nine men and women, totally blind, were working at engineering work. They had machines with special safety devices. They worked as a co-operative body in two shifts of a seven-hour day. Wages earned averaged 192 roubles a month, and the lowest paid received 160 roubles, or more than the seamen. They lived outside the Institute. Also the School of Blind Children, which will form part of our report on page 28.

### The Land.

We must now turn to the way in which the Five Years Plan is affecting the land policy, for this is most important if we want to understand the new Workers' Russia. Before the Revolution there were in or about 16,000,000 peasant households in Russia. In 1927 there were about 84,000,000. This increase of small peasant farming could not supply the food needed in the towns, or the raw materials for the factories. It was decided



that, just as industry has developed from handicraft to the big factory, so to get the results needed in a large country like Russia, it was necessary to have large farms, working with tractors and up-to-date machinery and methods. So the State decided to encourage collective forms of agriculture and cattle raising. State farms and collective (co-operative) farms have been organised, including cattle-raising farms to supply the cities with meat, eggs, and dairy produce.

We saw what was being done on the land at a State farm at Hutarok. Here were sixty houses in the village which had wireless installed. This village was a hundred miles from the nearest big town. It had two dramatic clubs, and the mansion of the former landlord had been converted into a Workers' Club-house, while they had also built a club-house themselves in the village, where we were entertained at a variety performance and a cinema show.

Here were various works, such as an oil factory, extracting oil from sunflower seeds, a factory for the production of crude alcohol for industrial purposes, and a biscuit factory. The ploughing over vast areas, was done by tractors, and we were told that the Steppes—hard virgin soil—soon put the tractors out of action, and they had to be constantly repaired. At first this was a big difficulty, but gradually repair shops were established, and workers trained for repair work.

More interesting still was the land working at Gigante, where 500,000 acres of Steppe are being broken. This is a State farm, and is the largest in the world, 80 per cent. of it being virgin soil. It was owned formerly by absentee landlords. Now the grazing land is being broken for cultivation. It is being done almost in military fashion. Eleven brigades are working in the fields with motor tractors, machine minders, field kitchens, medical service, and the inevitable library van. They work on three shifts, night and day, and constitute a moving colony. All the land was being ploughed ready for sowing—miles of it as far as the eye could see. We were shown a plain where one could drive a car for sixty-five miles, seeing nothing but growing wheat. In this district also, apart from the State farm, 10,000 hectares had been ploughed free for poor peasants. The ground is so hard that ploughs are often changed every second day. Men and women live on the fields where they work in caravans, and food is brought to them. At night the land is ploughed by the aid of powerful headlights. It was said that here the time for

sowing was very short—eleven days—because in winter the frozen ground is like iron, and in the summer it is baked hard by the sun. When the tractors first came, the difficulty was to find people to drive them. These difficulties are being overcome by men and women who cheerfully face these hard conditions to build Russia according to the Plan. In connection with this farm a Tractor School has been organised for the winter months, where, last winter, 200 poor peasants were trained as drivers and next winter there will be courses for 600 drivers, and also for mechanics. Alongside the tractors were camels drawing farm wagons. Workers were brought in lorries from the villages. When they worked over eight hours they were paid time-and-a-half. Holidays were spent in Rostov, the nearest centre. Typical of the spirit of these workers was the man who said he didn't care about holidays, because he was always thinking about what Brigade No. 11 was doing! The workers are wrapt up in their work because the results matter to them and to Russia. Next year they plan to double the size of the farm, from 60,000 hectares to 120,000 hectares. Sixty travelling kitchens are on the road, and 3,000 miles of new roads have been planned, of which 600 miles were already completed. Field telephones are used to connect the Brigades with headquarters. Newspapers are issued every second day dealing with the work of the farm. 7,500 workers are needed for the harvest, and 2,000 permanent farm workers are required. 3,000 building operatives are busy building new villages and towns where workers will live in comfort and in certain cases rent-free with free light and fuel. This is just one corner of the new Russia which your Delegation saw for themselves. The delight of the whole nation with this Five Years Plan is unmistakable. Everywhere workers are competing to see how soon they can accomplish the task.

### Culture and Education.

We have dealt fully with industrial and agricultural development because in Russia itself these things are regarded as of first importance. Everything else, education, child welfare, culture, peace—the very existence of the Workers' State—depends upon its capacity to produce the goods it needs. To-day there is some food control, but it is claimed that this is to prevent people, other than workers, from getting more than their share.

The people are alive to the danger of bureaucratic officials who do not share the workers' ideals and enthusiasm. In the



revolutionary pageant, such bureaucrats were held up to derision. Officials of this type help capitalist governments to obstruct the workers' progress, and they are a hindrance to the Workers' State. Every effort is made to promote workers to higher positions. There is a special Workers' Faculty for the higher training of workers. There is also the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, whose duty it is to supervise what is being done, besides the Workers' Control Commissions, composed of workers from different branches of industry, which have power to interfere in industry, when necessary in the workers' interest. So bureaucracy is prevented from growing up.

We saw much of the educational work being done by the Soviets for children and for adults, and we also visited children's welfare centres, clinics, etc., which are so plentiful in Russia, and have nothing but admiration for these efforts to raise humanity and prevent suffering. Women are taking their full part in all this work and occupy many responsible positions. Russians do not consider whether it is a man or a woman, they are only concerned with getting the person best fitted for each job. The result is practical equality between the sexes. Russian women are responding to the new conditions and a type of woman is appearing, energetic, self-reliant, intelligent, with fine qualities of character which she devotes to the workers' cause. This in itself should go far to disprove all the lies about Russian immorality which the capitalist Press broadcasts. People who are building a finer social order have not a lower standard than those who support exploitation of the old and weak, together with unemployment and misery for masses of people.

The Soviet Plan is purely secular. It does not allow religious instruction in the schools. It regards the Russian Orthodox Church with suspicion, as an agent of the capitalists. The rich vestments of the dignitaries of this church, thickly studded with jewels which we saw, show how they gave themselves over to pomp and wealth, without regarding the abject poverty of the people. Yet in Soviet Russia, any congregation that pleases may support a priest and worship in perfect freedom. Churches other than the Russian Orthodox Church are said to be freer now in Russia than before, even though the Government is unsympathetic. Some of our delegates attended Mass in Moscow and other cities, and found the Churches crowded. In Russia the devotion, the work, the selfless idealism which the people give to their cause is like the birth of a new religion. It is certainly

the birth of a new hope for what has come to be called the "common people." The Russians object to the hypocrisy of those who claim to be full of holiness and yet are indifferent to suffering, to starvation, to unemployment and misery, which they should regard as an outrage on Christian civilisation. They say to these hypocrites: "Cease talking so much about heaven, and try to make this world a little less like hell!" That, whether we like it or not, is the challenge they put up to the Christian Church, and the only way to meet it is to show an equal devotion with them in working to abolish the exploitation of man by man, which brings so much misery in its train.

Many things may be objected to in Russia. They have not yet solved all their difficulties and problems. But they are trying honestly to solve them. Their material standard of life is not high. They are working with feverish energy, almost to the limit of endurance. It is all for the future. For that, they are prepared to face hardships now. Every country has its own problems, its own standards and its own way of looking at life. The Russian way of approaching some of its problems is very different from the way followed in Western Europe. They outrage Western conventions by speaking frankly about social and moral evils. They discuss and teach how to avoid disease and dirt, moral and physical. It is the way that suits their temperament. Where we might be inclined to hush things up, the Russians discuss questions of personal hygiene and social morality. They are trying to foster a high standard through knowledge, not through concealment or ignorance.

Whether the methods they adopt will commend themselves to the outside world, is not for us to decide. But we can say, from observation, that the purpose behind all this self-questioning is a high one, its aim is to raise the level of life and conduct. The Soviet régime has held up to its citizens a rigorous and ascetic standard comparable to that in Ireland during the fiercest days of the national struggle. The people are asked to consider themselves of a nobler civilisation, who should in their lives prove the worth of their beliefs and make themselves equal to their great task.

In Russia everyone believes that sooner or later the capitalist governments will attack them. They believe the attack is now being prepared. "The Imperialists have tried to strangle us," say the Russians, "but they have failed. We are still growing and we have shown the world that workers can rule a country



for themselves. We have stood against Imperialism and Capitalism. We have given up privileges in China (alone among the European Powers). We have withdrawn from Persia, where the Czar had a sphere of influence, just as England had. We stand before the world for national freedom and working class freedom everywhere. The capitalists will strike when they dare, because they are afraid their own workers will follow our example, especially as we are now building up our industries and improving conditions." This is what the Russians think about capitalist governments abroad. They point out that when they suggested disarmament at Geneva, none of the diplomats would consider their proposals. Consequently they say that all the capitalist talks about peace is hypocrisy. And the Russian workers are ready to defend the country they have won, with arms in their hands.

The Russians are not attempting to emancipate anyone from work. They do not want any rich idle class in Russia. Only the worker is allowed to vote; only the worker is a citizen. The worker has privileges—or rights—denied to anyone else. His food is 50 per cent. cheaper in the "co-operatives" than it is in the private shops. He has entertainments, factory clubs and libraries, full free social insurance. He has short hours and long holidays. He has rest homes, invalid homes, holiday homes, homes for old workers in grand mansions which once belonged to the Russian aristocracy. These buildings are also used for club rooms, schools, trade union meetings, etc. Modern Russia belongs to the worker. The workers are emancipated, not from their work, but in their work. Men in greasy overalls, with dirty hands, preside at factory committees, which settle how the work is to be conducted. The workers' voice is at last heard in industry. They are putting life before profit. Everywhere they are caring for the children. It may be said that the child is king in Russia, so much is done for him, and he occupies such a measure of public attention.

Russia is not a paradise, and we do not want to create the impression that it is. It is a vast country where there is much perplexity, chaos and confusion. Problems of backwardness date from the despotism of the Czars. The turmoil of war and revolution, the wicked attempts of outside capitalist governments to smash up their growing order, has given Russia a mighty task. But the Russians are standing up to that task as men and women should. They are straining every nerve to build up their country.

And, unlike every capitalist land, as they go forward in Socialist reconstruction the benefits that result are being enjoyed by the mass of the people, in better living conditions, in better education, in more security and a happier life. Contrast this with capitalist countries—Ireland and the rest—where every improvement means bigger profits for the few, and grinding insecurity for the many.

The Delegation submits to the Irish Labour Movement that it should support the Russian workers in their struggle for human progress which is essentially the same in all lands. We have set before you the facts, as we saw them, in the belief that truth should prevail.

(Signed),

HELENA MOLONY	} <i>Delegates from the Dublin Trades Union and Labour Council.</i>
ROBERT TYNAN	
P. T. DALY	





## AGRICULTURE—ENGINEERING.

In dealing with the question of agriculture in the U.S.S.R. it is necessary to clearly envisage the state of the country on the coming to power of the Bolsheviks. In the first place, it must be remembered that it was heavily in debt as a result of criminal negligence and inexcusable ineptitude displayed under the rule of the Tsar. The country was further plunged into debt and disorganisation as a result of participation in the World War of 1914. This drain on the resources and man-power of any country would have been considered difficult enough to overcome with all the facilities for production and transport which this development connotes—particularly at that time. But how much more difficult it was for Russia can be imagined when it is mentioned that in addition to her difficulties, arising out of the World War, she experienced the disturbing effect of two revolutions during the year 1917, followed by an invasion of her territory by hostile capitalistic forces—in which British forces played a leading part—who, allied to the forces of the White Guards, waged internecidal warfare and caused unparalleled devastation.

During these critical times the greatest state of uncertainty prevailed. The Socialist parties were rent asunder on a multitude of issues, on which common meeting-ground proved impossible. In addition, there was always present the menace of a counter-revolution, led by the former generals of the Tsarist army, and supported by the aristocracy which had ruled Russia with despotic sway up to the November Revolution. This uncertainty was as much reflected in the rural parts of the country as it was in the cities and towns. Firstly, there was the greatest confusion as to which of the contending forces would ultimately triumph. Secondly, the system of land tenure had been completely revolutionised, passing from the ownership of the landed aristocrats to the peasants, many of whom were untrained in the craft of agriculture and husbandry. Thirdly, the armies of both the Red and White Guards had to be sustained, which led to frequent incursions on the part of both armies on the stocks of wheat and the crops produced.

At the conclusion of hostilities, the internal economy of the U.S.S.R. was phenomenally chaotic, and the rehabilitation of the country had to be undertaken on an entirely new basis, with famine rampant, with managerial experience lacking, with the land transferred to the peasantry just emerging from a state of serfdom and illiteracy, with the undisguised hostility of every country in the world, and with a government of theorists, without practical experience of the management of the industries of a nation.

Such was the state of confusion which the Soviet Government

inherited on the morrow of the revolution. The marvel is that they have been able to direct the industry into a state of comparative prosperity.

Much indecision was at first manifested as to how the rural population was to be treated. The land had been nationalised by a decree of the Soviet Government. Land committees were established in all parts of the U.S.S.R., who were entrusted with the task of apportioning the soil and seeing that cultivation was put in hand at the earliest possible moment, as the danger of acute and prolonged famine was imminent owing to the complete disorganisation of the country and the certainty of a refusal of help or credits from other countries to assist in the restoration of its industries.

The policy pursued in Tsarist days of exporting large quantities of food-stuffs, and receiving in return the industrial necessities of the nation, was no longer considered satisfactory. To give the standard of living to the workers of the U.S.S.R.—now the governing class of the country—aimed at by the leaders of the Revolution, industrialisation of the country was an imperative necessity. How was this to be accomplished? Such industry as was carried on under the Tsarist régime was hopelessly antiquated and inefficient. In what way, then, was the necessary finance to be secured? Poland, Finland, Latvia and Esthonia had been granted independence, and with their going went some of the most productive flax-growing districts. Competition with the leading capitalist nations of the world for a larger share of the world's trade, in the hope of making profits to modernise U.S.S.R. industries, was out of the question, owing to their inability to supply the needs of their own people, much less compete with better-equipped nations. Two points of view appear to have emerged: (1) the building up of the industries of the country on the exploitation of the peasants, who compose at least eighty per cent. of the population; (2) a temporary concession to capitalists to work on the basis of private enterprise, with a policy of moderation to, and assistance of, the peasants to generate their enthusiasm for the Revolution, in a comparable degree, to the urban population.

The latter policy was finally decided upon, and then commenced the real creative work of the Revolution. With the growing population and the higher standard of living decided upon for the workers and the peasants, a much larger tract of territory than ever before must be cultivated, and much-improved methods of cultivation introduced. And even so, the objects of the Revolution would not be achieved, as the peasants, left without direction and help, would inevitably continue in the ways of the past, following a policy of individualism with obsolete methods of production and marketing.

The task was then undertaken of inducing the peasants to work their farms collectively. The most suitable land in the district was chosen for this purpose. Seeds, tractors, combines,



and other agricultural equipment were supplied by the Government to the peasants. Centres of education were established, and specialists provided to impart expert advice as to how the land could be most scientifically cultivated.

The initial prejudice of the peasant has been gradually overcome, and at present 60,000 collective farms, of considerable dimensions, are being worked in different parts of the U.S.S.R. and each year, with the purchasing and manufacturing of machinery, sees this number considerably augmented. It is believed, at the end of the Five Years Plan, in the year 1933, most of the vast tracts of soil contained in the U.S.S.R. will be exploited with the most modern machinery, worked either on the principle of State or of collective farming.

Much difficulty has been experienced in the rural districts on account of the hostile attitude adopted by the Kulaks (rich peasants) towards the State and collective farms and the government of the country generally. The number of farms worked by the Kulaks is given as 1,000,000, while 8,000,000 farms are worked by poor peasants, and 16,000,000 farms by the middle peasants. It will be seen that the number of Kulaks is relatively small; but their influence and power is greater than their numbers suggest, owing to their superior education, their greater knowledge of agriculture, and better equipment. It is estimated that they control 35 per cent. of the means of production, and that a large part of trade production, such as corn, is concentrated in their hands. Their avowed hostility toward the Soviet form of government appears to have been tolerated on account of the acute agricultural position of the country, with the knowledge that their production of wheat will tide over a temporary difficulty, and like the Nepmen in the cities and towns, they will be entirely eliminated when the policy of the Government comes to complete fruition.

Their methods of opposition take many forms, such as stirring up discontent among the middle peasants to demand higher prices for their crops; gradually encroaching on the land of the surrounding peasants in any portion of the country where supervision is lax; arranging to work the land of other peasants, with the aid of their machinery, without giving adequate compensation; purchasing produce from the poor peasants and reselling at greatly increased prices; employing peasants to work their land, without observing the standard of wages and conditions of labour arranged by the Land-Workers' Union; and by holding up their supplies of wheat at the most advantageous moment in order to get an enhanced price for their crops. On occasions they adopt more violent methods, by attacks on the State and collective farms and the shooting of government officials or village correspondents. Their opposition is intensified in ratio to the sharpening of the class struggle, as they see the power of the Government increasing daily and their own power waning in proportion.

The Government's methods of overcoming these difficulties are by heavily taxing the Kulaks; by remitting taxes and giving generous help to the poor or middle peasants who arrange to work their farms collectively, and by the creation of gigantic State farms in all parts of the U.S.S.R.

Before the extraordinary development contemplated takes place, it will be necessary to secure hundreds of thousands of tractors, combines, ploughs, thrashers, harrows, binders, etc. The main portion of the machinery in use had been imported from America, and to a lesser extent from Germany. But now, huge factories are being erected in order to manufacture the machinery in the U.S.S.R.

We were privileged to visit one of the many factories being built throughout the country, at Rostov in the north Caucasus. Here we witnessed huge buildings already erected, and many more in the course of erection, skirted by thousands of workers' houses, built in accordance with modern town-planning and the latest ideas of sanitation and hygiene. Language seems an inadequate medium to convey even a faint impression of the immensity of the task undertaken: 600 acres of land have been requisitioned for the buildings, 300 acres for the factory, and 300 acres for workers' homes. The Government is giving 60,000,000 roubles (£6,000,000) to build the factory and houses, with a further grant of 34,000,000 roubles (£3,400,000) to equip the works with manufacturing machinery, etc. Here, as in all factories connected with Soviet industry, neither time or money has been spared in promoting and maintaining the health of the workers and providing facilities for cultural development. This was seen in the spacious, well-lighted, well-ventilated workshop; in the dwelling-houses, educational and cultural centres, hospitals, rest-houses, crèches, dining-halls and recreation grounds provided for the physical, mental and aesthetic development of those employed.

Already the manufacturing of agricultural implements has commenced in some of the buildings, with the most modern machinery, and we saw peasants' farm-carts being made in a manner that could not be improved upon in any of the leading capitalist countries. Hand-labour has been entirely eliminated, and machines are turning out the various parts with the utmost expedition, which are assembled and put together with clock-work precision.

On our Delegation who visited these works were skilled operatives drawn from America, Germany, Great Britain and Ireland, amongst other countries, and the opinion was unanimously expressed that the methods could not be improved upon, nor the conditions under which the employees worked excelled.

An ambitious programme has been sketched for this factory which is reckoned to be completed in the year 1933. It will give employment to 9,000 metal workers, and will turn out 100 automobiles every twenty-four hours, while manufacturing

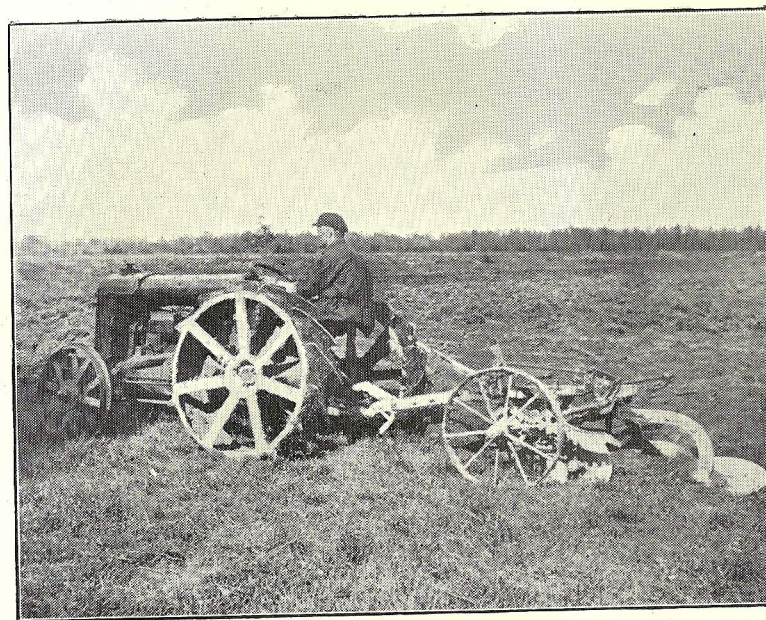


2,500,000 harvesting machines and 360,000 ploughs during the course of twelve months. Production, however, must not await the advent of 1933, and next year, with limited equipment, it is estimated the works will turn out 675,000 tractors, 100,000 peasants' carts, 70,000 harrows, 5,000 mowing machines, and 1,000 combines.

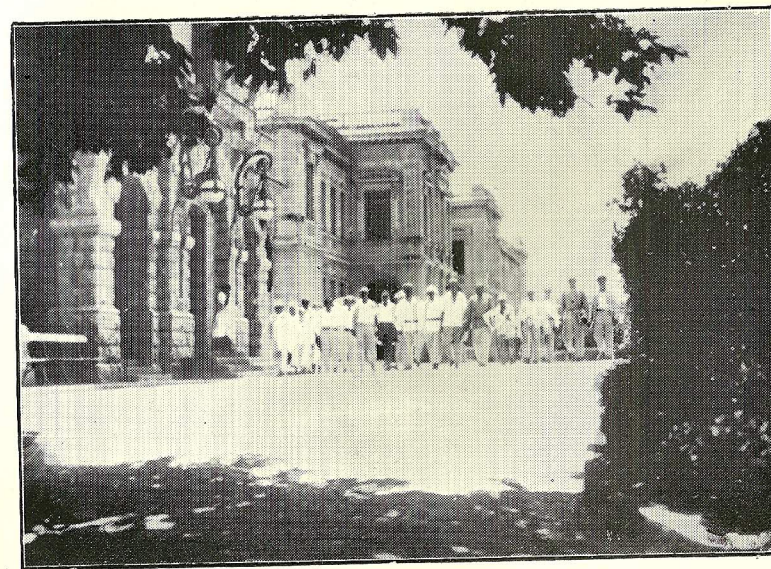
Anyone inclined to be sceptical as to how the output for these years will conform to the optimistic estimates of the experts, should not under-estimate the determination of the workers to make the facts fit the theories. Never has such enthusiasm been seen amongst any body of workmen to increase output. They display a degree of moral fervour unequalled by the most jingoistic crowd in its most rampant mood. Competition as to output between individual workers and squads of workers is at its keenest. The factory is literally covered with posters admonishing the slacker, rebuking the tippler, and anathematising the bourgeoisie. A factory newspaper is published thrice weekly, containing information of the progress of the Five Years Plan in other parts of the country ; but more specifically relating to the rate of progress in that particular factory. It upbraids the idler, the lazy and the indolent, and contains eulogies of the most skilled and efficient workers. A special feature of the paper is an open forum, to which the workers are encouraged to contribute. This has proved to have incalculable value, as many of the suggestions made by the workers as to how the technique of the industry could be improved, or production expedited, has meant a revolution in various processes which have afterwards had nation-wide application. Criticism is not limited in any way, and the manager and factory committee are not regarded as being sacrosanct, and come in for a fair share of criticism when the administration is not all that could be desired.

During our visit a dinner-hour meeting was held, at which we were given a most cordial welcome. The workers, fresh from the benches, made the most impassioned speeches, in language and diction which the members of less-eloquent nations greatly envied. Again, the topic of the hectic orators was the ubiquitous Five Years Plan, expressing their determination to accomplish it in a shorter time and secure the industrialisation of the country as speedily as possible.

We left these works profoundly impressed by all we had seen, realising how superficial is the contention of the protagonists of capitalism that, without the incentive of individual gain, society could not be maintained. Here was rationalisation *in excelsis*, without the ruthless exploitation of the workers ; without the haunting dread of insecurity, unemployment, and starvation which are its inevitable concomitants under capitalism. Thousands of willing workers, with keen brains and energised bodies, concentrated on the task of building up the nation's industries, and promoting the prosperity of the people in the Workers' Fatherland.



A Soviet Tractor.



Workers' Rest House, formerly Czar's Livadia Palace.



The next stage of our itinerary was a visit to a State farm. Here we would ask the reader to understand the difference between a State and a collective farm. The former is managed by the appropriate State trust, with all the workers in the category of State employees ; while the latter is undertaken by a number of peasants working their land collectively, with the right to sell their produce at the current price to the State co-operative stores.

To see two State farms we travelled 200 and 400 miles respectively, south of Rostov, into a region, the most part of which had never been previously cultivated. The first farm visited was formerly owned by a Baron Stengel, who precipitately fled on the outbreak of the November Revolution, when the peasants advanced in serried array to take possession of the estate on which they had formerly been serfs. The beautiful mansion is in a perfect state of preservation, containing all the plate and furniture of the former occupant. It is used as the headquarters of the State farm, and as a distributing and educational centre for the collective-farms within a radius of sixty miles. Students are given instruction in agricultural matters, and it has a library containing 4,500 books, with sixteen travelling libraries for those who find it difficult to attend the centre.

Its area is approximately 5,800 hectares (14,500 acres), which is cultivated in the following manner : 4,411 hectares are devoted to grain production, 120 hectares used for experimental purposes, 800 hectares for forestry, 143 hectares under vines, 48 hectares grow fruit (13 hectares of which are for free distribution), and the remainder of the area for miscellaneous purposes. It also has a butter factory, a distillery for manufacturing wine and alcohol for industrial purposes, while 14,000 animals are fattened each year for meat consumption. Some idea of the huge character of the undertaking can be gathered from a few figures which we append. The turnover for 1928 was 28,000,000 roubles (£2,800,000), and for the year ending October, 1929, 48,000,000 roubles (£4,800,000). In the manufacture of alcohol, 1,200,000 poods of corn are used. For feeding and bedding of animals fattened on the farm, there is used 600,000 poods of straw, 400,000 poods of hay, 80,000 poods of oil-cake and 800,000 poods of wash. In addition, the farm supplies seeds, plants and agricultural machinery to the peasants on the collective farms in the area.

We made careful inquiries into the conditions under which the workers lived. There is still an acute housing shortage, and the observance of the laws of sanitation and hygiene are still below the standard of other countries. This is not surprising when it is remembered that the peasants, before the Revolution, were not even provided with dwelling-houses by the land-owners, but were huddled together, with their families, in out-houses or fields, in accordance with the time of the year. Needless to



state the standard of morality was low, and there was a complete disregard of the rules of health. This is all being gradually overcome. With the schoolmaster abroad and health specialists active, remarkable improvement is already apparent from the old order of things.

In agriculture the five-day week has not yet been introduced. The working week is one of six days, with Sunday free, and eight hours are worked each day. The workers operating tractors and machinery are employed on piece-work. The average wage for the farm is given as thirty-eight roubles per month, but ninety roubles per month are earned by many of the operatives—with metal workers earning as much as 200 roubles per month. Besides these wage rates, the workers have many perquisites. Houses, light and fuel are provided free of cost. Holidays, ranging from two weeks to six weeks are granted each year, with full pay. Free social insurance, right to travel at reduced rates, maintenance in sanatoria and rest-houses free of cost; while three substantial meals are provided each day at a cost of seventy-two kopecks (less than 1/6).

The farm is controlled by a manager and thirteen representatives of the workers. The manager is appointed by an economic council and the workers' representatives chosen at the annual meeting of the operatives. Five of these are Communists and eight non-party members, though Trade Unionists. Four of the thirteen representatives of the workers devoted their full time to the work of looking after the interests of the workers and the management of the farm.

We cannot leave this subject without recording the deep impression made upon us by the cultural development taking place amongst the workers. An entertainment was arranged for our benefit in the cultural hall of the village, at which a number of short plays were produced. These plays were written, staged, and acted by the workers employed on the farm and a wealth of histrionic and vocal talent displayed which could not have been surpassed by any similar class of workers in any country of which we have any knowledge. The plays staged were extremely critical, clearly indicating a highly-developed sense of introspection in portraying their own faults, but more especially the faults of the bureaucrats, who are most carefully watched at all times to ensure service along correct lines.

Our next visit was to the State farm of Gigante. This farm was commenced in July, 1928, and is by far the largest of any farm in the world, containing about 190,000 hectares, or 500,000 acres, being seventy-eight kilometres long and forty-five kilometres broad. Coming from a country like Ireland, where small farms are the rule, it was difficult to visualise the working of a farm of such considerable dimensions. Unlike the State farm we had previously visited, which enjoyed buildings, and had been previously tilled, Gigante Farm had never been cultivated before, and its buildings had to be commenced afresh.

We saw very tangible evidence of the resolute manner in which the work was being tackled: offices, schools, hospitals, houses, grain-elevators, artesian wells, cultural halls, laundries, wash-places, etc., were being erected simultaneously with the cultivation of the soil. Everyone, whether peasant or artisan, were concentrating on their task as if their very existence depended on the completion of the work.

Tractors numbering 650 are now at work in the fields, together with a similar number of combines, and are manned by eleven brigades of men and women, who, at times are working miles from the village. Each brigade is equipped for a sojourn of six days in the fields, then returning to the village for one day's rest. Already 60,000 hectares of wheat have been grown, and next year will see a further 40,000 hectares cultivated, bringing the total up to 100,000 hectares, and with the acquisition of more machinery the scope of the work will be enlarged until the entire area is exploited. This year, at the height of the season, 7,500 workers were employed, a number which will be greatly increased as the development of the farm proceeds apace. Out of this number, 1,500 tractor-drivers were employed on shifts, and 2,400 chauffeurs for automobiles; while 600 students were working and studying preparatory to being sent out to various districts in the U.S.S.R.

The black soil of the district is remarkably fertile; two crops in the year are being extracted from it. Rotation of crops has not yet been introduced; while the yield per hectare is greater than in any other part of the country, and will soon attain the level of the previously more carefully-nurtured soil of other countries. Last year the total income from the sale of wheat and straw was 5,500,000 roubles, which gave a profit to the undertaking of 1,500,000 roubles. Considerable help was also given to the peasants in the adjoining collective farms to sow and gather the harvest.

We conversed with many peasants on the farm—particularly those who had returned from America, and were able to speak English—as to the conditions compared with before the Revolution; and while they admitted they had many difficulties to encounter and overcome, they were all loud in their praise of the transformation that had been effected in their lives and conditions, and expressed their determination to defend their Workers' State by any and every means in their power.

Like other places we visited, we were closely interrogated about the conditions of the workers at home, and when we intended to clear out the ruling class, as they had done. Apprehension was expressed as to the likelihood of the capitalists of the world waging war on the Soviet Union before the industries of the country could be built up. We were left in no uncertainty as to their attitude should this eventuate; but the fervent hope was expressed that they would be left undisturbed, to work out their economic salvation.



One does not require a very vivid imagination to foresee a bright future before the Russian people. Already agricultural production has reached the level of the year 1913, and the time is rapidly approaching when the countries comprising the U.S.S.R. will not only be able to feed their rapidly-increasing population, but will also be able to feed the greater part of the world. What clashes and effects this increased production will have on the capitalist countries of the world, faced with their acute problem of over-production and the resurgent armies of unemployed, is not a question we are expected to examine. But we are sufficiently conversant with world-history and economic development to know that the more scientific form of economy will eventually prevail. And as feudalism gave way before the advance of capitalistic development, so are we convinced that capitalism and socialism cannot exist side by side, and that socialism, being the more scientific and efficient form of economy, must ultimately be adopted in other countries, and triumph over the decadent remains of capitalistic Society. That the Russian Revolution is by far the biggest and most important event in the world's history cannot be denied by any competent observer.

Hectare=2.5 acres. Pood=40 lbs. av., approx.

### SOCIAL INSURANCE.

Social Insurance in the U.S.S.R. is provided free of cost to the worker, the funds being provided from the profits of industry and agriculture, whether the employer be the State, a co-operative enterprise, or private trader. Where a farmer employs more than two hired workers, he contributes to the Social Insurance fund. The insurance contribution is in definite proportion to the wage bill, 10 per cent. to 18 per cent., or even 20 per cent., according to the unhealthiness of the work and other considerations. It covers sickness, accidents, maternity, old age, unemployment, and also provides for orphans. It also covers dependents, who receive free medical aid in case of illness, and also domestic servants and soldiers—who get one month's pay on demobilisation—as well as industrial and agricultural workers.

**Doctors' Control.**—In connection with the scheme we visited an office in Moscow, whose title was translated as the Doctors' Control Commission, of which there is a branch in each district. In this, the Baumen district, there were 152,000 people insured. The annual expenditure was 12,000,000 roubles.

The function of this Commission, apparently, was to decide disputes as to illness. We were told that the procedure was that a person falling ill, or meeting with an accident, was examined first by the Ambulance. If the authority there said he was not ill, and he maintained he was, he was sent to this Commission—which consisted of medical specialists—who decided what was wrong. There were sixty-eight men employed, medical and

other personnel. These were chosen and controlled by a Presidium or Executive Committee, formed as follows: All the factories in the district send representatives to the Union district committee—from these thirty-five are chosen, generally those who have most spare time and understand the kind of work. These choose the Presidium of nine from their number.

**Incapacity.**—Every worker and employee in the U.S.S.R., in addition to receiving free medical aid for himself and his family, receives also benefit amounting to the average wage during the entire period of illness. They are divided into groups according to incapacity:

#### A.—TEMPORARY INVALIDS.

1. Totally incapacitated through accident or illness. Receives full salary as if at work, irrespective of length of illness.
2. Slight injuries needing daily treatment for a time. Receives three-quarter salary.
3. Casualties and slight injuries. Receive one-half salary.

There are also so-called "invalids of labour," given permanent pensions proportionate to disability, divided into six groups, paid full wages, three-quarters, half, one-third, two-ninths, and one-tenth, according to capacity for work. The "invalids" sometimes organise a committee among themselves for a loan fund, to which they pay 1 per cent. or 2 per cent. of their allowance.

**Maternity.**—Every woman worker gets leave, on full pay, both before and after the birth of a child; manual workers for eight weeks before and eight weeks after the birth; office and mental workers for six weeks before and after: also a sum of thirty roubles on reporting pregnancy, for extra expenses. On return to work, they are allowed half-an-hour off to nurse the baby as often as necessary without loss of wages, during the period of nine months—creches being attached to factories. Housewives not employed in industry, whose husbands are insured, receive eight roubles a month for nine months, plus the thirty roubles advance for expenses.

**Old Age.**—Men of fifty-five and women of fifty, who have been twenty-five years at work in a factory, can resign and receive a pension from the Social Insurance fund amounting to half their wages.

**For Orphans.**—Where both parents have been working, and one dies, if there is one child, it receives two-ninths of parent's salary up to the age of sixteen, or to eighteen if a student. Where both parents die a larger allowance is paid. Where there are two children, one-third of parent's salary is paid; where three or more, four-ninths.

**Unemployment.**—Unemployed workers receive a money benefit from the Social Insurance funds, as well as free medical



aid, in addition to the benefit from their Trade Unions. The amount depends on the district where they live, the length of time they were employed, and their qualifications, varying between fifteen and a half and twenty-seven roubles a month. They also receive an additional percentage of this amount for wife and family. Qualified workers getting twenty-seven roubles a month receive 15 per cent. extra for the family; semi-skilled getting twenty roubles a month, 20 per cent. extra; and unskilled getting fifteen-and-a-half roubles a month, 35 per cent. extra. Unemployed persons also have large discounts in rent payment. They may form a collective association for trading purposes, in which case they get six months' allowance in advance from the Insurance. If they fail to make good, they can come back and register again as unemployed.

### TRANSPORT—ENGINEERING.

Whilst in the city of Kharkov our Delegation visited the locomotive works situated in that city.

These works occupy a very large space of ground and consist of a series of large one-storey buildings. The interior of the buildings is fitted with the most modern type of engineering machinery of all forms necessary for the practical production of the latest type of high-speed and heavy haulage and long-distance type of locomotive.

There are some 5,600 skilled operatives employed in this works, attending and controlling the machinery and producing the most modern type of railway locomotive.

One is struck by the methodical organisation, and the wonderful display of efficiency displayed, and the whole-hearted and happy application of the workers to the particular task in hands. The atmosphere simply radiates with a spirit of contentment and interest in the work. Then, when one sees the finished locomotive awaiting for orders to depart for the scenes of its future usefulness; and, perceives the gigantic, efficient and modern-looking machine—the thought strikes one that here the chief factors in the successful progress of the economic interests of the Soviet Republics is being safely and efficiently and practically created.

We were informed that the output of locomotives from this great works was materially and effectively increasing in view of the modern and highly-specialised machinery installed therein, and the splendid enthusiasm in their work displayed by the men employed there.

The Soviet Republics realise fully the necessity for a more extended railway system to properly develop the resources of their great country; and, it is from the products (ever increasing in number) of such locomotive works as that in Kharkov that the full accomplishment of this idea will be fully realised in a short

space of time. In fact the output of this works alone has increased by 50 per cent. in the past twelve months and continues to increase.

From enquiries we found that the rates of pay for the workers employed in this works were: General workers, 180 roubles to 60 roubles per month (a rouble equalling 2/-); working seven hours per day for four days and the fifth day off.

Foundry men and smiths, etc., and any so skilled were on piece-work, and their rates of pay were from 200 roubles to 400 roubles per month; working hours, etc. the same as the foregoing. Night workers worked four nights of seven hours per night and were allowed the fifth and sixth night off.

Men engaged on heavy classes of work, such as foundry-men, etc., were also allowed free one litre of milk per day, and suitable classes of clothing free.

The general workers, besides being allowed every fifth day throughout the year off from work, were also granted from twelve to eighteen days annual leave.

Those engaged on heavy classes of work, besides also being allowed each fifth day off from work, were granted one month's annual leave.

Great provision and every care was seemingly made for the physical comfort, whilst at work, of the workers; and at the same time everything was done for their recreation. There were recreation rooms, rest rooms, concert hall, etc., and attached to the concert hall was a creche, where the wives of the workers could leave their children in the care of nurses whilst they attended the entertainment with their husbands. The administration, operation and discipline at this great works was carried out in accordance with the system that applies throughout the Soviet Republics, under the control of a works committee; and such a system is eminently satisfactory and produces wonderful results, as displayed by the engines produced and the output maintained at the works.

When the Delegation arrived at Rostov, and during its stay we, in company with some other of the delegates, visited the large railway running shed situated some distance outside the city. Unfortunately, when we were there no locomotives were standing by. However, it was found that every consideration for the physical comfort and social amenities of the engine drivers and firemen was provided. Engine drivers and firemen, whilst on duty and away from home, are provided with free board and lodging and every comfort.

The rate of pay of engine drivers is from 200 roubles to 210 roubles per month, and they work seven hours per day for four days and are off each fifth day.

Firemen are paid at the rate of 140 roubles to 160 roubles per month, and work the same hours and have the same time off. Besides this, they are granted one month's annual leave.



## SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.

We visited a school for the education of blind children, where 250 pupils lived. Housed also in this building, which was bright and commodious, were extensive printing, book-binding, knitting, leather, and brushmaking departments. We arrived at the end of, what is called in Russia, the "dead hour," when every child takes a siesta. We entered a large dormitory, where the children were just smoothing back their beds, and here we noticed, as we did throughout Russia, the beautiful quality of the linen—as good as our best Irish linen, and the bedding and blankets were of the same high quality. The children all appeared happy and free and well disciplined. The boys came leaping down the stairs, two and three at a time, on their way to their class-rooms, and we sometimes had difficulty in avoiding their laughing onrush.

Besides the usual subjects, gardening, music and languages, including Esperanto, are taught. There is a big orchestra and all the children are taught music, while those with special aptitude can specialise. Elaborate kindergarten equipment is provided for the smaller children. A beautiful natural history museum, fully furnished with stuffed animals, birds and reptiles from the Arctic and tropical regions, is provided for the daily classes of children, who are thus made acquainted with the wonders of Nature which they cannot see.

The general day's work is four hours' study in the morning, and two hours' practical training at some manual work in the afternoon. From an early age the children are made acquainted with the use of tools for book-binding, carpentry, leatherwork, etc. We saw some very nicely-finished boxes, made by little boys of seven or eight years old who were totally blind. They are also encouraged to design articles themselves. Some of the senior pupils turn out finished work fit for sale, and they get 20 per cent. of the profits of this. When they pass out of school, work is found for them outside, but they can sleep and board at the institute at their own expense, until they find their own feet in the world, and make their own homes. We saw during our visit, a few lads who were working outside, having meals in the dining-room.

There is an extensive printing plant in this institute for printing, on the Braille system, school books, pamphlets, newspapers, and works of fiction—which are distributed to various blind institutes throughout Russia. A good many are printed in Esperanto, which is apparently very popular with the blind. In several small study-rooms upstairs, we saw senior girls reading rapidly, their fingers flying over the raised type.

Two weekly journals are printed and distributed from here. We were much interested in watching stereo-plates being made.

We had a conversation with a man who spoke English fluently, and he was disappointed that we did not know Esperanto. We told the workers here that we were specially com-

missioned by our Dublin comrades to inquire into the conditions under which the blind lived in Russia. They were much interested, and asked us to arrange communications with them. They gave us a name and address, which we promised to give to a Dublin blind worker who would open up correspondence.

The physical and intellectual training of these leaves nothing to be desired, and the teachers, one and all, were of a highly cultured type and very proud of their pupils. Such classes as we saw, were small ones. The manners and deportment of the children would do credit to the best schools of this country.

Here, as elsewhere in Russia, we saw that serious regard paid to the importance of the child, with, perhaps in the case of these children, an increased tenderness and anxiety, because of their handicap.

## TEXTILE INDUSTRY.

In order to appreciate properly the stage to which the Russian textile workers have advanced, a slight knowledge of their position before the Revolution, and their struggles during the years of civil war, is necessary.

In old Russia all the mills were built in out-of-the-way villages, where the cheap labour of the peasantry could be had. Women and children were chiefly employed in these mills. The wages of the textile workers, therefore, were below the average wage obtaining in other industries throughout Russia. The conditions in the mills were revolting. The hours of labour were from twelve to sixteen per day, for six days in the week. Children were employed from eight years of age and it was a common occurrence for a woman to give birth while working in the mill. The mills were of the most unhealthy type: low roofs, small windows, bad ventilation, and sanitary accommodation of the most primitive kind. The bullying tactics of the foremen and overlookers made life in the mill a veritable hell. Coupled with this intense exploitation in the mills was the terrible housing conditions under which the workers were compelled to live. The homes were a narrow stretch of room, known as a "barrack," where three and four families were herded together like cattle. In these disease-breeding hovels privacy was impossible. Here birth and death, eating and sleeping took place in the presence of all the occupants. Education, cultural development, or any of the amenities of life were denied the workers. Life consisted of a daily series of poverty and misery until death came as a welcome relief. These conditions left a heritage of ignorance and superstition that was one of the many problems the Russian Communist Party had to deal with after the Revolution.

The textile workers of old Russia made many attempts to organise; but each time, after a brief existence, their organisations were ruthlessly disbanded by the Tzarist Government. The 1917 Revolution gave the textile workers, and indeed the whole of the Russian workers, the possibility of building up their



organisations. From the very outset of the Revolution they began to build up their Trade Unions parallel with the organisations of the Soviet, the future organs of the proletarian dictatorship. The growth of the Textile Union since the Revolution has been remarkable. In June, 1917, there were 100,000 members. Since that time there has been a steady yearly increase. This year (1929) the Union membership figures stand at 891,000.

After the Revolution the textile industry was in a state of disorder. The mill-owners, like the whole of the Russian capitalist class, began to sabotage and undermine the economic life of the country. They transferred parts of machinery to secret hiding places, destroyed supplies of raw material and fuel and other necessities. The result of this sabotage and internal war was that one factory after another closed down, and general devastation and distress prevailed. During this period the workers, led by the Communist Party, continued to organise factory committees which, by deed and action, were realising workers' control over production. They also organised detachments of Red Guards to protect the mills, and later, during the years of civil war and intervention, helped to defeat the enemies of the Soviet.

Having freed their country of the counter-revolutionary forces, and overcome the famine and fuel crisis, they began the work of peaceful construction: the work of building up their industries. It was not until 1925-26 that all the available mills were being worked, and at last a start made to build new ones. At the present time this construction has been considerably extended, and in every textile centre new mills are working, while others are in course of construction.

The Ivanovpovosinsk district, which we visited, is the second largest textile centre in Russia—employing over 290,000 workers in the textile trades. There are thirteen old mills and six new ones in the district, and under the Five Years Plan this number will be augmented by three artificial silk mills, one metal factory, one flax mill and one rubber factory.

The six new mills are built round the Ivanovpovosinsk village. Here can be seen the Soviet policy of transforming villages into industrial centres carried into effect. When we arrived at the village we were impressed by the great building activity that was in progress. A huge hotel, a fire-brigade station, a dining hall and restaurant, a workers' club, 500 workers' homes, a children's creche, and a large school were in course of erection. On expressing surprise at the amount of building, we were informed that this was part of the Five Years Plan of village construction and will be extended when all the new mills are completed and working.

Before visiting the mills we were taken through the large factory restaurant, where 18,000 meals per day are cooked and served. It was pointed out to us that this restaurant is inadequate to meet the growing demands of the workers; and the new

restaurant, when completed, will be capable of supplying 30,000 meals per day. 428 of the staff are engaged in the work of cooking and serving the food; 140 of this number are members of the Young Communist League, youths below the age of eighteen years, who work four hours a day in the restaurant and attend school four hours. Workers, by buying meal tickets in the mills, can procure at the restaurant a three-course meal for forty kopeks (about ninepence in English money). We were introduced to the chief cook: a young worker who was promoted to that position a few weeks ago. The person who formerly held the job was in jail awaiting trial for counter-revolutionary activity. From what we were told it appears that this character was one of the capitalist elements who lost their position of privilege at the Revolution. Two years ago he professed loyalty to the Soviet and he was given the job of chief cook and manager of the restaurant—having the qualifications for this work. Having secured the position of responsibility, he set out to undermine the work of the establishment. Under his supervision enormous quantities of food were wasted, accounts were wrong, and the general service of the place reduced to a very low standard. Finally a committee of inquiry was formed. After a few weeks of careful investigation the committee proved that he was guilty of deliberate maladministration.

After our visit to the kitchen we were taken to the workers' club attached to the dining hall. In the club all kinds of educational classes are provided for the workers. There were separate rooms for industrial circles, dramatic clubs, fine arts, radio, physical culture, sewing circles, music, drawing, modelling, designing, book-binding, photography, etc. The different courses are taught by specially trained tutors permanently engaged for this work. All mill-workers and their dependents have the right to participate in these courses and circles free of charge.

The first mill we visited was called the Djerzensky Mill, employing 3,900 workers. This mill, like all the new ones, is built on the most up-to-date and modern style. The huge glass windows gave one the impression that the building was constructed entirely of glass. In the entrance hall were rows of cloak-rooms and lockers, a book-stall where all classes of books were on sale, bath rooms, offices for the Trade Union and Communist Party and a special room, called the "Red Corner." The most popular form of cultural work in the "Red Corner" is to give lectures on various subjects, also reading aloud of papers, discussion classes and lantern lectures and, as in the clubs, family evenings, games and concerts are arranged. The different rooms in the mill presented a very bright and cheery appearance, and the numerous electric fans kept the atmosphere clear of dust. The colour design on the walls, doors and window frames, etc. was a yellow and light blue which, with the large windows and splendid lighting arrangements, added to the brightness and attractiveness of the rooms. In every room there was an ample supply of sanitary



accommodation, wash-hand basins and drinking taps. The factory Wall Paper was displayed on notice boards in every department. The function of the wall paper is to give the workers a greater opportunity of exercising their control in the administration of the mill. The wall paper helps also in the development of self-criticism and political educational work. All kinds of questions and suggestions raised by the workers are dealt with by the factory committee, who reply to the points raised through the medium of the wall paper. In this way each and every worker is given the opportunity of expressing an opinion on all matters in connection with the administration of the mill.

In our tour through the mill we were given every chance of questioning the workers as to their wages and conditions of labour. In every case where the question was: "Are you satisfied with your conditions?" the reply "yes" was immediately forthcoming, and the happy and contented look on their faces more than confirmed their answers.

The members of the Delegation, were also asked many questions by the workers, such as: What was the wages of the mill-workers in Ireland? Had we children's nurseries attached to the mills? The price of rent, food and clothing? How long did we think the Labour Government would last in England? What would the Irish workers do if the capitalist countries attacked Russia? What did we think of the Five Year Plan? The nature of the questions put to us indicated the knowledge and keen interest the Soviet workers have of the life of the workers in other countries.

The Milatove Combine, another of the new mills we visited, was opened on the 7th November, the day of the anniversary of the Revolution. This is the largest textile mill in Russia: employing 10,000 workers and covering an area of sixty acres. The same conditions prevail here as in other mills. All the mills in this district are working three shifts, seven hours per shift. All workers get ten minutes rest every two hours. The wages in the new mills average from 50 to 150 roubles per month. In the weaving department wages go up to 250 roubles per month. Juvenile workers below the age of eighteen, who work four hours in the mill and do four hours in the factory school, are paid the full rate of wages.

In calculating the wages of the textile workers it should not be forgotten that the cash wage received comprises only one of the many component parts of the actual wage received by a worker. Thus, rent is based on the worker's earnings. The average rent is 5 per cent. of the cash wages received. In some districts, where wages are lower than that in the Ivanovpovosinsk village, houses are provided free of charge; the 5 per cent. for rent (about 1/- in the pound) covers heating, lighting and bath service. Education, cultural development, use of clubs, children's nurseries, kindergartens, medical attention, full pay when off sick, insurance against old age, injury or unemployment

are some of the benefits the workers enjoy free of charge. Every worker in the mills receives two weeks holidays per year, with full pay. Workers engaged in what is called "dangerous occupation" are given four weeks' holidays per year and a special supply of fresh milk three times per day while working.

Special care is paid to women and child labour in the Soviet. Women receive two months' leave before child-birth and two months after (altogether four months) with full pay. When the child is born the mother receives a sum of money for the purchasing of what is called the child's "dowry," and for nine months after birth a special allowance is paid weekly for the feeding of the child. Practically every mill and factory have children's creches for babies from two months old to four years, and kindergartens for children from four to eight years, where mothers can leave their children during working hours. Should the child require natural food, the mother gets two half-hour recesses to feed the child. The cost of these creches and kindergartens is defrayed completely by the enterprises, whether they be State-owned or privately-owned mills.

In the Soviet the code of Labour Laws prohibits the employment of children under sixteen years. For juveniles between the age of sixteen and eighteen the working day is fixed at four hours. Juveniles receive not less than four weeks' holidays in the course of the year. Workers, when receiving their yearly holidays, can spend their vacation at one of the many rest homes throughout Russia, or, if their health requires it, can go to a sanatorium or health resort. Everything in these rest homes and sanatoriums is provided free of charge. In addition to all these benefits, food, clothing, entertainments and tram fares, etc. are all cheaper to the workers. In the Soviet a Trade Union membership card can be described as a passport entitling the holder to all the privileges and concessions that it is possible for the country to give at this stage of its industrial development.

During our stay in the textile district we visited the workers' club, Red Corner, children's creches and factory schools. Everywhere we found practical manifestations of the great drive for education and cultural development. Special funds have been raised for the liquidation of illiteracy; young and old are all taking part in the educational drive. At one school we visited we were taken into a class-room where over thirty men and women, over forty years of age, were learning the A B C. A practical example of the keen desire of the workers to educate themselves for the task of building up their country. The enthusiasm for the Five Years Plan is tremendous. When speaking of the Plan they speak of it as *our* Five Years Plan—something of their own creation, and not as something imposed on them from above. In every mill and factory there is a socialist competition in progress: the purpose of this competition is to increase production, eliminate waste and idleness—in order that the Five Years Plan is completed in four years. This competition was



started a year ago in the textile centres by the Young Communist League; the movement starting among small groups in the early part of 1929, has developed into a mass movement, embracing all the mills in Russia.

The contrast between the working conditions under the Soviet system and working conditions under capitalism is so tremendous that it cannot be fully explained in a short Report. If the Irish workers realised the true state of affairs in Russia, they would then understand the obvious reason why the capitalist governments are so anxious that the real truth should not be published. In Russia a new social order is being built on the ashes of the old order, where those who toil receive the full fruits of their labour, and the life, health and happiness of the workers receive first consideration.

### BUILDING AND WOODWORKING.

In dealing with the building and woodworking industries of the U.S.S.R. you can, by no means, compare it with the situation as it exists in Ireland to-day. In Ireland we have a separate or craft Union for each trade. In the U.S.S.R. they have only one Union for each industry, and they have adopted a slogan: "One Enterprise: One Union." Here we find one Union for the woodworkers and one for the building workers.

The following workers are grouped or linked up with the building Union: (1) All men and women employed in the construction or completion of railroads and transport lines (trunk lines, underground lines, railroad bridges, buildings and equipment); when this work is completed the workers are turned over to the Commissariat for Ways and Communications. (2) Construction and repair of high roads and other construction works of national or local importance for civil and military purposes. (3) Construction of auxiliary buildings and works for transport services; grain elevators, refrigerators, overhead cable-way. (4) Water transport ways; construction of barges for transport and fisheries, canals, cement ships, dams and river banks. (5) Research and designing of all kinds of construction work. (6) Workshops and factories working for the building trades using mineral building supplies (cement bricks, slates, asphalt, etc.). (7) Building offices.

In the Woodworkers' Union there are: (1) The men who cut the timber down in the forest. (2) All who handle it on the way to the mill. (3) Those employed at the mill. (4) Wooden instrument makers. (5) Cabinet makers. (6) Carpenters and joiners employed in shops for mass production. (7) All clerks in mills and such shops.

To try and make the case clearer: Take a carpenter working in a metal works. He would be in the Metal Workers' Union. A metal worker working in a saw mill; he would be in the Wood-

workers' Union. The Woodworkers' Union is built according to the following scheme: (a) Enterprise—General Meeting—Factory Committee. (b) District—District Congress, Administration of District Branch. (c) Region, Province, National Republic—Regional, Provincial, Republican Congress. (d) All U.S.S.R. Congress, Central Committee of Union. The Trades Union bodies are elected for the following terms:—Factory Committee: One year. District and Provincial Organisations: Eighteen months. Central Administrations and C.C. of Union—For a term of two years.

The Order of Subordination is as follows:—The C.C. of the Union has to report and give account to the All-U.S.S.R. Congress of the Union. The Regional, Provincial and District Organisations before the respective Congresses and before the C.C. of the Union. The Factory Committees before the general meetings of enterprises and before the higher Union Organisation.

The numbers of members in the Woodworkers are, according to years: Year 1917, 35,600; 1922, 83,018; 1927, 176,600; 1929, 184,761. At present it embraces 184,761 persons, made up as follows: 143,839 male adults; 35,317 women adults; 4,778 youths under seventeen years of age; and 827 girls.

Membership dues are paid into the Union to the amount of 2 per cent. of the wages. The Factory Committee collects them and hands them over to the Trades Union Organisation. Expenditure of members' dues is centralised. In spending the dues, about 50 per cent. go to serve the workers' needs, and are handed over to the funds organised by the Trade Union organisations themselves. In 1927, 14 per cent. was deducted for the special funds; in 1928, 22 per cent. was deducted; and for the first half-year of 1929 the following deductions were made: Cultural Fund and construction of Clubs, 20.9 per cent.; Unemployment Relief Fund, 10.4 per cent.; Strike Fund, 1.2 per cent.; Rest Homes, 2.3 per cent.

We visited buildings and woodworking concerns in Leningrad, Moscow, Stalingrad, and Rostov, and saw the different trades in operation. The biggest building job was Tractorstroy, where they are building a factory for the construction of tractors. It was twelve miles outside Stalingrad. The area of the whole block was 530 hectares; while 150 hectares were occupied by actual plant, and ten hectares by buildings. Schools, clubs, playing fields and workers' houses occupy the remainder of the ground.

80,000 persons are employed, 12 per cent. being women. The average wages for carpenters and bricklayers was four roubles per day; and while they only work seven hours, the Government allows them to work overtime as they want to have the factory finished. They get paid time-and-a-quarter for the first two hours. The houses for the workers who will work the factory were started at the same time as the factory. They also provided temporary houses for the building workers, rent free. Those who did not



stop in these buildings were transported free of charge to and from their work. There is no such thing as broken time. If it rains or snows the men are given inside work. Whilst it may not be at their own trade, they get the trade wages. If a man goes sick his wages are paid in full, but he has to attend the hospital or dispensary attached to the works.

### BRUSHMAKING.

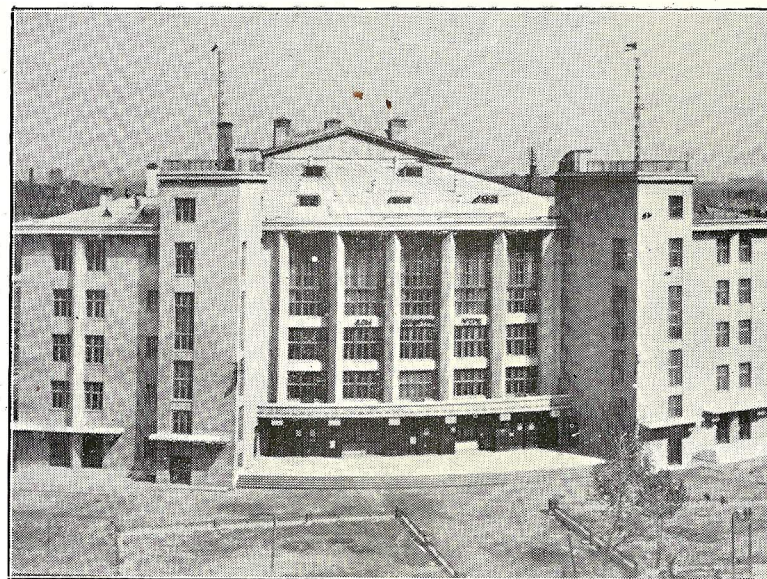
In Leningrad we went to visit a small brush factory. Up to a short time ago it was run by a private trader, but had just linked up with the wholesale co-operative society. All their workers practically were making sweeping brushes. Bass or street brooms did not seem to be made in U.S.S.R., nor were they in use. We consider that with the heavy snow-fall, bass or street brooms would be of great advantage and efficacy in cleaning the streets quickly.

Brushmaking is regarded as a dangerous and unhealthy trade, and therefore workers work seven hours a day, and are allowed four weeks' annual holidays with full pay. They are paid on piece rates and earn about seven roubles a day. The industry is not so highly developed as in this country.

### SOVIET PRISONS.

Some of us visited a prison in Moscow, where criminals as well as political offenders are serving sentences of from three to ten years. Here are murderers, robbers, spies, and State embezzlers. We found there was no solitary confinement in the prison. The Governor told us that there were no restrictions whatever on speaking to fellow-prisoners. We saw men visiting each other in their cells, and holding conversations in the corridors. On application, prisoners can change from one cell to another. In the cells we saw wireless sets. Each cell was well lit and heated, and contained bed, chairs and table, a fixed basin for washing, as well as a shelf for food tins. All the cells were lit by electricity. There are two prisoners in each cell.

The prisoners maintain their own discipline within the prison, addressing the Governor as Comrade. They have their various cultural circles, music, drama, reading, physical culture. They also play chess and dominoes. Any illiterate prisoner is taught to read and write before he leaves the prison. The work-rooms were like any ordinary factory. There were supervisors and instructors who were training the prisoners in the use of various machines. Most of the prisoners were working at looms driven by electricity, and some good articles were being made. The products were sold through the State stores in Moscow. All the prisoners were paid at piece rates for the work they were doing,



House of Culture, Leningrad.



A Factory Crèche.



and one of the prisoners told us that his average wage earnings were between twenty-five and thirty roubles a month. We saw their library, bookshop, barber's shop, and the co-operative store where they can purchase all kinds of luxuries out of their wages. Some of us purchased ties, scarfs, and shawls that were made in the prison.

The Governor asked us were any of us ever in prison. Some of us told him we were. He himself had been in a prison in U.S.A. for taking part in a strike, and also in Russia during the period of the Tsars.

Peasants are allowed to go home and work on the farm for three months, and this time counts, being deducted from their sentence ; two working days count as three days of sentence.

### ADMINISTRATION.

The seizure of political power by the Russian workers and peasants in the great October Revolution of 1917 resulted in the setting-up of what is known as the Soviet form of government, and a great deal of misunderstanding exists in capitalist countries as to what this "Soviet system" really means. "Soviet" is the Russian word for a Council, and as such has been a word in general use since long before 1917. After the Revolution, however, it was decided that only those who lived by their own labour were to be allowed either to vote or to sit on any Councils.

The confiscation of all private property, which took place at that time, assured the workers' control of the means of production, and the term "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat" is simply a convenient way of describing a democracy organised for the benefit of the agricultural and industrial workers as a class. In the Soviet Union a factory, for instance, is a self-contained unit, in which the workers co-operate in managing not only their own social life, but also concern themselves directly with the question of production, of output, and of profits. In the place of an employer, the workers have only to deal with groups of their own class-mates, fellows who work alongside of them at the bench. The very idea of a strike, therefore, becomes as absurd as it is unnecessary.

One Trade Union covers all the workers in any one factory, and that Union is represented by the Factory Committee, which is elected every six months at a general meeting of all the workers who are members of the Trade Union, that is to say, of about 98 per cent. of the whole personnel.

A Management Committee deals with the question of output and production generally. This Committee is not directly elected by the workers in that factory, as it is necessary for specialists and technicians to be employed ; the Factory Committee, however, has the right to protest against the nomination of anyone it may consider undesirable, and the matter is then



referred up to the Central Committee of the Trade Union. The Factory Committee is also able to make its own nominations.

Between these two Committees, and operating through the "Fractions" which it has in both departments, is the Communist Party Factory Local. The Party Fractions represent the most energetic elements among the workers, and it is their business to maintain the spirit of active co-operation upon which the whole system is founded.

Thus we have, as the three main centres of activity, first: the Factory Committee, or Trade Union centre; secondly: the Management Committee, or technical centre; and thirdly: the Communist Party Factory Local, or political centre. These three centres form what is known as the Red Triangle, and the same principle applies to all organisations in the Soviet Union, whether it is a question of a ship, a hospital, a school, a mine, or a Government office.

The Factory Committee elects delegates to represent its interests at Regional Trade Union Conferences; the Regional Conference elects delegates for the District Conference; the District Conference elects delegates for the All-Russia Congress of Trade Unions, which elects the Central Council of Trade Unions, consisting of 240 members, at the head of which is a Secretariat.

The Management Committee is responsible to what is known as a "Trust." A Trust unites factories within a certain area producing similar or kindred articles; Trusts, in their turn, are united in "Syndicates," and the output controlled by these Syndicates is co-ordinated through the Supreme Economic Council, whose task it is to regulate the production and distribution of goods throughout the Soviet Union.

The organisation of the Communist Party is similar to that of the Trade Unions, in that the Factory Local elects delegates to a Ward Conference, which in turn elects delegates to a City Conference, which in turn elects delegates to a District Conference, at which the All-Russian Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is elected.

In addition to these three main centres in a factory there are, of course, numerous sub-committees, or Commissions, which deal with certain specific aspects of factory life. For instance, there is a "Conflict Commission," which regulates any dispute that arises from the too-strenuous efforts on the part of the management to increase production at the expense of the workers' well-being, or *vice versa*. Another Commission handles educational questions, another deals with the Club, another with the development of social life, another with the encouragement of workers' inventions, another with the Co-operative, another with the Youth section, with Sport, and so on.

It is important to realise that, in a factory of, say, 2,000 workers, only about six or eight are exempt from their ordinary

work at the bench, and it is a noticeable fact that the Chairman of the Factory Committee, in spite of his important position, is invariably the most inconspicuous-looking person in the place.

Each factory also has adherents of various voluntary societies: International Labour Defence League, anti-religion, and anti-alcohol Leagues, the League for the suppression of illiteracy, etc., etc. It is also quite a usual thing for a factory to "adopt" a village, raising subscriptions to supply the village with a club-house, reading-room, wireless outfit, etc., and entertaining delegates invited up from the village from time to time. In return for this, the village offers its hospitality to the factory workers that are going on holiday. This is one of the many instances which show that the emblem of the sickle and hammer is not an empty symbol.

Lastly, in view of the totally misleading reports that have been circulated by the capitalist Press, to the effect that the Soviet Union is not a Workers' Republic, but that it is merely a dictatorship similar to that existing in Italy, but with Stalin instead of Mussolini at its head, it might be as well to mention that Kalinin is the President of the Soviet Union, while Rykov holds a position roughly equivalent to that of Prime Minister. Stalin is the Secretary of the Communist Party, and holds no post whatever in the Government. Anyone who has ever attended a factory meeting realises that the control is definitely in the hands of the workers, and that exploitation is impossible. Under no other system can individual grievances be so quickly redressed, while the security, and the steady rise in the standard of living, is the most convincing proof that, under the Soviet system, a new and better civilisation has emerged.

## MEDICAL SERVICES IN THE U.S.S.R.

It has been quite impossible, with the limited time and opportunities at our disposal while in Russia, to make anything like a full investigation into the Medical Service system, which is very different from ours. It is probably more advanced scientifically, but less so practically.

Interviews were secured with Dr. Vera Assatkiné, a director of the Bureau for Information on Health Services for foreigners in the U.S.S.R., with the General Secretary and other officials of the Medical Services Trade Union, and with Dr. Kahn, who is engaged in biological research work in Moscow; but as all these interviews and conversations are conducted through interpreters, some of whom were not very conversant with the matters in hand, it is difficult to get really clear and accurate information.



**GENERAL ORGANISATION OF HEALTH SERVICES.**—All Health services are co-ordinated under the Commissariat, or, as we would term it, Department for the Protection of Public Health, called Narcomstrav. In each district there is a Department of Public Health, having under its supervision all institutions dealing with health. These departments are all under the direction of the central Narcomstrav, and all scientific institutes come directly under Narcomstrav. Narcomstrav is divided into departments dealing with Protection of Motherhood and Infancy, Army and Navy Health work, Therapeutic Institutions, Tuberculosis, Sanitation, Epidermiology, etc., etc., each having a chief in charge. These departments send out general inspectors, who may or may not be medical men, throughout the Russian Republic. (There is a separate Health Commissariat for each of the Republics which together form the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.) They also send out school medical inspectors and nurses, and sanitary inspectors for houses. Narcomstrav has no other function with regard to housing.

The Commissariat decides how many nurses will be accepted for training each year in the various specialities, and also appoints the nurses and doctors, etc. to the various institutions, by applying to the Labour Exchange Bureaux, where they register after qualification.

All doctors, nurses, etc., are State employees; but as doctors only work on an average six hours a day, their free time can be employed in private practice. However, the extent of this is decreasing, as, in theory and in increasing practice, every citizen gets free medical care. Narcomstrav is designed to build up the nation's health in a positive way, and therefore develops the preventive or prophylactic side of medical work. For instance, they have succeeded in eliminating cholera entirely since 1925. Congresses in various diseases, tuberculosis, cancer, etc., are held periodically in different cities.

Education in personal hygiene, sanitation, simple preventive measures, etc., is carried on by means of posters, pictures, and pamphlets everywhere. Close touch for this purpose is maintained with the Unions, Workers' Clubs, Communist Youth movement, and co-operative societies.

Various new forms of institutions, such as the night sanatorium for workers, described later, have been set up.

**TRADE UNION ORGANISATION.**—All workers engaged in medical services: professors, doctors, veterinary surgeons, dentists, oculists, nurses, sanitary officers (called Sisters and Brothers of Mercy), also clerks, attendants, maids, porters, etc., are enrolled in one Trade Union of Medical Services. This follows out the universal practice throughout the Soviet Union of organisation

by form of employment. The total membership of the Union was given as 568,747. These were divided as follows:

(A) Medical and Dental personnel:

1. Doctors	....	....	12 %
2. Dentists	....	....	1.8%
3. School officers (both men and women, including some maternity nurses)	....	....	5.8%
4. Military male nurses	....	....	2.2%
5. Midwives	....	....	3 %
6. Medical Sisters and Brothers of Mercy (sanitary officers)	....	....	8.6%
7. Miscellaneous medical personnel (also includes maternity)....	....	....	2.7%
8. Lowest grade sanitary officers....	....	....	26 %
Total			62.1%

(B) Pharmacy workers

.... 8.5%

(C) Veterinary Personnel:

1. Doctors	....	....	1 %
2. Nurses	....	....	1.4%
3. Miscellaneous	....	....	2 %
4. So-called sanitary officers (unqualified attendants)	....	....	1.1%
Total			3.7%

(D) All other personnel:

1. Clerks	....	....	9.4%
2. Maids and porters	....	....	14.3%
3. Electrical mechanics	....	....	2 %
Total			25.7%

**OBJECTS OF THE TRADE UNION.**

1. *The defence of members' interests.*—There is a wage conflict sub-committee, which deals with all disputes regarding wages or discipline. In any institution the administration (head doctor) can suspend a worker, who is then defended by his Trade Union committee. The Union has special discipline rules, and a member can be expelled from membership for breaking these. There are also committees dealing with the maintenance of rest-homes, sanatoriums, etc., and assistance in the administration of Social Insurance.

2. *Improvement of the work.*—A small committee in each institution considers suggestions from all workers for improvements. If a suggestion is considered good it is tried first in that particular institution, and if found useful is communicated to other institutions, if considered suitable for them.

If the suggestion is scientific, medical, or surgical, it is considered by a special doctors' committee.



3. *Cultural activities.*—The general and political education of members. There is a general Union club in each institution or district, divided for the various sections of workers. There are special rooms and officers for different sections of workers. In Moscow there is also a special doctors' club. The sections are doctors (since 1920), veterinary workers, pharmacists, and general. This division into sections, which is not usual in Soviet Trade Unions, came about, we were told, through various associations being already in existence before and after 1917, and later being afterwards amalgamated, but wishing to preserve their individuality. The doctors especially, being largely non-Communist, had to be given separate sections in order to induce them to join in a Union. It is confidently predicted that through education these will eventually be merged in one. There must be at least fifteen workers of a category in any institution in order to form a section.

There are sub-committees elected by the members to deal with the above and other objects.

The percentage of all medical services belonging to the Communist Party at present is 6 per cent., and of doctors 2 per cent., but this is on the increase.

The Trade Union contribution is the usual 2 per cent. of salary. Of this nearly 50 per cent. comes back to members in social services. The remaining 50 per cent. goes for congresses, meetings, conferences, literature, office expenses. Doctors, nurses, and other workers who neglect to pay their 2 per cent. are considered after three months to have lapsed membership, and their cases are tried by the general workers' committee, who considers their applications to rejoin after taking into consideration all reasons for non-payment. This general committee meets once a month. Where membership of the Trade Union is lost, all benefits in the way of social services, etc., are lost, and the worker is made to feel an outcast, so that although membership is voluntary, the social pressure to join is strongly felt.

#### SUGGESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS FROM PATIENTS OR DOCTORS.—

A patient not satisfied with his treatment can complain to the Industrial Conference or Trade Union nucleus, and his appeal may be referred to a commission of specialists.

A doctor (say in the provinces) who wants some new treatment or apparatus installed, if refused by the administration, can go to the local health department, and if not satisfied there can appeal to the Trade Union committee.

We were told that in the U.S.S.R. all tuberculosis sanatoriums have X-ray apparatus, and that pneumo-thorax treatment can be practised from the smallest villages—if necessary the patient being sent for X-ray to a larger centre.

**SALARIES.**—The average salary of nurses is 57 roubles a month; maximum, 85 roubles. The average salary of doctors

is 140 roubles a month; minimum, 100 roubles; maximum, 400 or 500 roubles a month.

It may be mentioned here that no member of the Communist Party, no matter what his position, accepts a higher salary than 225 roubles a month. It must be remembered that rent in Russia is based on salary, in a definite percentage. We were told also that in the health resorts the nurses only pay 15 roubles a month for their food.

**HOURS.**—The average hours of doctors, nurses, etc. are six per day. X-ray doctors work only four hours a day, and get six weeks' rest a year, as well as their annual holiday.

**THE TRAINING OF NURSES.**—In pre-Revolution days in Russia, outside of the larger cities there were few trained nurses of the type we know. The patients were tended, and the hospitals cleaned, by illiterate servants or relatives of patients. Temperatures were taken and the doctors' orders carried out by persons called feldshers, who had taken a modified medical course of about two years, and in the case of women, a midwifery course also. These were the doctor's assistants.

Training courses for nurses have now been in operation for some years, but do not contain as much practical nursing work as we would think desirable. We visited a Polytechnic in Moscow, where 700 students were attending classes in a three years' course—for the first two years learning general nursing, and the third year some specialised branch, such as tuberculosis, prophylactic work, midwifery, etc. There were also 150 students doing a refresher course, which lasts nine months, and is compulsory for all nurses who have ceased practice for five years.

The classes included physics, anatomy, biology, theory of nursing, X-ray work, chemistry, dental work, medical analysis, social science, hygiene, and the inevitable history of the revolutionary movement, which is taught everywhere and here was linked up with social science. There was also a club with reading, rest, and study rooms, a library, physical culture room, and refectory, where a good dinner was obtainable for 29 kopecks (about 1d.).

Applicants for the course had to be between seventeen and thirty years of age, and must have had seven to nine years' elementary school training. Until a few years ago nurses were accepted for training who could merely read and write. There was an examination held every half-year, and those who failed to pass were allowed to go forward again after further training. A diploma was awarded on completion of the three years' training and passing of final examination, after which the nurse registered for work at the Labour Exchange, to which the Commissariat of Health applied when vacancies occurred. The hours worked in the school totalled forty-two to forty-six per week, six to seven per day: this included the practical work undertaken in various hospitals and in the polyclinic attached to the school. After work was over (usually 4 p.m.) the nurses were free, and prepared



for next lectures, or took part in the various club activities, physical culture, choral singing, dramatic groups, or trade union meetings or political economy debates. They could receive visitors up to 10 p.m., and their reading-room was furnished with wireless sets, magazines, newspapers, chess and other games. The holidays from school are two weeks in the winter and two months in the summer.

This school was only open to the children of the workers, peasants, or office employees, and students received 20 to 25 roubles a month pay (about £2). They had to supply their own clothes (simple overalls were worn) except where special clothes for disinfecting, etc., were necessary.

In the polyclinic attached to the school there were rooms for violet-ray treatment, for prophylactic work, for skin diseases, etc. Unfortunately, I got no opportunity for seeing an ordinary hospital where nurses learn practical work.

We learned there was a similar institute to this in Leningrad, and fifty throughout the U.S.S.R., and that under the Five Year Plan, they would have turned out 24,000 trained nurses by 1933.

**NIGHT SANATORIA.**—Night sanatoria are establishments described as a kind of "repair shop" for workers, for the care of those who are not actually ill, but who have such complaints as anæmia, slight heart disease, the first threatenings of consumption, etc., or who are just run-down or weak, and need special diet or treatment, but are still quite able to work.

The health of all workers in factories in U.S.S.R. is examined periodically, and those who need it are sent to the night sanatorium, which is maintained out of the 10 per cent. of profits which is earmarked in all undertakings for a special fund "to improve the condition of the workers." They are sent for a period of one and a half, two, or three months, in alternate batches of men and women. We were told that they first tried having men and women together (there is very little segregation of the sexes in Russia), but this was found to have very bad results, as rest and quietness and freedom from any worry or trouble forms a large part of the treatment, and mixing the sexes led to too much excitement, and to what the interpreter called "heart griefs"! Married people form a large proportion of the patients; and if there is no one at home to look after their children, they are sent to a creche, or nursery, so that a mother is satisfied that her children are quite safe and well cared for while she is away. The patients we saw included textile workers, printers, metal workers, chemical factory workers.

The nightly régime is as follows: The workers come direct from the factory when they cease work at about 5 p.m.; they do not go home at all—they undress in a room off the hall, where each has a numbered lock-up cupboard for clothes—they go straight into an adjoining bath-room, where they have a douche bath, then into a further room where they get clean dresses and

dressing gowns, then to dormitories to lie down for an hour and a half. The dormitories in this sanatorium were small rooms with two, three or four beds each. The building had been a private hospital previously. It was a small sanatorium of only thirty patients; others are larger, taking up to a hundred patients. Supper is served at 7 p.m., consisting of soup, a meat dish, and sweet. They then go to recreation and rest rooms, where there are magazines and amusements, also physical culture and other cultural activities, concerts, dramatic evenings of self-expression, etc. There is also a special study room. At 9 p.m. they have tea and biscuits, then wash and go to bed at 10 p.m. At 6 a.m. they get up and do half-an-hour's gym., then bathe and douche again, then have a good wholesome breakfast. They then change into working clothes again and go to work.

The physician examines them every day, and they get any special diet or treatment considered necessary.

Some of the results have been:—weight increased four to eight kilograms, haemoglobins increased 15 per cent. to 20 per cent., slight heart diseases and ills arising from fatigue completely cured. The patients, during the course, are advised by the doctor as to their future life, and are visited afterwards for two or three years by Social Sisters, who advise about children, hygienic conditions, food, etc. If necessary, the doctor helps them to get healthier living rooms.

Any illiterate workers are taught to read and write, as part of the campaign for elimination of illiteracy. There were pictures in the dining-room illustrating hygienic principles, etc., for the benefit of those who could not read.

The patients produced the usual wall newspaper, printed by hand and written by themselves, in which they criticised the establishment if they wished. The number we saw contained a humorous poem describing arrival in the sanatorium. We questioned patients as to loneliness, and they said they felt this at first, but it soon wore off and they were very happy.

The sanatoria are periodically inspected by workers' delegates from the factories.

This establishment had as director a lady doctor, who was paid 150 roubles a month. There were three qualified nurses, and three Social Sisters, paid 60 roubles a month. The nurses work a six-hour day, but also do cultural work in the sanatorium in their spare time; this of course is voluntary. The patients we saw seemed very happy indeed, and gave us a great reception, singing revolutionary songs and dancing Russian peasant dances for us. We were told there were fifteen such sanatoriums for miscellaneous diseases in Moscow, and also thirty specially for tuberculosis.

#### BOOT AND LEATHER FACTORIES.

In Leningrad and Moscow we visited a number of factories: one very large factory in Leningrad employing 12,000 workers.



It was wonderful to go through this factory and see how the comfort and safety of the workers is looked after; every means of protection was given them, all machines being very well protected, and large pictures displayed of workers being pulled round revolving shafts, etc., giving warning to the too reckless. Certain operations are considered unhealthy, and at these only strong men are allowed to work—whilst in Ireland it is quite common for youths and girls to be employed at such operations. In such cases the workers are allowed four weeks' annual holidays with full pay. All others are allowed two weeks with full pay.

In the tanneries everything possible is done to protect the health of the worker: a fine system of shower baths makes it possible for the worker to leave for home feeling fresh and clean. In most of the boot and shoe factories the ventilation is excellent, and the rooms are clean and warm. All workers have lockers to put their clothes in when they enter the factory, and good washing accommodation in each department. Also in every department we found pure drinking water provided.

Some of the factories have schools attached, where boys and girls attend as apprentices at the age of fourteen years. They spend four hours a day in the schools and four hours in the factory. In factories that have no schools, arrangements are made for apprentices to attend the nearest school.

**TECHNICAL SCHOOL.**—In Moscow we were shown all over a technical school which was attached to one of the factories there. This school was for the whole leather industry in Moscow—there being six leather factories there. Students work a four-year course in the school, and then get a diploma—the most brilliant may be sent abroad afterwards to study at foreign Universities. They are selected from among the workers in all the leather factories—the school prepares and circulates its programme of work and the factories choose suitable students.

**HOURS.**—They work four hours a day in classes, and four hours in the factory, and for the five-day week. The hours are to be reduced to seven after 1st January, 1930.

**WAGES.**—The students are paid 75 roubles a month, with free rooms, and tea morning and evening free. Dinner costs 43 kopeks.

**NUMBERS.**—At present there are 230 students, and it is hoped by the end of the Five Years Plan there will be 400.

**CLASSES.**—We saw classes going on that morning in electrical engineering, theoretical mechanics, drawing, Russian language and literature (the book under study was one of Pushkin's); mathematics, chemistry, the technology of shoes (in this class were X-ray photos of feet, showing effect of shoes, also a decorative frieze of pictures of shoes in different countries throughout the ages), etc., etc. The students all looked very happy, and were eager to ask us questions. There was also a very fully-equipped students' library, with books in German and English as well as Russian.

**THE FACTORY.**—This was an old leather factory which has been extended and partly rebuilt by the Soviet Government. The old parts of the factory were stuffy and dark, the new being large, bright rooms, with big windows. We saw the hides being prepared from the beginning, dyeing, polishing, etc. In another building machinery belts were manufactured; also boots and shoes. In this building the top storey had been added by the Soviet Government.

**WAGES.**—The average wage was 175 roubles a month. The cutters (skilled) get 200 roubles a month, sometimes more. The stitchers were paid 150 to 200 roubles a month. One worker told us his rent was 8 roubles a month, for a two-roomed cottage. For rooms, rent is a definite percentage of wages.

**HOURS.**—Eight per day, to be reduced to seven in 1930—five-day week: that is, work for four days, and rest on the fifth.

**SOCIAL INSURANCE.**—18 per cent. of the total wage bill was paid into the fund for free Social Insurance.

**FACTORY COMMITTEE.**—This Committee looks after all the interests of the worker, and defends him if necessary, against the manager. In every factory there is a directorate consisting of the manager, the secretary of the factory committee, and the representative of the Communist Party. This leather factory committee had nine members, elected from each department or group of departments. We were told that it could warn slackers, but had not the power of dismissal, which rested with the directorate, on which, of course, the worker was represented.

The administration of the factory pays in  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. of all wages towards the support of the committee and its cultural and educational activities—out of this the secretary and chairman are paid salaries equivalent to the wages they would otherwise earn. In this factory they were whole-time officials; in smaller ones they would be only part-time, and would work in the factory also.

**LIBRARY.**—There was a workers' library and reading room, and the woman at the head of this is in charge of the cultural life of the workers. There was a book in which were entered their opinions of various books.

There were about 900 workers and students, out of which 210 belonged to the Communist Party and thirty were candidates for it, and 140 young pioneers. We met the Party representative, who is responsible for the political side of the administration, and here we learned that a Communist is not permitted to accept more than 225 roubles a month, no matter what position he holds, and Party discipline is very strict.

There was a volunteer army organisation attached in which the workers are instructed in the use of arms, and form a workers' militia. Out of the 900 in this factory, 500 were in this organisation, and of these 300 had volunteered for the Eastern front.

In the hall of this factory were pinned up a series of miscellaneous questions and answers which are asked by workers



and answered by a special bureau. Also a diagram showing the progress of the factory week by week, the "Socialist Competition." There was a similar diagram in each room showing the status of each worker by name.

We also saw the students' rooms, with radio headphones for each bed, and a central radio apparatus. They were comfortable, small rooms, about four beds to each.

Most of the factories have excellent dining rooms attached. There is also a dispensary attached where we saw workers receiving first aid and other treatment. For minor ills a qualified nurse is on constant duty at the dispensary.

Attached to the factory is a creche, or nursery, for children, where mothers who are working leave their children under the care of a trained nurse during working hours. If the mother wishes, after working hours, to attend meetings or amusements, etc., she can leave her children in charge of the nurse attached to the club.

### ARTS : THEATRE, PAINTING, SCULPTURE.

Under this heading we would like to refer first to the theatre and its relation to the State. All Russian theatres are State-owned and State-controlled. The plays produced are all of an educational character. The majority of them are propaganda productions for the spread of culture and the uplifting of the people. In Moscow they produce, on alternate nights, a national ballet or grand opera. We saw the production of a Russian ballet, entitled "The Red Poppy." There was an orchestra of seventy-five instruments—wood, wind and string. We were told that this is the usual number in a theatrical orchestra producing a ballet. We saw grand opera produced with an orchestra of 115 performers. In all the workers' clubs we visited we found an orchestra composed of members of the club, with from eleven to twenty-three instruments. In each club we found cultural classes for the education of the worker, and slogans on the wall decrying illiteracy and demanding the spread of education and cultural classes for the people.

In the higher schools we found the sons and daughters of the workers with a bent for painting, drawing, engineering, writing in the sense of the art of the writer, had been carefully graded from the elementary schools—all having found their way to give expression to their gifts and their genius.

On every side we noted the care that was taken to develop the national instincts and traditions of the people. In their schools of painting they have rekindled the desire of expression of a national outlook and re-established the Russian schools with an evident desire to emulate nationally the examples of the Italians, of the Dutch, of the French and Impressionist Schools, and to make the Russian schools of painting the equal,

if not the superior, of the best of them. We found a school of authors unostentatiously developing in the workers' clubs, and they gave us examples of men and women whose plays were first produced in the villages, now writing for the nation. In all circles which may rightfully come under the heading of Art, the genius of the people is developed through their language and their customs.

We saw in every workers' club the kinema exploited as propaganda for the education of the people for the uses of the Soviet. Mutual self-help exploited for the improvement of the outlook of the worker. Houses being built by the workers for occupation by members of their own class. And Art as well as Industry lending its aid for the spread of their slogans in connection with the Five Years Plan. Fraternal feeling is cherished and expressed by their desire that the most artistic of the Russian people, as well as the least artistic, realise that an injury to one is the concern of all. And in the theatre, in the art schools, in the higher spheres of education, that spirit is evident on all sides.

### MUNICIPAL AND STATE UNDERTAKINGS.

The first object of interest visited was a newly-erected skyscraper, that gave the impression one had landed in New York by mistake. The pride with which this wonder was exhibited was only equalled by the interest with which it was explored by the Irish, German and American delegations.

Built to house the offices of the State Industries—mining, metallurgy, electrical, etc., it consists of seven huge blocks rising to fifteen storeys in the central buildings, and never lower than ten in the flanking wings.

Here, as in the school visited in Moscow, air, light and comfort are recognised as the greatest aids to efficiency. Modern equipment—generally of the finest oak and brass; thousands of quiet, capable, efficient workers, all impressed with the idea that this workers' State is worth working for, and giving that impression to the visitor, spacious corridors, wide staircases, busy elevators, all contributed to a sense of grandeur and dignity and prosperity which in other countries is supposed to be the exclusive attribute of capitalism.

The work of Russian architects and engineers, built of Russian materials, standing like a range of mountains in the day, glittering with myriad lights when darkness falls, this monument to the faith of a delivered people in its future present achievements and confident outlook of a people delivered from centuries of bondage was well worth travelling the width of a continent to visit.

The automatic telephone exchange in the basement, connecting several thousand rooms was, in itself a revelation, and the



suites of rooms devoted to the pleasure, comfort and convenience of the workers, which are an indispensable feature of all Russian institutions, were here in keeping with the ultra-modern design of the whole establishment.

The luxurious offices of the Municipal Workers' Union in Kharkov reminded one of what Union Headquarters should be, only by way of contrast.

The splendidly-equipped headquarters of the excellent tramway service were again notable for the extraordinary enthusiasm of the workers and the wonderful arrangements made for their comfort, even down to the fully-equipped library, with modern index system, in the refectory; and the provision of three different menus to choose from at a merely nominal price.

The Third Polyclinic at Kharkov was the most wonderful medical institution we have yet visited. Here again, modern architectural beauty, without and within, is combined with the most up-to-date equipment.

There are nine polyclinics in Kharkov, and the institution visited, which has a frontage nearly twice as large as that of the Mater Hospital in Dublin, has thirty-five different departments and 200 doctors in constant attendance. Medical help and drugs are given free to all manual and office workers who stand under the Social Insurance scheme, and also to their dependents. The Third Polyclinic serves the locomotive, electrical, textile, and agricultural workers, numbering 25,000.

It deals with out-patients only, in-patients being exceptional, and retained only for observation purposes.

Each day 4,000 persons are treated, though the hospital is capable of treating 8,000.

Ten roubles per head of the population is provided from the funds of the State Insurance, towards which 10 per cent. of the wages of the worker is paid by the industry, the worker paying nothing.

Spectacles and gold-fillings for teeth are provided free.

Special cases are drafted, after observation, to special dispensaries, these being provided for tuberculosis, heart troubles, optical defects, narcotics and venereal diseases.

After a preliminary lecture by the medical superintendent, we made a tour of the clinic, visiting the dental surgeries, the dental factory, the optical saloons, the excellent equipment of all of which could only be adequately appreciated by professional workers. Men and women doctors, young and old, white-clad like their nurses and assistants, were everywhere attending to large numbers of male and female workers, whilst the comfort of those who were waiting was also considered in every detail.

Vapour chambers for throat and chest diseases, the atmosphere thicker than a London fog or the back-kitchen on washing day, but the flavour different, were literally groped through, leading to rooms where every possible variety of nasal

sprays and syringes were fixed over basins at which the patients sat, twelve aside, as if they were about to have a shampoo at a high-class hairdresser's saloon.

Other instruments for inhalation, regulated by electric dials, made one wishful to develop symptoms in order to be treated in the luxurious and intriguing manner which seemed to be thoroughly enjoyed by the patients.

Sunlight treatment was given in five different wards, the patients lying full length on screened beds, or treated for special parts only.

Chemists making tests for diabetes were not disturbed by the international invasion, which proceeded to the water-cure department, which occupies three floors and contains every possible variety of spray, hose-pipes, baths in which to stand, sit or lie, with what the layman would presume to be bath-salts of every hue in the rainbow. Mud-baths are now being installed, the mud being specially brought from health resorts at a distance. 80 per cent. of these baths are reserved for artisans, and 20 per cent. for office workers.

Leaving this marvellous institution, newly built by native architects and engineers with native materials, it was impressed upon us by the medical director that the principle of Russian medicine is not only to cure, but to study conditions and causes and prevent these illnesses—this course of study being called dispensarisation.

Whilst the Delegation yet remained in the city of Kharkov we specially visited the Municipal Undertakings of that city. To gather some idea of the size of this place it may be here stated that the population of Kharkov is about 900,000. The Municipal Workers' Committee headquarters were visited in this connection. This Committee controls and administers and manages all matters dealing with civic affairs in this great city (including the tramway service).

One was struck by the splendidly-equipped and appointed headquarters of the tramway workers. Every possible thing for their comfort and well-being is installed, including a fully-equipped library and a splendid refectory where meals are obtainable and may be chosen from three different menus at very nominal prices.

As well as the tramway system, this Committee also controls waterworks, domestic and public scavenging, etc. Men and women are employed as sweepers, and their rates of pay are the same: 85 to 110 roubles per month. They also work eight hours per day for four days and have the fifth day off. Domestic scavenging is done by horse-drawn vehicles, and the rates of pay are 100 roubles to 200 roubles per month, on piece-work or tonnage basis. The hours and days off are the same here. Any workers under eighteen years of age only work six hours per day. Night workers work six hours per night for four nights and have the fifth and sixth nights off.



All the employees get one month's annual leave ; they are also supplied with one heavy coat each during the winter, and one light coat each during the summer ; and one litre of milk per day free, and other nourishing foods. During the winter months, when it is fifteen degrees frost, all workers are allowed fifteen minutes in every hour to enter specially-provided places to heat themselves.

In the cleansing, etc. of this city there are no mechanical contrivances used in the process—horse-drawn vehicles being the general mode of removal of refuse and rubbish. The sewerage system is also very much behind the times—the street system of draining consisting of large open gratings. However, steps are being taken to introduce a sewerage system on the most modern lines.

The surfacing of the roadways and streets of the city is very far from being modern—there are some sections covered with asphalt—but on the whole the cobble-stones form of surfacing prevails, and in some places there is no special surfacing at all.

In this undertaking, as already explained in regard to the other activities of this great State, the Municipal Workers' Committee controls and operates every section of the city's civic administration. The money for all expenditure is provided by the Government of the Soviet Republics ; but the local Committee may raise money locally for any particular utilitarian purpose, even though that purpose may be outside the actual requirements of the administration of the city's affairs.

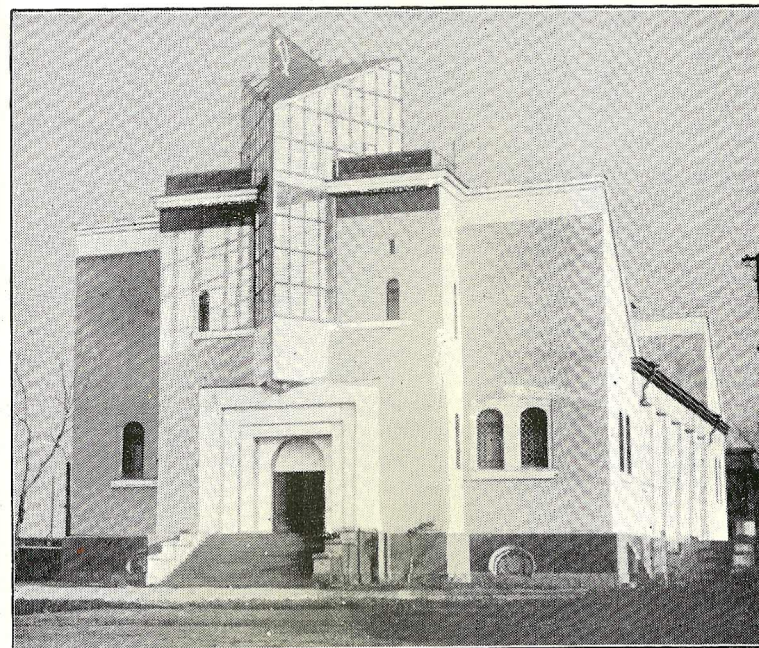
Whilst at the city of Rostov we also visited the Electricity Undertaking of that place. The generating station is really only in course of construction—although the construction has advanced to that stage that there is one generator at present developing electrical current, and three further generators are being installed. When fully complete, it would generate 140,000 kilowatts.

The rates of wages were the same as those applying for the engineers.

### EDUCATIONAL WORK IN THE U.S.S.R.

The President and Vice-President of the Union of Workers in Education met us, by arrangement, in the Palace of Labour (formerly the residence of the Tsar's sister), and in the course of an interview lasting two hours, which was frequently interrupted by callers from the country districts, and which suffered somewhat from the difficulty of interpreting and noting lengthy statements, the following information as to educational development in the Soviet Union was obtained :

Children of pre-school age (three to eight years) were formerly in schools conducted by the wealthy. These schools are now provided by the Government, but the number attending them is



Workers' Club and Theatre, Leningrad.



Liquidating Ignorance. Adult Elementary Class.



very small—about 1 6/10 per cent. There are creches at every factory, the cost of which is paid by the office of the Educational Workers' Union.

Children from nine years upwards were formerly catered for in two groups—the first comprising five classes and the second, four forms, in the latter group, instruction being given in industry, agriculture, or municipal work—each child specialising in some section of labour. These schools are now being re-organised, and the classes are arranged from Standard O (for those who had not passed through the pre-schools) to Standard X—those in the tenth class receiving special instruction, though it was remarked that there is a great want of specialists. Some children leave school before specialising in order to get wages.

The Soviet of Leningrad expends this year 450,000 roubles for the provision of scholarships, and this sum will be increased to 713,000 roubles at end of the Five Years Plan.

*Meals* are provided free for the workers' children, who are over 75 per cent. of those attending—a small charge being made to others. (In the school I visited later, a splendid airy and well-appointed refectory was seen.)

Teachers lead the work of organising social study groups, and give their services free in this direction.

Special provision is made for *homeless children*, of whom there are large numbers as a result of enemy attacks, especially in the South, and the civil war.

For *illiterates* of fourteen and upwards, there are special schools, and it is expected that the liquidation of analphabetism will be completed by the end of the Five Years Plan.

*Defective children* are sent to special institutions by the teachers of the ordinary schools. There are special schools for all kinds of ailments, and of many interesting types. Deaf and dumb children are treated by the very newest methods, and greater progress is being made in this matter. There are also special schools for deformed children, and those with no hands are taught to write with their feet.

*Boarding Schools* are of two classes: (1) for children of pre-school age; (2) for children of school age.

Leningrad has schools of this type at Tsarskoe Seloe, the Tsar's village, which is now called Children's Village. These special schools give a quicker way of forming special habits—the factory schools give habits of industry, the village schools give habits of training in agriculture.

*Professional Technical Schools*, or middle high schools, are conducted by special technical experts for training in pedagogy, industry, medicine, etc., and these are followed by colleges or high schools—these are often conducted at special workers' factory schools, but this is only a temporary measure, and the number of these colleges will grow and grow.

Pupils of promise are sent to the Workers' University, where the first year's course is of a general nature, and the second for



better professional habits (training) in different works. (The director of the railway engineering works at Kharkov was a metal worker who was sent by his fellow-workers to one of these universities before taking control.)

*Political Schools.*—Every section of industry has its own schools, where special courses (primary and secondary) are given to form a complete political education, particularly in the doctrines of Marx and Lenin.

The secondary political schools are designed to provide for posts of the Soviet apparatus qualified Party workers.

Referring again to *Professional Schools*—These were intended to increase the efficiency of the different sections of workers, and were directed by the respective Trade Unions. The Union of Workers in Education have such a school for increasing the professional capacity of teachers. Colleges or high schools include commercial high schools, technical colleges and science institutes. 85,000 engineers are required to be prepared by the end of the Five Years Plan, as well as 110,000 agriculturists and 160,000 teachers. Special plans are being made to prepare workers and peasants to be teachers.

In this connection the question of illiteracy was again referred to. This legacy of the Tsarist régime, affecting quite one-half of the population, was being dealt with in a thorough fashion, and 1,500,000 people were now being taught to read and write. At the end of the Five Years Plan 19,000,000 adults will have been taught.

*Medical Inspection* of schools takes place each year, in the autumn, after the vacation. Those needing attention are passed on to dispensaries. Dietetic dining rooms and night sanatoria are provided free. The number of doctors assigned to this purpose is being increased immediately, and now Leningrad compares favourably in this respect with any European city. All children are vaccinated when admitted to school, and this repeated at intervals.

Education is controlled by the local Soviet, of which the Union of Workers in Education act in an advisory capacity, as an education committee. The constitution of the Union provides that each village has a local committee. In large towns every institution which has twenty-five workers chooses its own local committee. These elect each a representative to the Congress of the district, which in turn elects delegates to the Central Committee in Moscow.

*Putiloff School.*—After the interview at the Palace of Labour, the Vice-President of the Union brought us to the large school of the Putiloff factory, where 1,650 scholars are on the rolls. The school is a large four-storeyed building of the most modern design, with large and airy class-rooms opening from very wide corridors, running the whole length of the building.

The furniture and school equipment represented the last word in comfort, efficiency and culture. The thorough and

complete manner in which this school is equipped can only be described as phenomenal, with a due regard for the meaning of the word.

Most large schools have one or two specially-equipped departments which are regarded with pride and pointed out to visitors; but this school possesses special rooms for every phase of technical development. Woodworking and engineering shops, needlework and cookery rooms, with the most modern machinery and appliances, physics and chemical laboratories, electrical and astronomical departments, art rooms, library, geographical and travel bureau, committee rooms for the scholars and staff, gymnasium and concert hall—each specially constructed and designed to give the utmost facilities to the children of the workers.

The children themselves seemed intelligent, keenly interested and, above all, happy and cheerful, and the work of the scholars displayed round the walls of the class-rooms showed that the instruction imparted is of a very high order.

In one room a conference was being held between the teachers and representative boys and girls from each class to review the work of the term—the annual holidays being about to commence. The school director was exceedingly anxious to afford the fullest opportunity for inspection, and the large staff and the children of all ages seemed to be on the best of terms with each other.

From the wonderful observatory in the tower of the building, to the vast gymnasium on the ground floor, one could only ring the changes on various expressions of admiration, and wish that school-builders at home would evince such a partiality for light and progress, physical and mental, as one saw at every turn in this wonderful school.

*Teachers' Club.*—A lordly palace on the banks of a picturesque canal, formerly the town house of Prince Yusupuf, was next visited. Historically it is famous, because in its cellar was executed the infamous Rasputin. Now its marble halls and beautifully-adorned and furnished saloons are used as the Teachers' Club and offices of the Educational Workers' Union.

Rest rooms, libraries for various scientific sections, restaurant offices, meeting rooms—all the magnificent apartments are now devoted to the welfare of the workers, and made one visualise the I.N.T.O. housed in the Dublin mansion of the Earl of Iveagh when the Revolution in Ireland is a fact.

## NORTHERN CAUCASUS.

The waterworks in Rostov, where four gigantic tuns are kept constantly filled from the Don, and the wonderful processes whereby the city is assured of a never-failing supply of clean water, deserves to be mentioned, as does the inevitable provision for workers' clubs on an almost incredible scale of magnificence and comfort. The Harvester factory has been dealt with elsewhere, and one dictum of the communal manager at a demonstration in our honour, deserves to be recorded: "The old



communal policy did everything for the bourgeoisie. The new communal policy does everything for the worker." "Everything" is right.

On the last day of our stay we were received by the President of the Government of the Northern Caucasus, Balachnin, who was formerly a metal worker, and whose evident strength of character could not be hidden behind his unassuming manner.

The province contains 9,500,000 of people, and covers 200,000 square miles. Several races inhabit this region, and books and papers are printed in the native language of each, and each maintains its own laws and customs. All the working masses participate in the government, and only those who exploit the work of others are excluded.

If any man hides his past record he is excluded from Soviet administration, special precautions having to be taken against those anxious to obtain posts but to continue their destructive work. Villages elect a "self-Soviet"—one representative for every hundred people. There are 210 Soviets working freely. Town Soviet and self-Soviet are elected on the same principle. Rostov, with a population of 400,000, has a Soviet of 850 members—some elected by industries, others by quarter (district). In the towns the Communist Party forms a larger proportion of the Soviet—generally 50 to 60 per cent. In the country districts the proportion is smaller. Persons of eighteen and upwards can vote at elections. In answer to a specific question, the Governor asserted that every one was perfectly free to practise any religion he wished, so long as religion was not used as a cloak for counter-revolutionary activities. Besides the Russian Orthodox Church, the places of worship included Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Mohammedan and Jewish.

Here, too, interesting statistics of the campaign against analphabetism were gleaned. Only 30 per cent. of the people of this province could read and write before the Revolution. Now the proportion is 50 per cent., and the Five Years Plan provides for the education of all illiterates.

The mountain districts were entirely neglected under the old régime, only 5 per cent. being literate before the Revolution. Now 35 per cent. can read and write. Seventy schools in the mountains have now increased to 700. Technical and middle schools have increased from fourteen to fifty-four, and high schools from one to eleven, including two for the "mountainy" men.

Here as elsewhere, the point was insisted on that the policy of the present administration was to take care of the masses of the people, and everywhere this policy is taking effect—in the remote Caucasus as well as in the metropolitan districts of Leningrad and Moscow.