

SOVIET RUSSIA TO-DAY

*The Report of the British Workers'
Delegation which visited Soviet
Russia for the Tenth Anniversary
of the Revolution, November, 1927*

First Printed, December, 1927, 1-10,000

Second Impression, January, 1928, 10,001-20,000

Third Impression, March, 1928, 20,001-25,000

PUBLISHED FOR THE BRITISH WORKERS' DELEGATION
BY THE LABOUR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT,
162, BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD, LONDON, S.W.1

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NOTE

The National Committee which organised the workers' delegation to the U.S.S.R. (see page 5) was constituted as under:—

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- W. H. HUTCHINSON, A.E.U.
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- A. J. COOK, Miners' Federation.
- BEN TILLET, Transport Workers and General Council, T.U.C.
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- TOM MANN, National Minority Movement.
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- A. G. TOMKINS, N.A.F.T.A.
- C. W. GIBSON, Workers' Union.
- HARRY POLLITT, Boilermakers.
- W. C. LOEBER, N.U.R.
- V. BEACHAM, National Society of Painters.
- JACK TANNER, A.E.U.
- J. REEVES, Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society.
- M. BIRCH, Workers' Union.
- B. SULLIVAN, Tailors' and Garment Workers' Union.

W. PAUL, Editor *Sunday Worker*, was Hon. Secretary of the Committee.

Soviet Russia To-day

INTRODUCTION

The Tenth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution was an occasion which aroused universal interest among the workers in every country. In Britain, as in other countries, a national committee was established to organise a representative workers' delegation to the U.S.S.R. to participate in the celebrations and to investigate the results of the ten years of Soviet rule. The National Committee of the Workers' Delegation to Russia had its first meeting in London on September 9th, 1927, and instituted a national fund to defray the expenses of the visit to Russia. Some weeks later, through the medium of district committees, conferences of delegates from trade union, co-operative and labour political organisations were held in London, Cardiff, Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, Newcastle, Glasgow and Carlisle, for the purpose of electing rank and file delegates to go to Russia. In addition to the 48 delegates so elected, a number of Trade Union, Co-operative and other organisations which had been specially invited by the corresponding Russian organisations also sent delegates. After the return of the Delegation, the National Committee, having completed its work, held its final meeting on December 16th, 1927, leaving the further work to the actual members of the Delegation, who for this purpose constituted themselves into the "Friends of Soviet Russia."

The British delegates, together with the separate Irish delegation, left London on Saturday, October 29th, in the steamer "Soviet," and arrived at Leningrad on November 4th. Most of the delegates spent four weeks in Russia, during which time, in addition to taking part in the Anniversary celebrations, we visited various parts of the Soviet Union and investigated conditions in every type of factory and institution.

In making the following report of our visit, we have tried to convey our own personal impressions of what we saw, giving a simple description of Russia and of its people. No writing can adequately express the intense emotional experiences of every day of our visit, when we realised that in this country the crushing weight of feudalism and capitalism had been thrown off, and the highest achievements of knowledge and industrial development were here at the service of the working class. But we hope that the account of Workers' Russia given in this report will help to bring Russia more vividly before the eyes of the British workers, and will give them new faith and encouragement in their struggle against capitalism in Britain, and against the British imperialist attack on revolutionary Russia.

We are issuing this report immediately on our return, and we propose to supplement it with a series of pamphlets giving a more detailed description of particular industries, with the statistical data which will be of interest to British workers in those industries.

Finally, we ask every reader to do his or her share in seeing that the report is distributed among all the British workers, in order that they may come to know the facts and be equipped to meet the continuous lying propaganda against Workers' Russia.

December 23, 1927.

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F. WOMERSLEY (Sheffield), N.U. Foundry Workers.
JACK WOOD (West Ham), N.U. of Glass Bottle Workers,
 and I.L.P.
E. YATES (Ashton-in-Makerfield), Lancs Miners.
ELISA YOUNG (Barry), L.P. and Women's Co-op. Guild.

I

THE TOWNS

The visitor to Soviet Russia who has read the stories of dilapidated buildings, broken pavements, insanitary streets and so on, numbers among his first impressions the fact that there are no traces either of exceptional wear and tear or of any disregard for what is now the property of the workers.

The contrast between the facts on this subject and the British press accounts is so glaring that we feel it necessary to inform every reader that the general appearance and condition of the towns is perfectly normal, that life is going on there in a perfectly normal way, and that it is as easy and safe to walk about Moscow day or night as to walk about London—for women, considerably safer.

So far as the towns in Soviet Russia are abnormal, it is in the exceptional beauty and grandeur of a large proportion of the buildings, and in the wide streets and squares which are to be found in every district. These are inherited from pre-revolutionary times; the important point to us is that the Revolution has preserved them, repaired them, and in some instances which came to our notice had actually improved their architectural and historical value by the restoration of features mutilated or obscured during recent Tsarist periods. We may take as an example the Kremlin, that world famous mass of buildings—palaces, churches, museums, offices and barracks—which dominates Moscow and is held together by a triangular wall over a mile in length and crowned with nineteen towers. Many of the buildings and towers were heavily damaged during the revolutionary fighting of 1917, when it was the stronghold of the reactionary forces. All the damage has been made good, and buildings and decorations not only renewed but restored to their original forms of a period before Tsarist mutilations had been carried out. Within the Kremlin walls the Court Museum of the Tsars has become the Museum of the Decorative Arts, the palaces and churches are all kept in splendid order, while the barracks are now used as a training school for Red Army Officers, and the Moscow Senate and other buildings form the central offices of the Soviet Government. Everything that is of historical value has been preserved, and the whole Kremlin brought within the reach of the workers and used for the workers. Over the central tower of the Government building in the Kremlin flies the Red Flag; after dark the flag is illuminated

from below by a shaft of light, which catches the waving folds and gives the impression of tongues of flame above the dark mass of the Kremlin. The Kremlin seen from across the immense Red Square, with the Cathedral of St. Basil at the far end of the Square, is a wonderful sight, and the red flag and revolutionary decorations help to bring home to the visitor that all of this, which was created by the workers, now at last belongs to the workers and is the symbol of their power.

The same impression is created by the magnificent buildings in which the Trade Unions are housed. The Palace of Labour in Moscow, which houses the Central Council of Trade Unions and also the central offices of the separate unions, is an enormous building facing the river, while the House of the Trade Unions, near the Square of the Revolution, contains what is probably the most beautiful hall in the world. These and many other buildings used by the Moscow Soviet, the Moscow Council of Trade Unions, the Co-operatives and many other workers' organisations, were built for other purposes, and are now in the service of the workers.

As for the churches, we were told that in Moscow alone there were over 900. We did not attempt to check the number, but all the Delegation can say that there were churches, large and small, in practically every street, and that they showed no signs of damage or dilapidation. A few of the historical churches, such as the St. Basil in the Red Square, are now used as museums; but very large numbers are still used for religious purposes. Some members of the Delegation attended services in them on Sundays.

One church visited was the Polish Catholic church in Moscow, on Sunday at the last mass. The church was crowded, many people having to stand in the aisles. The service opened with a procession led by the priest and followed by a large part of the congregation. Psalms followed and then a sung mass. The English delegates were surprised to find Holy Communion administered at nearly 1 p.m. during the last mass.

The management of the church is invested in a committee of parishioners, and the church was in a very clean condition; the altar rails were newly painted with aluminium paint, and the statues were also recently painted. The priest and the secretary of the church committee told the delegates that

they had both gained and lost privileges since the overthrow of capitalism. The chief grievance they had, both in Moscow and in Baku in the south, was that religious instruction was absolutely forbidden, the priest being liable to a penalty if found giving any religious teaching to children. Children under 18 were allowed to attend classes only when preparing for Communion and for Confirmation. The financing of the church was secured by collections at all the services. Just before we left Moscow, the Baptist Church announced that they had secured concessions that were satisfactory from the Government. The Salvation Army was also stated to have come to Russia since the Revolution.

Leningrad, with its magnificent wide streets, clean and tidy, with rows of fine, large, airy houses and shops on each side, is undoubtedly one of the finest towns in the U.S.S.R. The outstanding feature is its wonderful "Winter Palace," once the residence of the Tsars, now one of the finest art galleries to be seen in the world. The Winter Palace contains hundreds of magnificent rooms, banquet halls, ball rooms, etc.; many of the ceilings and walls are hand-painted by artists of world-wide fame. Paintings by French, German and other artists from the fifteenth century onwards are arranged in a series of rooms, so that the visitor can see the historical development and make comparisons. The existence of this gallery, and the obvious care that had been bestowed on it, was all the more interesting to us in view of the lies we had read in the capitalist press about the destruction of everything of artistic value which the Bolsheviks were alleged to have carried out. The delegates saw with their own eyes this wonderful collection, preserved and cared for so that the workers may come to the Palace and see and appreciate the paintings of the past. One room, known as the Rembrandt Room, contains 44 paintings by this world-famous artist; there is only one art gallery in the world, in France, that has more Rembrandts than the Winter Palace. Housed in this building there is also a wonderful collection of arms and musketry, and in the vaults the delegates saw the invaluable collection of the crown jewels.

Leningrad has also some of the finest opera houses in Russia—magnificently high, roomy buildings, where operas and dramas are performed for the special benefit of the workers, who, as in all towns in the U.S.S.R., get tickets through the trade unions at greatly reduced costs. We paid

special attention to the workers' homes which have been recently built and others in the course of construction. These are like large blocks of flats, and are arranged on communal lines; there are communal dining rooms, reading rooms, libraries, etc., and we have no hesitation in declaring that they are ideal.

When we saw the Winter Garden and other palaces, and considered the wealth and luxury these represented in Tsarist times, and on the other hand the oppression of the workers which was its background, the great achievement of the Revolution in changing the system and bringing new life to the workers filled us with an emotion that is beyond expression.

In Moscow, Leningrad, Ivanovo-Vosnesensk, Kharkov, Baku and other towns we visited, we were particularly impressed with the immense work which had been done in connection with municipal enterprises. During the counter-revolutionary wars municipal enterprises, already seriously weakened by the European War, were reduced to a very low state. In the last five years, however, they have not only been restored to their former level, but have been extended and expanded; the total put into municipal enterprises since the restoration began has been over £35,000,000. Tramways have been built in Baku and five other towns—we were most favourably impressed with the efficiency and smooth and silent running of the cars at Baku. Water supply systems, sewerage systems, public baths, etc., have been installed in a large number of towns.

One instance of the municipal work that is being carried out is the erection of a dust destructor for Moscow. Up to 1925 there was no destructor, and all garbage and refuse was tipped in fields close to the city, no attempt being made during the Tsar's reign to disinfect or otherwise deal with the refuse. As a result virulent diseases, especially typhus, used to be prevalent in the outlying parts of Moscow occupied by the workers. As soon as the Moscow Soviet had accumulated the necessary resources the work was put in hand, and in 1925 a public destructor was brought into use. This destructor is now dealing with 300 tons of refuse per week. It should be noted that the very best conditions are given to the workers employed on this work; and in particular the sorting of the refuse and abstraction of rags, bones, glass,

etc., is not carried out, as it is considered to be directly harmful to the workers engaged on it.

Kharkov is an interesting town; on one side there are the old houses, and on the other the new. We saw houses of the semi-detached type with gardens; also many built on the flat principle. We also noticed the Chamber of Commerce building. This is a fine building of 15 stories. Kharkov is well on the way to becoming a very modern city; the new houses, hospitals, etc., look very imposing.

The condition of the streets in Moscow and other towns is quite good. There are some holes in the pavements; in the first week of our stay, when snow and a short frost were followed by a thaw, there were pools in the streets and the going was bad; but this can be paralleled in any town in Britain during similar weather. From a sanitary standpoint, the streets were exceptionally clean and tidy, not only the main streets in the centre of the towns, but also the back streets and outlying districts which many members of the Delegation made a point of visiting. So far as the lighting is concerned, while there are no such brilliantly illuminated streets as Piccadilly or Oxford Street in London, the lighting is adequate and general, and compares favourably with the lighting of many parts of industrial towns in Britain.

The general condition of the inside of the numerous buildings which we visited either in groups or individually left nothing to be desired. They were clean, in some cases brightly decorated, and in no case giving an impression of squalor or untidiness. Even the railway stations and trains compare favourably with those in Britain.

Summing up our impressions of the physical condition of the towns, we can say with confidence that, whatever the conditions may have been during the earlier and more difficult period of the Revolution, already now they will stand comparison with those of British towns. Moreover the very fact that, amid all the difficulties which the Russian workers have had to face, they have wanted and have been able to preserve and rebuild, and in many cases to extend and improve the towns and buildings of the pre-revolutionary era, is a proof not only of their determination but also of their wide outlook and appreciation of life. These qualities become even more evident when we pass from the physical condition of the towns to the condition and attitude of the workers themselves.

II THE PEOPLE

Moscow is now a town of 2,700,000 inhabitants and every form of industry and activity is carried on within its boundaries. The Delegation at one time or another, in groups or individually, visited practically every part of Moscow and every form of factory, depot, and institution. Moreover, we were frequently in the streets, not only in the centre of the town, but walking through the outlying districts, at the stations, and in the shops. In the course of our stay in Moscow we can therefore say that our impression of the people is a truly representative one, and that it is ludicrous to suppose that the hundreds of thousands of people whom we met and saw had been carefully prepared by the Soviet Government or the Communist Party in order to deceive us as to their real conditions.

The first and most universal impression of the people is their extraordinary friendliness and interest in the foreign visitors. Everywhere we went we experienced not only kindness but enthusiastic welcome. Fellow passengers in trams and trains, workers in the factories and depots, and even people from whom we asked the way in the streets were full of interest not only in us but in conditions in Britain, and many of them displayed what was to us an amazing amount of knowledge of the political and industrial position in Britain. There can be no doubt that the workers in Soviet Russia are politically conscious and that they feel the identity of their struggle with the struggle of the British workers. In factory after factory we heard of the collections that had been made for the British Miners, and received assurances that the same help would be forthcoming when any other section of the British workers was attacked.

The outward appearance of the workers in the factories and of the people whom we passed in the streets was quite remarkable, and was commented on by the Delegation among themselves from the first day of their arrival. Everyone looks healthy and well-fed, and their clothing was strong and warm. There were no silk hats in evidence, and there were very few silk stockings, but we all got a very clear impression that however dear clothing may be, the workers and peasants were able to get it. Perhaps the most remarkable feature was the appearance of the children; at one time or another we saw large numbers of children, and we were all impressed

with their remarkably healthy appearance and the fact that their clothing was extremely good and warm, while they *all* had strong boots and a large proportion also wore goloshes. We saw many of the children playing and tobogganing in the snow, and we saw them also walking along the streets, and in the schools and factory crèches, etc. Their high level of health was extremely noticeable and also their happiness and remarkable intelligence.

The section of the Delegation which visited Leningrad gathered similar impressions of the people there. In the streets and shops, workers' clubs, trade union meetings, children's schools and crèches, there was ample evidence of the very healthy condition of both adults and children, and the physique and happiness of the women workers were particularly striking.

Some of us came into contact with individual children whose political and economic knowledge was positively startling. One boy of 13 whom we met on the Red Square not only gave us full information about the children's movement, housing conditions and rent in Moscow, but also showed a very considerable knowledge of British affairs, and put some searching questions on the position of the British Coal Industry, and on the policy of the Miners' Federation and the British General Council. He knew only a few words of English, but could converse fluently in German which he had learnt at school. He told us, among other things, that about 20 per cent. of the school children in Moscow were in the Pioneers, and that their special work was to prepare themselves with political and economic knowledge so that they may be capable of playing their part in building up Socialism when they enter the factories.

It is difficult to convey in words the very definite impression we all had of the general contentment and well-being of the workers and their children, and of the high level of intelligence and interest in affairs. Of their pride in the achievements of the revolution there can be no doubt, and they share a very live sympathy with the workers in other countries. We have no hesitation in saying that the very existence of large masses of workers who have this confidence and wide outlook was a revelation to us, and is something which is a truly remarkable achievement of the Revolution, in view of the historical and economic disadvantages which have had to be overcome.

For the first time in world history a revolution which triumphed with the aid of women rewarded those women by giving them their freedom. The women of Soviet Russia are as free, economically and mentally, as the men, and are encouraged to take their full share with the men in the political and social activities of their country. In fact, several of them told us that they consider themselves better off than the men, because there are certain privileges to which their special position as bearers and guardians of the children entitle them.

Women are encouraged to enter the industrial life of the country; no industry is closed to them unless it is too heavy or dangerous. A woman who has any child dependent on her is given preference over men when seeking employment, and is the last to be discharged if an industry is reducing its staff. In addition to the social insurance benefits enjoyed by men, women in industry receive two months' holiday before childbirth and two months' after, all on full pay; special allowances for expenses of the confinement and for the feeding and clothes of the infant for the first nine months; also one half-hour off out of every 4 hours for the feeding of her child. As soon as the child is two months' old if the mother chooses to return to work it can be taken daily to the factory or district crèche where it receives expert nursing and medical attention free. In many districts there are night crèches where the children may be left when the mother wishes to attend meetings, classes or entertainments. A child is treated exactly the same whether its parents are married or not; but if the father of the child does not live with the mother he is legally bound to pay one-third of his income towards its upkeep. The new housing, with its labour-saving arrangements, the communal restaurants and wash-houses, and in general the healthy attitude towards womanhood, has already made the Russian working woman a very different creature from the pitiful household drudge so often seen in capitalist countries.

During the civil war which followed the revolution working women took a very large part in the Red Cross work at the front, working often in the direct line of fire. They also took part in the actual fighting. The women delegates in Moscow talked with the woman who organised and led the women's Red army detachments. 14,000 women workers took part in the defence of Leningrad against General Yudenich, and some of the cities in the Ukraine were saved

from the White Guards by women who took part in the fighting *en masse*.

More than 20,000 women are already taking part in the different sections of the local and central government, and 13 per cent. of the Communist Party are women. The women delegates attended a meeting in the Grand Theatre of 4,000 women delegates from the Province of Moscow, which was addressed not only by Krupskaya (the widow of Lenin), Clara Zetkin, Kollantai (first woman ambassador), but by women textile workers, peasants, Red Army soldiers, Young Pioneers and armed women from the factory contingents. The enthusiasm and intelligence of these women, straight from the fields and factories with their red head-coverings and bright shawls, were a revelation and inspiration to the British delegates. Wherever we went the women of Russia greeted us with hearty affection and anxious enquiries as to the chances of our own revolution, and the Eastern women, particularly, many of whom had only recently succeeded in throwing off the domination of the veil and the harem, were full of gratitude for the Soviet Government, which they look upon as their deliverer from a tyranny worse than death.

In everything which we saw the most significant feature to us was the fact that in Soviet Russia the workers and peasants are in power. The anniversary demonstrations on November 7th provided, as it were, a spectacular proof of this, both at Moscow and in other towns; but signs of the workers' power were evident everywhere and at every time.

Those of us who were in the Red Square on November 7th and saw over a million Moscow workers passing the Lenin Mausoleum, gained an impression which will last the rest of our lives. We left our hotel at 8.30 a.m., and, armed with special passes, made our way through the city to the stands under the Kremlin walls. Apart from the pickets and the few privileged spectators hurrying to the Red Square there were no people to be seen—no crowds of onlookers, because practically everyone was going to take part in the demonstration. The Red Square itself was packed with soldiers—contingents from every regiment in Russia sent into Moscow to take part in the celebrations. Voroshilov, the Commissary for War, on the horse that had carried him through the Civil Wars, was in command, and when Kalinin, Chairman of the C.E.C. of the U.S.S.R., drove up at 9 o'clock for the ceremonial greetings and inspection there was a tremendous burst of cheering from the troops. Kalinin

is said to be the most popular man in Russia; he was a peasant himself and is always willing personally to interview any peasant who comes to Moscow with a grievance to be rectified or a problem to be solved. After the inspection, Kalinin mounted the platform of the Lenin Mausoleum and gave a brief address on the 10 years' struggle and the progress towards Socialism. At the conclusion of his speech the massed military bands, foot and cavalry, played the International. The realisation that here the power of the State was expressed in the International and that the highest ministers of the State and the army stood at the salute whilst the International was played, created a vivid impression on our minds, an impression which was deepened when the roar of the guns inside the Kremlin joined in the salute, and the smoke drifted slowly over the Kremlin walls across the Square and among the spires of the Cathedral of St. Basil, while the Red Flag fluttered over the central tower of the Kremlin. The victory of the Revolution and the massed power of the workers was brought home to our minds with dramatic force.

After the salute, speeches were also made by Bukharin, in the name of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and by Gallacher, in the name of the Communist International, and then the march past began.

After the march past of the troops, including picturesque Cossack regiments, Frontier Guards, Artillery and Naval Contingents, and Railway Guards—all with red banners inscribed with revolutionary slogans—the march past of the workers began at 11.15. From factory after factory, from colleges and schools, from every quarter of Moscow, from the villages of Moscow provinces, workers and peasants, men women and children, were pouring into the Red Square in four separate columns which converged and marched past the Mausoleum in a solid unbroken phalanx forty deep. Their pride in the Revolution was expressed not only in slogans and picturesque banners and models, but above all in their carriage and enthusiasm. Their determination to defend the Revolution showed itself both in the slogans and effigies of Chamberlain, Baldwin, etc., and in the contingents of armed workers (men and women) which led the various factory groups. Some of the effigies were extremely ingenious and amusing. One showed Chamberlain wedged in the sickle, with the hammer rising and falling on his head. Another showed Chamberlain and Briand being pressed by the

workers, their bodies flat in the press and bulging heads and feet exuding. Another showed Baldwin and Chamberlain making peace speeches, their jaws being operated by capitalists and militarists.

The marchers showed tremendous enthusiasm when they passed the Mausoleum whence Kalinin and others greeted them and replied to their revolutionary slogans. The British and other delegations also gave and received cheers as particular groups passed. The children, of whom there were a very great number in the procession, were particularly bright and enthusiastic. The whole day was full of interest and excitement, and when darkness fell and the Square was lit up by four large searchlights and the coloured lights of the decorations, the scene became even more impressive. When the workers' procession was over the grand climax was reached with a magnificent charge across the Square by Red Cossack cavalry. The pace was terrific; the riders' blue uniforms and shining lances, and their glossy black horses in the blaze of the searchlights, made a most wonderful spectacle.

Part of the Delegation was in Leningrad for the Anniversary Demonstration, which took place in Uritski Square. What we saw there will never be forgotten: hundreds of thousands of workers marching past with the enthusiasm born of the consciousness of freedom. Through the Square they marched from 60 to 80 deep, with their massed bands, banners and tableaux; and then on to the Palace of the Martyrs to pay their tribute to those who had died for the Revolution. We also witnessed the military review; soldiers, sailors, armed factory groups, and women Red Cross workers of every description; and we realised the universal determination to defend what they have won against the attacks of world capitalism.

Several delegates also took part in the Anniversary Celebrations at Ivanovo-Vosnesensk, a large textile town about 400 miles from Moscow. The workers gathered in the Square opposite the Palace of Labour under their own factory banners; several of the contingents had their own bands. Numerous groups of peasants from the surrounding villages were also in the demonstration; and the sections of the Red Army and Police were given a wonderful reception by the workers and peasants as they marched past to the "Red Army March." At midday, various speeches were made—a peasant, representatives from the factories, trade unions, the

workers' delegation, a member of the Soviet Government, and a Red Army soldier, all delivered short speeches. Then the huge demonstration, led by the massed bands, sang the International, and we all marched to the newly built textile factory named "Djerjinsky," which was to be opened to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary. After the opening ceremony by an old revolutionary worker, the immense crowd was conducted through this new factory; the Red Army and Police mixed with the workers as comrades. The factory will employ 4,000 workers; the hundred or so machines which had been bought were built by Platt, of Manchester; but because of the Baldwin break with Soviet Russia, the Soviet Government have been forced to buy the rest of the textile machinery from America. A simple dinner was given at 6 p.m. by the Provincial Soviet to delegates from the villages, factories, schools, trade unions, etc. The feature of the demonstration with which we were most impressed was the fact that the workers and peasants give unhesitating support to the Soviet Government, and are prepared to defend the Revolution with all their strength should the necessity arise.

At Nijni-Novgorod, which some of us visited for the Anniversary demonstration, practically the whole population must have been in the procession, with banners and flags, tableaux and brass bands. Workers from every factory, doctors and nurses from the hospitals, school children and teachers, University professors and students, musicians, co-operators, Communists, Young Pioneers, all had their separate groups and banners, forming a wonderful combination of every phase of economic and social activity.

Those of us who were present at the anniversary meeting of the Moscow Soviet carried away the same impression of the tremendous new force that was in the hands of the workers. But it was not only in the demonstrations and in the meetings that we felt the power of the workers; in the theatres, in the universities, and in the streets and shops, we saw the workers as the ruling class.

In statistics, Rykov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissaries of the U.S.S.R., told us that of the 827 members of the Central Executive Committee, the supreme legislative organ of the Soviet Union, 43.6 per cent. are workers, 21.3 per cent. peasants, and the balance are intellectuals, office workers, etc. Of the total number of 71,235 members of the Municipal Soviets in five of the affiliated

Republics, 46.6 per cent. are workers, 4.9 per cent. are peasants, 31.0 per cent. intellectuals and office workers, and students, house-wives, Red Army delegates, etc., 17.7 per cent. In the village Soviets 84.4 per cent. of the members are peasants. In the industrial organisation, 74.8 per cent. of factory managers are workers, and in the Boards of Trusts and Syndicates over 50 per cent. are workers. In the health institutions of Moscow 36,000 men and women from the factories and shops are taking part in administration. If all the forms of industrial and social institutions are taken into account, at least 30 out of every 100 workers are taking an active part in building up the life of the country. This, Rykov said, was the dictatorship of the proletariat, and at the same time the most highly developed democracy which the world could show—understanding by democracy, the fullest participation by the workers in the leadership of the country and in the work of its economic, administrative, cultural, and social institutions.

Impressive as these figures are—and they certainly represent a far higher achievement of rule “by the people for the people” than is known in any other country—we ourselves are satisfied from our personal observation that the workers are taking an active interest in every phase of life in the Soviet Union, that they are extremely well informed, and that they take a real pride both in the work and development of their own factories and in the general progress towards Socialism. In the report of the Official British Trades Union Congress Delegation which visited Russia in 1924 the point was made:—

“The Russian workers are the ruling class of Russia. They enjoy the rights of a ruling class. They are beginning to exercise its responsibilities.”

The report of the British Women's Trade Union Delegation, which visited Russia in 1925, stated:—

“A fact that struck the delegation most forcibly during their whole stay in Russia was the way in which the workers, both men and women, looked upon the factories, the shops, the museums and art treasures, and on the country as a whole, as really belonging to them.”

In 1927 we find the same attitude, reinforced by further years of education and experience, of economic construction and material progress. The workers are conscious of their achievement, conscious of the end towards which they are working, and above all conscious of their power.

III

THE FACTORIES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

The Delegation divided into groups to visit various factories and undertakings; the details of their investigations will be the subject of further reports to be published in pamphlet form dealing with particular industries. Here we have space only for a brief description of a few of the factories visited, which will serve to illustrate the general conditions throughout Soviet industry.

Metal and Engineering Works

The Metal Workers' Section of the Delegation visited metal and engineering works of every description, including blast furnaces, steel furnaces, tin and sheet mills, foundries and engineering shops. In every instance, without exception, at the factories we visited new and modern workshops were either erected or in course of erection. German and Belgian machines of the latest types were very much in evidence, either at work or waiting to be installed in the new factories when completed. We were told by the responsible persons at each factory that the machinery they needed would have been purchased in Britain if credits had been available. And although much of the plant in use is antiquated, the Delegation was everywhere impressed with the achievements already made in the short period of five years of reconstruction since the Civil Wars and the famine. New factories and workshops are being set up, and are already partially in use, which compare very favourably in equipment with the most modern undertakings of any capitalist country in the world.

Attached to every factory we found training schools, workers' clubs, clinics and every possible institution for the comfort and safety of the workers. Cultural and social life find their place in the organisation of every factory. The workers have their own theatres, reading rooms, games rooms, rest rooms and study circles. In the clinics we saw the babies of the mothers who are at work being cared for on the most modern lines, while nursing mothers are allowed time off work each day to feed their children.

At Gorlovka, in the Donetz Basin, we found a magnificent Palace of Labour, where theoretical and practical lessons were being given to boys and girls by fully qualified teachers. The boys and girls enter the school at 14 years of age, and receive three years' training, during which period they are

paid 45 roubles per month—equal to about 22s. 6d. per week. The Delegation could not help contrasting this first-class training and practical experience, which equips the young workers for their part in the building up of Socialism in Russia, with the condition of hundreds of young workers in Great Britain, following blind alley occupations, and facing a stunted and blighted future.

Some of the Delegation visited the Tomsy Steel Works. There are eight smelting furnaces of the open hearth Siemens type, similar to our own and quite up-to-date, with a capacity of 45 to 75 tons each. The valves, especially the gas valves, seem antiquated. A first-hand smelter was reversing his smelter while we were near, and he had to have the assistance of three men to weigh down while he turned the gas on the other end; the furnaces were reversed every 15 to 20 minutes. Foundations are in hand and the flues built for two new furnaces. The blast-furnaces are quite modern. There is an aerial railway from the coal pit to the batteries, and an overhead carriage containing the coal is automatically tipped on the blast-furnaces being charged. The iron ore and other material is raised from the ground in trucks by means of a lift. The gas producers are out of date; new gas producers of the very latest type are being built; these are German, and a German firm is building them. The Mill Furnaces (re-heating furnaces) and Soakers are like the British type and modern. There are good Mills; plates, angles and sheets are turned out. The little Merchant Mill was going merrily and whirring and groaning as if the future of the U.S.S.R. depended on it. In the steel works, as in the factories and other workshops where there is machinery, posters are stuck up in conspicuous places warning the workers against dangerous practices. The skull and cross-bones is the "extreme danger" sign. Posters are very widely used. When we visited the steel workers' club we saw posters with appropriate illustrations and plans of certain sections of the plant, also diagrams and charts showing the membership of the Union at different periods; the output of the works is shown in the same way, and there are also tables showing the materials used in the processes. 12,000 people are employed at these works; and the workers' district committee looks after the interests of 25,000 workers, including the auxiliary industries. There is 100 per cent. organisation in these steel works.

A considerable amount of time was spent in investigating the Trade Union organisation. In the factories which we

visited we obtained full particulars of the structure and learnt the detailed activities of the different bodies. There is a single metal workers' union, on an industrial basis, embracing every kind of worker attached to the metal and engineering industries. The membership of the Union in 1927 was 860,000. A general meeting of the workers employed in each factory elects a Factory Committee which acts as the official mouthpiece of the workers in that factory. In addition to this there is a delegate conference, on the basis of one delegate for five or more workers, according to the total number employed, which acts as an advisory body for the Factory Committee, and besides discussing the report of the Factory Committee, receives and fully discusses the report of the management of the factory. Once a year there is a special "Production Conference," which considers the financial report of the factory during the previous twelve months, and criticises and makes suggestions for better organisation and management. Sub-committees of the Factory Committee are appointed for social, educational and industrial purposes. It is important to note that the factory itself provides the Factory Committee with funds for its social and educational activities; the amount provided is from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 per cent. of the total amount of the pay roll, according to the size of the factory. In general the Delegation was impressed by the vitality of the Trade Union organisation in the factories and could not help comparing the activities of the Factory Committee and conferences with the usual discussions in the British Trade Union branch meetings.

We asked many questions of the workers in every factory with regard to their conditions, and their replies showed that a continual improvement has taken place and that their conditions now compare favourably with those of similar workers in capitalist countries.

Railways

It has been asserted by the enemies of the Soviet Government that the workers would prove incapable of managing the economic enterprises of the country and, in particular, such a large concern as the railways. We were, therefore, particularly interested to notice the efficiency of the train service, the speed and smooth running of the trains, the spaciousness of the restaurant cars and the excellence of the meals, and the comfort and warmth of the sleeping accommodation in particular.

Railway workers are getting considerably higher wages than before the Revolution, ranging from the lowest-paid workers, the junior guards, who get about 30s. a week, up to the engine-drivers with £3 10s., all with the usual social insurance benefits and additional pension rights. They are also provided free with artificial limbs, teeth and glasses where necessary. The hours are eight per day usually, but four and six for those on dangerous or semi-dangerous work, and these from January onwards will be reduced to seven, three and five respectively.

It must be borne in mind that no part of Russia's economic organisation suffered from the War and the Civil War more severely than the railways. Bridges had to be rebuilt, track relaid, and worn-out and dangerous rolling stock replaced. The work has been steadily and rapidly carried out, and the track extended. The railway service as a whole now compares very favourably with that in any European country.

A section of the Delegation visited the Railway Engineering shops at Tiflis, where 2,700 workers are employed. In these shops practically the whole of the machinery and material has been produced in Russia. The shops are expanding rapidly, and new plant is being installed to cope with the demand for new and bigger locomotives. In a few weeks' time the whole plant will be electrically driven from the new hydro-electrical power station which has just been erected. After careful investigation we came to the conclusion that the machinery and methods of production, though behind the best European standards, were good, especially if the difficulties with which the work of reconstruction has had to contend are taken into consideration, and it was obvious that very rapid progress is now being made.

We found a number of workers here who were able to speak English, and learnt from them the conditions without the aid of interpreters. All of them stated that their economic and social conditions were considerably better than before the Revolution, and were steadily improving with the general improvement in industry. One point of great interest was the care taken in the training of young workers, who serve a three years' apprenticeship. During the first year they work 4 hours per day in the shop and spend 4 hours at school. During the second and third they work 6 hours per day in the shop and spend two in the school. They

receive wages from the moment they begin work, on a rising scale as their skill increases; they are also admitted into the Trade Union and pay on the same basis as the adults, namely 2 per cent. of their actual wages. Membership of the Union is voluntary, but very few fail to join. The Union concerned is the Railwaymen's Union, which in 1927 had a membership of 1,097,000.

In the Mines

The Miners' Section of the Delegation visited, among others, Pit No. 1 at Gorlovka, in the Donetz Coalfield. It is an old pit, having been worked for 54 years, and during the counter-revolutionary attacks from the South, Denikin had occupied this area and destroyed machinery and flooded the mines. During the last five years, however, the pit has been reopened and at present employs 3,500 men, the output for last year being 412,000 tons. One of the seams inspected was on a gradient of 55 degrees and 4 feet thick; the method of timbering was as near perfection as ever seen in a mine. The coal is cast down to the bottom heading, where it is filled into tubs.

The hours of the underground workers are six per shift (reckoned from when they leave the pit-head until they get back there). All miners get good houses rent free, heating and electric light for nothing, besides all the social insurance advantages which are common to all industries. Moreover they get working clothes supplied, and pithead baths.

In preparation for going down into the mines we were taken to a large and well-heated bathroom containing about 15 large porcelain baths already filled with hot water in readiness for the shift shortly expected up. Here we undressed and were given a set of the men's pit clothes, consisting of a cotton shirt and pants, canvas tunic and trousers, and linen foot cloths, all spotlessly clean, together with high leather boots and leather hats or helmets. These clothes are supplied to each man free, and are also regularly washed for him without charge. When we got back to the surface again we had most welcome hot baths and changed back into our own clothes, just as every miner did. It was a treat to see the miners coming out of the bathroom after their day's toil (six hours), clean, healthy, well-built fellows, looking very smart in their beautifully embroidered Russian shirts and good thick blue cloth blouses. When we considered the general conditions of the British miners, the miles

most of them have to walk in filthy pit clothes, and the difficulties of washing in their homes, we could not help thinking that we had that day seen something typical of the difference between Communism and Capitalism.

We noticed particularly the village Palace of Labour, which is the property of the Miners' Trade Union district organisation and is the centre for the whole political, social, educational and recreational life of the miners. It cost £60,000, and contains reading rooms, club rooms, study rooms, women's debating and sewing rooms, a night crèche, Pioneers' room, Lenin room, and a lecture hall, together with a theatre seating 1,500 people; we contrasted this building with the halls erected under the Miners' Welfare Scheme in Britain.

Another mine visited was at Rutchekovka, where similar conditions existed as at the Gorlovka mine. In order to cope with the tremendous coal face cut by the Sullivan machine, part of the coal was brought up by a unique type of conveyor, with a single scoop, worked on an endless rope. The rapidity with which the coal is taken from the face is amazing. Here two new shafts have been sunk to a depth of 600 yards. The shafts have a diameter of 24 feet, and they are expected to raise 700,000 tons per annum. This is part of the extension work in the Donetz area which has already brought the total production up to 30 per cent. over pre-war.

A visit was also paid to the coke and by-products plant, which is a most up-to-date installation. The by-products, namely, gas, benzole, pitch, tar, ammonia, dyes, etc., are part of the industry, and the proceeds from the manufacture of these products go to the industry as a whole and are not separated into two departments as in Britain. Bearing in mind the present conditions in the British mining industry, this fact made a deep impression on the British Delegation.

A visit was also paid to the industrial school for boys and girls from 14 to 17 years of age. They learn mining, engineering and electrical engineering, working 4 hours and going to school for 4 hours, coming out at the end of their course with a first-class mental equipment for their life's work.

We also visited the Karl Liebknecht Salt Mine. The shaft is 400 feet deep, and the seam is 154 feet thick, half of which is now being worked. Practically everything is done by machinery, and the conditions of labour are excellent,

electric light being everywhere. This mine supplies all of Russia's needs, and the surplus is exported to the Border States and even to China and Japan.

In the Oilfields

We visited the oilfields a few miles out of Baku. The field we visited once formed part of the Caspian Sea and in 1904 the Tsar's Government commenced to fill it up. The filling in was completed by 1914 and comprises 120 acres. The first shaft was sunk by the Soviets in 1922; the method of sinking was steam drilling and was both slow and costly. The American Rota method is in operation now and is much more economical, enabling them to reach oil much sooner. They sunk 42 in one year by the old method, but are able to sink 130 a year by the new method. A still newer method invented by a Russian engineer was being tried when we visited the oilfields. They are sinking 7 new wells every month. The depth varies from 200 to 600 metres. Until 1921 they pumped the oil to the surface in buckets, now they pump it through pipes of 4 to 6 inches. The old method needed 15 men, but the same work can now be done by 3 men.

We also visited the refinery and saw the various processes the crude oil goes through. At one end of the distillery the crude oil goes in and at the other end it comes out as benzine, gasoline, kerosene, machine oil, cylinder oil, vaseline, and wax cakes; and from the dregs pitch and asphalt are made.

We then went to the Grozny oilfield and visited the new housing scheme, the community living houses, workmen's clubs, and the Palace of Labour. In this oilfield 6,000 workers are employed and 90 technicians. The Community House is for single men; here board and lodging and all the social amenities are provided for 18 roubles a month. They each have a locker; spray baths are provided, and 12 of them share one dormitory. We also visited the school which has just been built out of the profits from oil at a cost of about £20,000. The ages of the scholars ranged from 12 to 14 years. It was a mixed school, and owing to the dearth of buildings the scholars have to take their turns. The first shift begins at 7.15 and ends at 11.55. The second shift begins at 12 and finishes at 4.15 p.m.

The manager of the oil wells informed us that the refineries in 1914 turned out 1,450,000 tons. Much damage

was done by the White Guards here, flooding the mines, smashing machinery and destroying houses. However, the Soviet Government has tackled the work of reconstruction, and although in 1921 output was only 200,000 tons, in 1927 it was over 3,000,000 tons, the number of men employed in 1927 being 14,500 as compared with 9,500 before the Revolution. They are "rationalising" the industry, and the workers are getting the benefit of it all. They have installed 400 of the newest type of pumps. In 1921 they had 121 of the old type; this year they have only 50. In 1921 they had 40 pumps driven by electric power; this year 400 are driven by electricity and only 3 per cent. steam driven.

The improvements in technique and the increased production of the oil industry are bringing very definite advantages for the workers. Out of the profits new housing schemes are being carried out, where the workers live *rent free* (see Section IV.); £150,000 has been put into the construction of schools; and loans of £55,000 have been made to the co-operative societies; while buildings for workers' clubs have also been put up. Through the whole of the oilfields there is evidence of very rapid technical progress, while from conversations with the workers, as well as from the concrete evidence of the new houses, workers' clubs, etc., we are satisfied that the conditions of the workers are infinitely better than in Tsarist days.

The development of the oil output and export has assisted in breaking the monopoly prices in Great Britain—and has also resulted in the campaign against Russian oil now being conducted by interests hostile to the British workers.

A Chocolate, Sweet and Biscuit Factory

This Moscow Factory, which is the biggest chocolate factory in Russia, employs 2,275 workers, of whom the great majority are women. There are 300 members of the Communist Party among these workers and also a number of candidates and Young Communists.

The women looked very clean and bright in their holland overalls and white headkerchiefs (provided and washed free by the factory authorities) and there was an atmosphere of happiness and good comradeship throughout the whole factory which made it a pleasant place to be in. When we went into the various departments many of the women crowded round us and shook hands; one or two who were learning to speak

English at their club asked us eager questions about conditions in England.

All the machinery used (some of it extremely up-to-date) was English, mostly from Vickers, and in the export department they were working hard to fill a large export order from London. They were very anxious for us to taste everything; the biscuits and sweets were excellent, and we tasted some plain Russian chocolate which was just as good as Terry's best. The factory is at present only producing 50 per cent. of its possible chocolate output because the Soviet Government is not able to import cocoa beans in sufficient quantity, the needs of the heavy industries having to be supplied first.

We saw the workers' dining room, a beautiful big hall where an excellent dinner with soup, meat, vegetables and a sweet is supplied for 40 kopecks (10d.), or without meat for 25 kopecks (6d.). The workers' hours are from 7 to 11 and 12 to 4 p.m., and their wages average about 45s. a week. We also went over a big and well-furnished crèche, which is provided free for the workers' children, where we saw children from two months to three years, all looking healthy and well cared for.

Textile Factories

The cotton factory which one group visited was called "The Leader of the proletariat," at Egoryesk, three hours' journey in the train from Moscow. It was an old factory, built in the time of the Tsars, but already many things have been done to improve the conditions of the workers. As soon as we entered the mill all workers were eager to know which country we came from, what was our occupation, whether the women workers in the British Textile Factories take an active interest in the Trade Unions, what were the opinions of the workers regarding the General Strike and the miners' lock-out; and a very interesting question—"When are the British workers going to defeat capitalism?" These and many other questions were asked of us, but these are taken from notes made at the time to show how far the ordinary rank and file textile workers in Soviet Russia have advanced in politics.

Going through the factory we were compelled to notice the ease and freedom of the workers; there were no signs of any manager and foreman who bullied the workers. One woman spinner told us that if anyone has a complaint about

bad work, or something wrong with her wages, she reports the matter to the Factory Committee, who discuss the case with the manager and an agreement is reached, usually in favour of the workers. We asked one spinner if she preferred the Soviet Government rather than the Tsar. This is what she told us:—

Before the Revolution in 1917 she worked 10½ to 11 hours per day, now she only worked 8 hours, and from the 8 hours is taken 30 minutes for lunch, and 10 minutes' every two hours, which leaves seven hours actual work. Before the Revolution there were no holidays, now she gets 14 days in the summer (with full pay), also three days in November and May Day with full pay. Before there was no recreation for workers, but now there are the Workers' Clubs (named "Marx" and "Lenin") controlled by the workers, where study circles, games, physical culture, a library with many books, reading rooms and a small theatre are open for the workers of the factory.

Attached to the factory is a crèche, or nursing home for children, where mothers who are working leave their children under the care of trained nurses during working hours. If the mother wishes after working hours to attend meetings, amusements, etc., she just gives her children to the nurse attached to the club.

In the weaving department we were particularly struck with the health and vigour of the girls and women. We asked a question about wages, and a woman worker told us that before the Revolution the wages were 18 roubles (36s.) for a month, working 10½ hours per day with two looms. In 1927 her wages are 60 roubles (120s.) per month, for 8 hours per day (7 hours' actual work), holidays with full pay; and when she is "waiting" on a "beam" it does not affect her wages. She gets free medical advice, and if her health is none too good her Trade Union can send her to a Rest Home, where every attention is given to her, and on return she receives full wages for the period of her absence from work. A woman also receives two months' rest before and two months' after confinement, and special allowances are given for the child's benefit during the first nine months.

Another day we visited a Woollen Dye-works in Lenin-grad, and found the same freedom of the workers in the factory. All textile workers know what a dye-house is, and what happens to the workers' clothes, so we enquired and

were informed that they received two suits of clothes each year and two pairs of boots. As the work in the dyehouse is considered unhealthy each worker receives one month's holiday with full pay. We found the average wages here were 110 roubles (220s.) per month, plus free medical attendance and all the other benefits.

Attached to this factory was a crèche with 35 infants, and another for children aged three and eight years, where they were prepared for a higher school. There was also a large Workers' Club for study and amusement.

Calico Printing

At the First State Printing Works, where nearly 3,000 workers are employed, we found that the hours of labour were 46, including meal hours; one-third of the workers, in occupations scheduled as dangerous, worked even shorter hours (for example, all in the dyeing houses worked only six hours a day) and had four weeks' paid holiday instead of the normal two weeks. Juveniles between 16 and 18 worked six hours and spent two hours at school, being paid for eight hours. When operatives were selected for special training they had four hours of work and four hours of school, irrespective of age, being paid for eight hours. In all processes where acids and chemicals were used, workers were supplied with milk daily. The hours of labour for platers in the bleach croft were seven per day, including meals, and the workers were provided with protective clothing, also having one month's paid holiday. In every section of the trade women had freedom to work on any process and received the same wages and conditions as men. The wages were 120 per cent. higher than before the Revolution (with a cost of living approximately 100 per cent. higher), and the hours averaged 40 per cent. less. In addition, every employee was provided with housing accommodation or its equivalent in money; and those who had to travel two miles to work were supplied with free travelling tickets. In addition to wages, an amount equal to 21½ per cent. on the total pay-roll and rent allowances was paid by the Trust for social insurance purposes, without any deduction from wages. Club rooms were provided, and a quarter per cent. on total wages was also paid for the maintenance of a crèche. During sickness full wages were paid, and if sick workers were certified not fit to resume their occupation they

were transferred to the charge of the Health Commissariat. Other social insurance benefits were paid as in all industries, for example, before and after confinement women were allowed a total of four months off duty with full pay, and received free medical attendance and food and clothing grants for the infants. The operative's right to pension begins at 55 years.

These conditions, noted at this particular factory, apply throughout the industry under a collective agreement between the Trade Union (Textile Workers, membership in 1927, 826,000, embracing all sections of the textile industry) and the State Trusts. We have no hesitation in saying that the general standard of life of these workers is higher than in Britain, which is all the more remarkable because of the disadvantages which the country suffers through lack of machinery.

Clothing Factories

Up to a very recent period the system of production in the clothing trade in Russia was for the journeyman tailor to make garments at home, or at least in very small workshops. During the past few years a revolution has taken place in production, and now the method of making all classes of clothing is far in advance of any factory in England. The conveyor system, an American method of economical production, is in operation. In Moscow the cutting for all the factories is done in one workshop, and the cut cloth is then dispatched to the various factories to be made up. The lay-out of the factories is a long line of machines. Men and women at one end of the factory divide the cloth and distribute it to the various workers. The work then travels in a direct line down the room, only leaving the line where pressing or finishing is required, and these operators work immediately behind the machine. When the garment reaches the end of the line it is ready for pressing off on the next floor.

The first factory visited employed 1,200 workers on two shifts. The first shift starts at 7 a.m. to 12.30, and 1.15 to 3.45 p.m. and they are followed by the next shift at 4 to 12 p.m. The day shift have a five minutes' pause every hour; this operates on the late shift also up to 10 p.m., and from then onward a ten minutes' pause is given; these pauses are in addition to a 15 minutes' break for food at 8 p.m.

Overtime is paid at the rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ times for the first two hours and double time after; double time is paid also when Sundays are worked. There is one month's holiday with pay given to all workers. At this factory 150 workers are employed on the divisional system to make a single coat, 132 workers make a pair of trousers, and 75 people make a vest.

The lack of machinery makes the cost of production very high, as for instance, pressing is almost entirely done by hand. The few pressing machines used are out of date. A new pressing machine, bought in America, was standing idle, as when used it burned the garments, owing to their lack of knowledge how to use it. The cheapest suits are nearly all made with hand buttonholes, which cost seven kopecks ($1\frac{1}{2}$ d.) each, whereas if made by a machine they would not cost two kopecks ($\frac{1}{2}$ d.) each.

Men and women work the same operations and receive the same rates of pay on piece work. Wages vary according to ability. The monthly earnings in 1922-23 were 48.90 roubles, or about 25s. a week. By 1926-27 they had risen to 123.70 roubles (about 62s. a week) and are sure to be further increased in 1927-28. Married and pregnant women are not expected to work on the late shift. Crèches for the children, social clubs and canteens were attached to the factories, just the same as in other trades.

At the No. 3 clothing factory, which had previously been a gaol, the medical clinic treated 40 patients per day. The percentage of workers treated in 1922-23 was 18 per cent., in 1926-27 it was 7.1 per cent. The women workers showed a keen interest in English politics, and at one firm asked that a similar delegation of Russian workers should visit English workshops. The Russian directors stated that they were anxious to purchase modern machinery from England as soon as possible.

Blind Workers in U.S.S.R.

We include here some items which we collected in Moscow, in connection with the working conditions and general position of blind workers. By a Tenth Anniversary decree, a pension of 60 roubles (£6) per month is given to blind persons. There are 1,300 blind persons in Moscow, 900 of whom are working. Their minimum wage in the workshops is 87 roubles plus 10 roubles for extra allowances—a total of about £10 per month. The blind workers are organised in the

Union catering for the industry; there is no special league of blind workers. An association of blind workers, however, attends to the educational and social life of blind persons. Their average earnings in the Brush trade are 120 roubles (£12) monthly; they are said to show 75 per cent. efficiency of ordinary workers. They work a 7-hour day. Women are found to be cleverer than men in bookbinding. The chief occupations of blind workers are brush-making, bookbinding, basket-making, and cut-paper work.

Ex-service men blinded in the war get two-thirds of the Trade Union wages until efficient, and then receive the rate they earned before losing their sight. One factory assembles one-horse power motors. This workshop and the brush-making workshop are self-supporting; the Government gives preference to the produce of blind workshops. The factory visited was opened three years ago. The blind workers are living in one block of buildings; there are crèches and welfare activities as in other trades. It should be noted that blind pensions are forfeited for begging.

Boot and Leather Industry

The boot industry had been suffering severely a few years ago from lack of machinery, but Germany is now supplying machines. It is surprising to learn to what a remarkable degree the manufacture of renewal machine parts has been developed in Russia itself. To-morrow Russia will have gone a step further and will be actually making her own machinery.

In all branches of the industry it was apparent that the health of the worker receives prime consideration. In the tanneries especially everything possible is done to protect the health of the worker. Improvements in method and machinery are continually being applied both to improve the quality of the leather and to eliminate obnoxious operations. A fine system of shower baths makes it possible for the worker to leave for home after the day's work feeling fresh and clean.

In most boot and shoe factories the ventilation is magnificent. The impure air is drawn out of the workrooms by great fans operating through large pipes laid along the roof and which have vents inserted at regular intervals, thus ensuring that every cubic inch of air is continually replenished throughout the room. The rooms always smell clean and warm. This is very important when we take into consideration the high mortality from tuberculosis in the Boot and Shoe industry the world over.

Certain operations are considered to be unhealthy and difficult; only strong men are allowed to work under such conditions, whilst in England it is quite common for youths to be employed on similar operations. In all such cases the workers are allowed four weeks' annual holiday with full pay. All other workers are allowed two weeks with full pay. Those workers doing unhealthy work are particularly watched for any sign of ill-health. If sickness occurs the worker is allowed an adequate period for a rest, with full pay, and will if necessary be sent to a rest home. The period spent in the rest home has no bearing whatever on his annual holiday. In addition, evening rest homes are provided for the worker who is not actually ill, but who feels "off colour." In these homes he receives instruction in physical culture, and a special system of dieting, etc., quickly brings him back to health again. All machines are protected, and large pictures of workers being pulled round revolving shafts, etc., give adequate warning to the too reckless.

The control of the factories is entirely in the hands of the workers. The only person not directly appointed by the workers themselves is the manager, who is appointed by the State Trust. The official sanction of the Union must be gained, however, before the manager takes charge. But although the workers cannot appoint the manager, yet they have adequate power to have him removed if he is found to be inefficient or lacking in comradely feeling.

In fact the centre of authority in the workshops is not the manager, but the factory committee appointed by the workers. All foremen are elected, but work subject to the decisions of the Industrial Council which hammers out schemes for the greater efficiency of the factory. All workers are encouraged to suggest any improvement either in machinery or method of working. All accepted suggestions are paid for. In all departments the workers show a very high degree of skill, and the materials used are absolutely the best obtainable; great care is taken to prevent any possible waste.

The output in all factories is rapidly increasing. One factory named after the Paris Commune, and which is typical of others, has increased production in the last three years from 1,400 pairs per day to 2,400 pairs. Another large factory in Leningrad produces 20,000 pairs per day. *Average* wages have risen to the extent of 114 roubles 64 kopecks

(about £11) per month, as compared to 91 roubles 81 kopecks (about £9) three years ago. The duration of the working day is 8 hours (46 hours per week). In no instance, however, does the operative work the whole 8 hours, as rest intervals are allowed which shorten the working day by from 30 to 40 minutes.

Vigorous efforts are now being made to further develop the industry. The new workshops which are being erected are not the mere damp brick structures to which we are accustomed in England. The new workshops are as well built, bright and sanitary as many English Sanatoria. There is no doubt whatever that the workers are happier, healthier and far more free than the workers in Capitalist Britain. The success of workers' control is beyond argument.

A Moscow Tram Depot

The Apakov tram depot is of considerable size, with 1,650 workers in all departments, including the repair shop; it is named after the only worker in the depot who was a Communist in 1917, who organised the workers for the revolutionary struggle, and in the campaign against Denikin was captured and burnt alive by the Whites. Now, they told us, 270 of the workers were Communists, and they had brought the educational level of the workers up to a very high standard.

In the repair shops we found that the engineers all get working clothes once a year. In the lunch interval they insisted on a little meeting, when speeches of welcome were exchanged, and we conveyed to them the thanks of the miners for their help during the lockout. The friendliness and comradeship they showed us was quite moving. They were exceedingly proud of their conditions. They showed us over a new building, on the ground floor of which were lockers for their clothes, which they changed coming on to duty and going off, and next to this was a beautifully-equipped room with shower baths round the walls, large porcelain baths, and wash basins in the middle where they cleaned up before changing and going home. Exactly similar arrangements were in another room for the women—30 per cent. of the drivers and conductors are women. On the upper floor of this building there was a fine hall used as an eating room and rest room, where we saw those workers who brought their own food having a good meal, and playing chess and other

games. About a dozen drivers, male and female, clad in bathing costumes, were being instructed in physical exercises. In the evening the room was used for the musical and dramatic circles, and for other entertainments and meetings.

We then went across to the building used by the traffic section and found a number of men and women drivers and conductors changing shift. In general they worked the "straight eight," but were occasionally obliged to work split shifts when changing duties. In such cases the interval between duties ranked for pay at double rates, and also counted as double hours worked. For example, 3 hours' morning duty, a 3 hours' interval, and a 3 hours' afternoon duty, ranked for pay as 12 hours, and counted as 12 hours towards the maximum of 172 hours per month worked by the traffic section. Work is at present limited to a maximum of 8 hours a day, with 24 duties a month. Revised schedules are now being worked out, and from January the 7-hour day comes into force.

Among other rooms that we saw must be mentioned the library. It contained 7,450 books; and under a joint arrangement with other Moscow factories a substantial portion of the books was changed each month, and practically any book could be got. The books ranged over a very wide number of subjects, including novels and children's books as well as educational and political books. The librarian told us that the average number of books taken out was 120 each day; of these about 50 per cent. were novels and children's books, 25 per cent. scientific and educational, and 25 per cent. political.

We also saw the canteen, and checked over some prices, coming to the unanimous conclusion that no items were higher than in Britain (bread for example was much the same as here, 4d. for the kilo. loaf, a little over 2 lbs.); eggs were 1d. each, and sausages, cheese, etc., were much the same as here. Good meat, we were told by several of the workers, ranged from 7d. to 9d. a lb. And there was no question about the fact that they fed well; they all told us that food was plentiful and cheap, and their general appearance and vitality gave evident proof of this fact.

All the depot employees were in the Municipal Workers' Union; the contribution was 2 per cent. of wages. They had, of course, their factory committee, and numbers of other groups were taking an active part in the business and social

sides of the work. The depot sent 3 delegates to the District Soviet and also to the Moscow Soviet. Financially, the whole of the Moscow tramways are worked as a single system, and in the last completed year the balance sheet showed an income of 40,000,000 roubles, with expenditure of 31,000,000, leaving a surplus equivalent to £900,000. This surplus was being used for improving the buildings and extending the equipment.

Building

During our visit to Russia the A.U.B.T.W. representatives devoted special attention to building work and housing, and the work, working and living conditions of those employed in the building trades. We were given every facility for, doing this by the Soviet authorities; the officials of the Building Workers' Union, and, with eager enthusiasm, by the workers themselves.

The building workers work eight hours a day. It was evident to us that they have more freedom on the job than we experience in this country. There is no supervision of the type that we have here, and the work is carried on under easier conditions. The Russian building workers are assuredly more content than are the building workers in Britain. Unemployment has not the terrors for them that it has for us; the work is not casual work as it is here. They do not run the risk of being "knocked off" because of wet weather, lack of materials, or other conditions over which they have no control; and the building workers of the cities are as well off during the long winter, despite the periods when outside work is impossible, as in the summer. We mention "building workers of the cities" because the ranks of the building workers are frequently augmented by the influx of surplus workers from the land who come into the towns from the surrounding villages, and, in season, return again to the country.

In many places we were able to see the building workers active in their employment. We were struck with the strength and solidity of the work. The walls are extraordinarily thick. In big buildings this is especially the case. In examining the walls of an electric power station just outside Moscow, we noticed that not only have they a damp course in the foundations, at the ground level, to keep the dampness from ascending the wall, but also behind the bricks in each and every course. On the outside walls they have this damp-proof course to prevent the moisture from penetrating.

Even as regards workers' dwelling-houses they appear to us to make the walls too thick. Of course, the severities of the Russian winter demand greater weather-resisting powers from the walls, and the houses must necessarily have double windows. Nevertheless, we think economy could be effected by having a cavity in the walls, without increasing the thickness. The tools used by the Russian building workers were old and antiquated. We tried them, and in particular found the Russian trowel a very awkward tool. As one of our Delegation remarked: "It is like laying bricks with a button-hook." In the Don Basin we went down the shaft of a coal mine which was being bricked by building trade workers, over 1,000 feet down. The most primitive kind of trowels were being used; just like butter-patters. It is unfortunate for the workers and the industry of Britain, just as it is unfortunate for the Russians, that the British Government has crippled and prevented trade between this country and the workers' Socialist Republics. "Why don't you get proper building tools?" we frequently asked. "Why don't you get your Government to trade with us?" was the invariable reply. And when we asked them why they did not make modern tools for themselves, the usual answer was that: "We can't afford at present to stop the pressing work we have in hand."

Another thing that astonished us in regard to the building work we saw in operation was the very substantial and the costly character of the scaffolding on buildings over one storey. We believe there is far too much work and material put into it. Certainly, however, there are no risks as regards safety run by the building workers of Russia; everything is made absolutely safe for them.

All the workers in the Building Industry are organised in the one Building Workers' Union. In July of this year the membership figures were 819,887, and the membership now approximates to nearly a million. As is only to be expected in a workers' country, Trade Unionists are a privileged class. This privilege finds expression in easier access to the social and cultural life of the community. Trade Unionists, for instance, are only charged half-price on presentation of their Trade Union card for entrance to theatres and sports assemblies.

It was our good fortune, while in Moscow, to go to the Building Workers' Club. The Workers' Clubs are a great universal and growing factor in Russian life. The workers

make use of these clubs not merely for social gatherings but for technical and general educational classes, and for cultural work. It was our pleasure, while at this Building Workers' Club, to be able to present an old Builders' Union banner to the building workers of Moscow. The appreciation, delight and enthusiasm of the building workers and their wives and sweethearts—they always take their women-folk to their clubs—of this little expression of international solidarity were beyond our wildest expectations. The Russians have their own ways of demonstrating their affectionate enthusiasm. We were taken by a member of the stalwart workers and thrown into the air a number of times, always safely caught in the outstretched arms, amidst shouts of approval and much playing by the band.

Subsequently we were shown the technical school, which is part of the Club, and witnessed the acting of a Revolutionary play which the building workers had produced and of which they are particularly proud.

There can be no question that the Building Workers' Union exercises a profound influence on the lives of the Russian building workers. The unit of organisation of the Union is the Local Workers' Committee, which is elected at general all-inclusive workers' meetings on the job or undertaking, or when operations are carried on over a wide area, by meetings of delegates from building works, factories or offices.

Insofar as we were able to judge, the wages, including State and Union social benefits, relative to the cost of living, would compare favourably with those of the building workers in other countries. Food is good and plentiful; the workers are warmly and comfortably dressed, and rents are low, and paid in accordance with salaries received, that is to say, that a higher paid worker would pay more rent for the same, or similar house, than a lower paid worker.

The Building Workers' Union is 100 per cent. organised in the towns and cities, and includes all employed in the building industry as such. Building workers employed in steel works come under the jurisdiction of the Metal Workers' Union, those employed in the mines under the Miners' Union, and so on.

IV WAGES, RENTS AND HOUSING

In examining the position with regard to wages, the delegates were struck with the fact that the money wages were only a part of the total benefits received by the workers. No contributions whatever are made by the workers to the social insurance schemes which provide extensive benefits and entirely remove any necessity to save for sickness, childbirth, accident or other interruption in earning capacity or special family needs. The whole of the social insurance funds is a direct charge on the employing concern. Again, in all cases rent is proportionate to average earnings; in the case of lower paid grades being infinitesimal—1/- or 1/6 a week, which sum not only pays for the rooms occupied, but also covers lighting, central heating, water supply, and other municipal services. (It may be noted that even this small charge is remitted for unemployed workers; also that in all cases where rent is paid, it goes entirely for the maintenance of buildings and services.) In the case of many industrial concerns, which have built new and excellent housing accommodation for the workers, no rent whatever is charged, the maintenance and services being free. We even came across one case where some of the workers lived in old houses of the Tsarist period not only rent free, but actually received a special allowance as compensation for having to live in the old houses, pending the extension of the new housing scheme! Another important point is that throughout the whole of industry the workers are provided with the necessary clothes, boots, etc.; actual examples which we ourselves saw have been mentioned in the previous section. Then again, in all concerns of any size there is a co-operative restaurant, where food of first-rate quality can be got at remarkably low prices. Many factories, especially those lying at a distance from the towns, also have general co-operative stores where articles of all kinds can be obtained cheaply.

The very important questions of education, recreation and amusements are well provided for. The libraries and study circles, club rooms, games, musical circles, dramatic circles, etc., which are open to the families of the workers as well as to the actual employees, are all free, the cost being defrayed by the concern. Tickets for visits to theatres, opera houses, cinemas, museums, and art galleries are obtained through the trade unions either free or at a very low cost.

To consider the money wages alone gives therefore quite an inadequate impression of the actual conditions of the workers. But even if we take only the money wages received, the general average wages, after correction for the change in prices, that is, the *real* wage, shows a 16.9 per cent. increase over pre-war. Taking into account the various other advantages indicated above, it is estimated that the real improvement in the material conditions of the workers is between 30 and 40 per cent. above the pre-war level. We cannot, of course, vouch for the exact accuracy of this estimate; but, having visited practically every type of industrial concern in widely-distant parts of the Soviet Union, and having heard the details from the workers themselves as well as inspecting the pay-sheets, we can say, without hesitation, that the material conditions of the workers represent a very substantial improvement on conditions before the Revolution, and that the workers themselves, far from being discontented, show a very real pride in their conditions.

A feature which created a great impression on us, as showing the real economic successes of the Soviet system, was the steady rise in wages since the period of reconstruction began. During the last four years *real* wages (excluding the various additional benefits enumerated above) have risen from 82.6 per cent. of 1913 to 116.9 per cent. of 1913. This is an achievement which is in striking contrast with the stagnation or even decline of real wages in capitalist countries throughout the world. In Soviet Russia wages are not regulated by the state of the labour market, or the determination of an exploiting class to increase its profits, but by the actual economic position of the country and the material possibilities of improving the standard of life. The progress made by Soviet industry during the last five years has therefore been necessarily accompanied by a steady rise in wages. The further economic progress—in which we have every confidence unless it is stopped by imperialist attacks—will bring with it each year further wage increases, and further improvements in housing and other conditions, and will raise the conditions of the whole of the Russian workers far above the best conditions in Britain or in any other capitalist country.

Many critics, especially in the capitalist press, have alleged that the cost of living in Soviet Russia is excessively high. From our personal investigations we are satisfied that this is absolutely untrue. The best fresh meat can be obtained

through the co-operative shops (which are everywhere and supply practically the whole of the workers) at 7d. to 9d. a lb.; excellent white bread is sold at 4d. for the kilo. loaf (a little over 2 lbs.); when we were in Moscow eggs were a penny each, and we were told that in the summer they were as low as three a penny. These prices, which compare very favourably with prices in Britain, refer to Moscow; in other towns food was even cheaper.

The only items in the workers' budget which were considerably higher than in Britain were clothes, which appeared to be about 50 per cent. higher than over here. But in this connection the fact that working clothes are provided by the employing concern is a substantial set-off against the high cost of clothes bought by the workers; and as we have already noted, the very large numbers of workers whom we saw in the streets, theatres, etc., and especially the children, all had good warm clothing, and it was obvious that the high price had not placed good clothes and boots beyond the purchasing power of the workers. During the whole of our visit we never saw a single child with broken boots!

One of the most important aspects of the great work of reconstruction now in progress—an aspect which is of special significance for working class conditions—is the large number of magnificent buildings and working-class homes that are being erected. In the Moscow province alone, the value of housing work in hand at present for the Moscow Soviet (Town Council) is over £6,500,000.

Special interest attaches to the building schemes in the Baku oilfields, where 20,000 organised operatives are engaged in the erection of houses. Prior to the revolution the workers were housed in one-room hovels made of mud, mostly without windows. During the last five years splendid results have already been achieved. Large new quarters have been built for the railwaymen, tramway workers, municipal workers, and those engaged in the oilfields. The houses are built mainly as bungalows or flats. Accommodation is made to suit the size of the family. The flats mainly consist of two bedrooms, a living room (about 12 to 15 feet square), kitchen, bathroom and lavatory. The houses are large and spacious, the rooms being 10ft. 6in. high, ensuring plenty of air space. A notable feature is the veranda to each flat, and a bed can be placed in the sunshine for the sick. The rooms have a polished parquet flooring, which gives a fine

appearance, and is hygienic in addition to being a labour-saving device thoroughly appreciated by the women-folk. There are central heating installations, which can be maintained at any desired temperature. A modern gas oven is provided in each bungalow and flat. Another useful feature is the double bay windows protecting the tenants from the severity of the Russian winter, whilst ensuring a plentiful supply of light. The quality and finish of the plastering are very good, and the walls are distempered and tastefully coloured, giving a bright and clean appearance. Each group of houses is provided with an up-to-date wash-house, and each estate has its own recreation and social club. The rents average three roubles a month ($1\frac{1}{6}$ a week), and no charge is made for electric lighting, central heating and gas. Each house has a small garden back and front; the width of the roads and the wide grass borders were specially noteworthy features. The size of the estates can be imagined from the fact that on one estate alone accommodation has been provided for 10,000 families. The housewives everywhere expressed great satisfaction at the change from the slums of pre-Revolution days to the modern houses provided by the Soviet régime.

While in Moscow we visited portions of some housing schemes in and around Moscow city. One such is being developed to meet the needs of the workers employed at the motor tractor and engineering factory. Those we visited were of the tenement type. The number of rooms occupied by each tenant is determined by his needs; a man and wife would occupy fewer rooms than a man, wife and family. The accommodation is all that can be desired, all conveniences being perfectly arranged and each set of rooms being self-contained. Like all houses of a similar type in the various parts of Russia, rooms are heated by a central heating system, which, being considered a communal service, is provided free; each set of rooms is provided with a stove for cooking similar to those we know as American or anthracite stoves (these, we learn, are made in Russia). The rooms are spacious in every respect, the living room being about 15 feet square and 9 feet 6 inches high. The rent is, in this case, determined by the cubic space occupied, and is quite small, a living room and two bedrooms costing 6 roubles a fortnight or about 6/- a week; this includes heating and lighting.

We visited also a Moscow rubber factory, where there are 4,500 people employed. We saw at a little distance in

connection with this factory a new housing site being developed on garden city principles; time did not permit us to visit the houses, but we were told by the manager that the cost is met by certain percentage allocations from factory revenue. We were also informed that these rents were determined by the capacity of tenants to pay; a highly-skilled worker being in receipt of a high wage would pay more for a house than a lower paid man for a similar type of house.

We visited mining villages in the Donetz coalfield. Here again the garden city principle is followed. As in other cases, rooms are lofty and large. Here rent, heating and lighting are free. We were able to visit some pre-Revolution "homes"—small, dark, dingy hovels, with earthen floor, and a tall person would have difficulty in standing upright in them. In this area we were also able to inspect the accommodation provided for single women employed at the pit-head. This consists of corridor flats. One or sometimes two women friends occupy a bedroom and sitting room furnished, for a sum just sufficient to meet cost of furniture, maintenance and keeping clean the very wide corridor into which the rooms open. The rooms are large and well lighted, and at the ends of corridors are communal cooking and washing kitchens, where this work is done for the tenants. In one area alone, over £2,500,000 was expended last year on working-class houses.

During our visit to the oilfields we inspected a new housing site at Grozny. There is a very large scheme built on what might be termed the semi-detached, two-storied flat principle, to accommodate four families, two on the ground floor and two on the upstairs floor, each with kitchen, living and two bedrooms. The site and general appearance of these are particularly pleasing, much nicer than anything we have seen in Britain. Each has a separate entrance, and the upstairs flats have French windows leading on to a terrace balcony overlooking a lovely valley. Rooms were also large and lofty. Rents, again, were free, also heating and lighting. In this connection it is interesting to recall that two weeks prior to our visit, while boring for oil, a hot spring or geyser was struck at a depth of 3,000 feet, and water 2½ degrees below boiling point pours out of the earth at the rate of 27,000 tons a day. Immediate steps are being taken to connect this up with the housing schemes to replace the present method of central heating.

Again in Rostov, where a new agricultural machinery factory is being erected, which will cover an area of 260 acres, and which will provide employment for 5,000 workers, at the present time 3,000 building trade workers are employed erecting houses for these workers. When it is realised that the factory will not be completed until 1932 (it was commenced in May of this year), it will be seen that the first consideration is the comfort of the workpeople.

And so it is, north, south, east or west. We have mentioned but a few of the housing schemes we saw. A new Russia is springing up. New standards are being set, standards which can only be attained by a people freed from the fetters of a decadent capitalism and inspired by the knowledge and confidence which that freedom brings. The general structure of the buildings is the essence of real architecture, as it combines strength, use and beauty. Walls two feet thick are a feature of all buildings. The interiors of the houses are very clean and comfortable; the tenants were in all cases proud and happy to let us see their homes. The houses visited were without exception chosen by the delegates, and although in some cases they appeared somewhat scantily furnished, this is accounted for to a large extent by the fact that these people have in the main been obliged to live and have their being hitherto in one-room dens. In all other respects they resemble the artisan home of this country. We were struck by the fact that in all homes one corner at least was devoted to Lenin, a bust or figure in a characteristic attitude being in evidence. In one or two cases the Icon still remained in another corner. Karl Marx, in plaster, metal or picture, was also noticeable in most houses.

For the people of Soviet Russia good homes and modern conveniences are being brought into existence as rapidly as possible, and with the other phases of their newly-acquired conditions will inspire them to work, and fight if need be, to retain and extend the system which has opened up a new life for them.

V

THE GENERAL ECONOMIC POSITION

In the course of our visit to various institutions, from discussions with a number of persons in responsible positions, and more particularly from the report given by Rykov, Chairman of the Soviet Union Council of People's Commissaries, we were able to get a general picture of the economic development, the stage that has now been reached, and the difficulties which have still to be surmounted.

The outstanding features of the past years have been first, the fact that pre-war Russia was one of the most backward countries of Europe; and secondly, that the work of reconstruction, owing to the counter-revolutionary attacks on Soviet Russia and finally the famine, only began about five years ago. The present position is therefore the result of only five years of the most determined and energetic work, starting from a position that must have been incredibly difficult. But in one respect the position in Russia in 1922 was immeasurably in advance of the position in any other country of the world. The State power had been won by the workers, and the whole process of development was unhampered by the burden of capitalism. Large-scale industry, transport, banking, foreign trade, and the land had been nationalised, and an effective working alliance had been created between the town workers and the peasantry, who realised that they must step forward side by side. In such circumstances the progress has been infinitely more rapid than was possible even in the early vigorous days of capitalism. Taking the whole of large-scale industry, the output of which had fallen in 1921 to about 25 per cent. of the pre-war, in 1927 the output was already 12.9 per cent. above pre-war. The coal output is 24 per cent. above 1913, oil 20 per cent., and cotton 12 per cent.; the only important industry which is still below pre-war level is the metal industry, the output of pig-iron being 82.3 per cent., and steel 85.2 per cent. of the 1913 level. In all cases, including the metal industry, progress is continuing at a very rapid rate. Agriculture had not fallen to such a low level, but in 1921 the total output of agricultural products was only just one-half of the 1913 total. In 1927 it is 8.2 per cent. above pre-war. The number of cattle is now 88,000,000, compared with 84,000,000 in 1913. The railway system has been immensely extended; in 1913 it was 39,000 miles in length; in the current year it will reach 51,000 miles, almost a third above pre-war.

These figures help to reinforce the general conclusions which we had arrived at from personal observation. There can be no doubt whatever that the general economic position has now reached a very satisfactory level, and that the workers and peasants are benefiting from the results. We consider also that the general economic position is improving very rapidly, and the detailed plans which we were told of at every factory we visited—plans in many instances which had already been partially carried out—showed the absolute confidence of the workers in the general economic security and growing prosperity of the country. The recuperation in Russia proves conclusively the possibilities of development under a Socialist system, and must be contrasted with the struggles of the capitalist countries even to maintain their level of production.

There are one or two questions, however, on which we elicited special information, inasmuch as they are real problems for the Russian workers and peasants and are discussed in the British press as if they were insuperable difficulties. There is first the question of the relation of State and Co-operative enterprises to private enterprise. We have been given figures showing that over 90 per cent. of large-scale industry is in the hands of the State and the Co-operatives. We saw for ourselves that in the towns all the large shops, along all the main streets, were run by the State, Municipal or Co-operative institutions. There are plenty of small private shops in the back streets, but at present at least we can say that the socialised shops are able to provide everything that is wanted, while the factory workers have their own special canteens and co-operatives, where they get their requirements at exceedingly low rates and have not the slightest temptation to utilise the private shops. We can, therefore, well credit the statement that in the current year 84.5 per cent. of the total trade turnover is being done through socialised institutions, and only 15.5 per cent. through private concerns. We have been given figures showing that the percentage of private trade to the total turnover has fallen year by year, and we feel that the confidence of the workers that private trade will dwindle away to nothing is fully justified.

Another question is the question of unemployment. On this we had some very interesting discussions with Tomsy, Chairman of the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions. At certain times of the year there are over one-and-a-half million

unemployed persons in Soviet Russia. But among these, apart from purely seasonal occupations such as some sections of building, there are no skilled workers unemployed for any length of time; the overwhelming majority are the young peasants from the countryside, who come into the industrial areas during the winter months in order to find a living and enjoy the social advantages of the towns. There is also a certain number of persons, remains of the old middle and upper classes, who are looking for work for the first time. This was the essential contrast between the condition in Soviet Russia and the condition in other European countries; outside of Soviet Russia the unemployed are in the main industrial workers who have lost employment; in Soviet Russia the unemployed are in the main non-workers who are for the first time seeking employment. The expansion of industry in Soviet Russia is giving increased employment; in the last economic year 500,000 new workers were employed and in the current year a minimum increase of 150,000 is anticipated. But the problem which arises from the existence of the great mass of peasantry cannot be solved within a short time. Progress towards the solution of the unemployment problem is being made partly along the line of raising the technical level of agriculture—the introduction of machinery, of electricity, and extending the area of special cultures such as sugar beet, flax, cotton, etc., which will give more and more varied employment in the countryside as well as helping forward the development of town industries. In another direction the introduction of the seven-hour day—and later on, when economic development makes it possible, of an even shorter day—together with the application of double or treble shifts where desirable, would both give new employment and cheapen production, thereby enabling a more rapid expansion of industry. Above all, the problem of unemployment in Soviet Russia is not a problem of a decaying industry and is therefore finding its solution in steady economic development.

Another problem is the need for adjusting the rate of improvement in the workers' conditions with the necessary expansion of industry and the material resources necessary for that expansion. This problem is being solved, thanks to the system of planned economy, by a simultaneous advance in all spheres, social, economic, cultural, etc. There is certainly continuous pressure from every department and organisation for the allocation of more funds for its special purposes; but there is equally certainly a real understanding,

which spreads right through the ranks of the workers, of the need for planned economy, and of the need for minor wants to be subordinated to the general plan essential for the building up of Socialism.

A further point is the question of capital equipment: can a Socialist system provide a surplus which will be available for the improvement and extension of factories and plant? We have already indicated that we saw abundant evidences that such improvement and extension have already taken place, and are continuing at a rapid rate. According to figures provided by the Supreme Economic Council, the accumulation of capital began to be effective in 1924-25, when about £38½ millions were used for this purpose. In 1925-26 accumulation was over £81 millions; in 1926-27 it was £100 millions, while in 1927-28 the plan provides for the setting aside of £119 millions, excluding a further £28 millions for the electrical system. These sums have been used mainly for the metals and mining industries, in order to hasten the recovery of these industries.

This and other points were explained by Kuibishev, Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council; one of the most interesting statements was his summary of what it was intended to achieve during the next five years. Unless war prevents the planned development, by the end of the fifth year from now it is calculated that industry will have reached an output *over twice as high as in 1913*—actually 130 per cent. higher. Real wages during that period will have increased by 40 to 50 per cent., in spite of the reduction of working hours.

But behind all the problems which Soviet Russia is able to solve with her own resources if need be, or with help from the outside, if that help can be secured, there remains the menace of war, the menace of an attack fomented by the Imperialist powers in an attempt to strangle Workers' Russia. The war danger threatens the achievements that have already been won and still more the progress of the next few years. Already, in view of the very definite acts of hostility which Soviet Russia has experienced during the last few months, a substantial portion of the energies of the country has to be devoted to preparations to defend the Revolution.

VI EDUCATION

It is true to say that in the sphere of education the Revolution has been more complete than in any other. In industry there are the "NEP" (the New Economic Policy) and the relics of private capitalism; on the land there is still to a great extent individual production. In education, on the other hand, a clean sweep was made of what little education did exist under the Tsarist *regime*, and a new educational system has been inaugurated.

From the first days of the Revolution the aim of the Soviets in education was made clear: it was to prepare good citizens for a working-class State. No pretence of impartiality is made. This is rejected as Utopian in a class system of society, and as leaving the working class under the mental domination of capitalism. Not to base education on the materialist conception of history and the class struggle is, in the opinion of the Russians, to ignore the scientific basis of all human progress. Consequently, all education is working class in character, and is closely linked with the social and economic life of the people, in the town, the village, the factory, mill, workshop and trade union.

The Revolution brought the new *regime* face to face with a double educational task. First, it was necessary to remedy the enormous measure of illiteracy among the adult workers and peasants—a relic of Tsarism. The second was to build up an educational system for the children of the workers and peasants. Very great progress has been made in the liquidation of illiteracy among adults. The trade unions play a foremost part in this work by the provision of clubs, reading rooms, newspapers, literature, etc. In addition, workers' faculties ("Rabfacs") assist in training workers for the universities. In the education of juveniles the progress that has been made can only be described as remarkable when viewed against the dark educational background of Tsarist times. Further, not only has the change been quantitative, but the *kind* of education has been changed to fit the working-class conception of the Soviet State. The study of the social sciences from the Marxist point of view and the history of the working-class movement are the corner-stone of the Soviet school.

At the present time there are 10,000,000 children attending elementary schools in the U.S.S.R compared with 7,000,000

in 1914. Schools for young workers and technical schools provide training for 590,000 students. The number of teachers is already $1\frac{1}{2}$ times as great as before the war. There are 136 Universities in the Soviet Union as compared with 90 in 1914, while the number of students is 30 per cent. greater.

In no aspect of education is the Revolution more clearly indicated than in school discipline. The old formal discipline maintained by the teacher has been abolished, together with all forms of corporal punishment. In pursuance of the principle of granting self-government to children and teaching *organisation* as a school subject, each school has a Committee of Pupils, representative of all the classes in the school, and including representatives of the teachers. This Committee controls not only the discipline of the pupils, but the cultural activities, sport, sanitary arrangements, etc., of the school. In addition it maintains contact, at its regular meetings, with the "patron" of the school, usually a factory, tram depot, etc., in the neighbourhood of the school. At the Apakov tram depot in Moscow, for example, we saw an exhibition of decorative work done by the children of the school which was under the patronage of the depot. The class importance of such training cannot be over-emphasised.

The organised teaching of religion has been abolished, and is punishable under Soviet law. On the other hand, the State does not carry out a *negative* anti-religious policy, but teaches, as the State doctrine, the materialist doctrine of Karl Marx and Lenin as a *positive* alternative. No attempt is made to injure the susceptibilities of the religious. The atheist societies, which are very active in the schools and universities, in the working-class movement and among the peasants, are independent of the State, nationally and locally.

The school curriculum is laid down on general lines by the central government, but each of the constituent Republics and national minorities of the U.S.S.R. has full autonomy in education, both in organisation and finance. Under Tsarism every effort was made to Russianise these minorities; the use of their language in schools, on the stage, etc., was prohibited and punishable. Now, however, these national minorities, with an enthusiasm unexampled in history, are busily engaged in building a national culture and in liquidating the illiteracy of their workers and peasants; the Republic of Georgia, for instance, spends no less than 46 per cent. of its

whole national budget on education, whereas, under the Tsar, Georgian education was non-existent.

All over the U.S.S.R. the educational workers play an important and direct part in the drafting of the curriculum and in the administration of the educational system. No decision affecting education and the teachers can be taken nationally or locally till it has received the consent of the organised teachers. These are organised in the Educational Workers' Union, one of the 23 industrial unions in Soviet Russia. It has a membership of 800,000, and includes not only the teachers but all workers employed in educational institutions (technical and administrative workers, school cleaners, etc.). It is numerically by far the most powerful teachers' organisation in the world, and plays a highly-important part not only in the U.S.S.R. but in the international movement of teachers.

Mention must be made of "pre-school" education in the U.S.S.R. The care of the child in the U.S.S.R. begins before birth with the special attention given to expectant mothers. All over the Soviet Union crèches and kindergartens are being set up, particularly in connection with the big factories.

One of our most interesting visits was that paid to a big school in the Sokolniki district of Moscow, a working-class area. The school building, which had previously been a workhouse, had been very effectively converted to its present use. The halls and classrooms were large, lofty and very light and airy, and the whole building was spotlessly clean, although the halls were used as indoor playgrounds during bad weather.

The school had about 500 pupils and was a "Unified School," i.e., it included pupils from the earliest age (6 or 7) to 18. There was no division, except in the age and aptitude of the children, between the first and second grades of the school. This plan is followed throughout the Soviet educational system, which has completely abolished the class distinctions between "elementary" and "secondary" education which still exist in Britain.

Owing to the lack of school accommodation in that district the building was used in two shifts, a morning and an afternoon school. The school was also often used in the evening by adults. This concentrated use of school buildings is fairly common in the U.S.S.R. owing to the difficulty in keeping up with the gigantic demand for education.

In this school (we were told that it was representative of schools in general) the average number of pupils per class was thirty and all classes were mixed. We visited a number of classes of various ages, inspected their work, talked with them and their teachers and paid particular attention to the general bearing of the children in relation to the teachers—a point of peculiar interest to the school-teachers on the Delegation. We have no hesitation in saying that the freedom, enthusiasm and joy in life which characterised the whole atmosphere of the institution could not be equalled in any working-class school in a capitalist country, particularly in a working-class district of a big town in Britain. The knowledge displayed, even by some of the younger pupils, of working-class affairs in their own and other countries, struck us as being almost uncanny.

There was a complete absence of formal discipline, but the school was thoroughly orderly. Noticing some of the pupils wearing armlets we enquired the reason and were informed that these pupils were the class orderlies for the day. We also ascertained that a large proportion of the pupils were members of the Communist children's organisation, the Young Pioneers, of whom there are 40,000 in Moscow alone. We were told by one mistress, a non-Communist of bourgeois upbringing (she had had a French governess as a child), that this powerful and intensely active children's movement was the basis on which the self-discipline and self-government of the pupils were maintained. In this school there seemed to be a complete absence of the hooliganism which is common among the children of British workers in the slums of our big towns. There is no doubt whatever that the Russian children realise that they are future citizens of a working-class country and appreciate to the full the splendid training in organisation which they receive throughout their school career.

A special meeting of the School Committee was called in our honour. This, the General Committee or "Plenum," consists of three delegates from each class together with delegates from the teachers. There were about thirty pupils present at the meeting, which was presided over by a boy of seventeen, a Young Communist, who had spent several years in America and who conducted the meeting, in two languages, with remarkable skill. The Plenum is divided into three Committees (Disciplinary, Health, Cultural), and with little

of no assistance from the teachers is undoubtedly in real control of the school. The personnel of the Committee is constantly changing as the result of periodical re-elections. In one class we visited, nearly all the pupils had, at one time or other, served on a Committee.

Before leaving we had an interesting interview with the staff, nearly all of them women. We ascertained that most of them had been teaching before the Revolution, that there were few Communists among them, and that all of them greatly preferred their present conditions and the Soviet educational system to the old regime. They were undoubtedly keen supporters of the Soviet Government.

One final note—the chairman of the school branch of the Educational Workers' Union, a woman, was one of the school cleaners. We are afraid that democracy taken to such lengths would be too much, as yet, for most British teachers!

Visiting a school at Ivanovo-Vosnesensk we found a modern building, built since the Revolution, and lessons in full swing. 900 scholars attended this school, and they had 30 teachers, or an average of 30 scholars to each teacher; 5 of these teachers were termed "specialists"; they were what we should call in England, Art teachers, Music, Drawing, etc. We went into the Music Class and heard solos and community singing, the scholars selecting their own songs. Children from 9 to 16 attended this school, and the character of the teaching appealed to us as being totally different from that prevailing in British schools; there was a complete absence of red tape, and closer attention was paid to the wants of the individual scholars and not to the requirements of the teacher. We could see that a very comradely feeling existed between the scholars and teachers. The school hours were four per day. At night this school was open for adults, and they expect shortly to say that adult illiteracy is completely a thing of the past in this town. The walls of the school were covered with natural history specimens, and many of the class rooms also contained posters on health, etc. Communist youth slogans were also prominent. The method of teaching is bringing out a new, clean youth in Russia. Physical culture and sport form the recreative side of the opportunities which the new Soviet Schools are giving to the children.

Among the various types of educational institutions visited we specially wish to record one of the "reformatory" children's homes in Moscow.

There were about 90 boys in the Children's Home, ages ranging from 12 to 16 years. All the boys were there for crimes, usually theft. We visited every part of the school. The staff was composed of nine teachers, four being instructors for teaching the boys trades in the school workshops. We saw boys repairing boots and shoes; basket-making was also being done in another workshop; there was also the carpenters' shop. All the goods manufactured in the school are sold, 15 per cent. of the proceeds being returned to the boys. The walls of the schoolrooms were covered with drawings and charts touching a great range of subjects—botany, education, hygiene, mining, etc. All the boys were taught political economy besides the ordinary school curriculum, and they also had their sports and games; there was a fine library and a Lenin corner. The children run their own paper. They have their own school group, split into various sub-committees, to assist in the general conduct of the school, the discipline committee being a fine achievement in such a school. The head teacher told us that at one time they had locks on every drawer. This did not, however, prevent them from being broken open, and the policy was then altered and nothing was put under lock and key. This immediately produced satisfactory results and hardly anything is ever stolen now. The chief aim of the Home is to develop in the boys a sense of understanding that there is no need for these schools in Russia; the workers being in control of political and economic power, the future destiny of the country was in their hands, to minimise or stamp out all crime, poverty and vice.

It can be said, in short, that in education Russia is speeding ahead under the sure guidance of the workers' State. In no other country can such an intense and such sustained enthusiasm be found for education. In no other country is every grade of education as open to the workers as in Russia. In the capitalist world education serves the double function of training, on the one hand, a ruling class, and on the other, a class of subservient and efficient wage slaves. Only in the U.S.S.R. has education become a means for raising the cultural level of the workers in the true sense. In this respect the Russian Revolution has provided an example for the workers of all countries.

VII

SOVIET PRISONS

Several of us visited the Lefortovo Prison, just outside Moscow. It is a prison for men, criminals as well as political offenders, serving sentences of over three years; ten years, we were told, is the maximum sentence in Soviet Russia. The Governor of the prison took us first to a central lobby, from which radiated corridors of cells, and asked us to choose any cells we should like to see. We selected one, and went in, to find two middle-aged peasants, who told us that one was serving seven years for a sexual offence, and the other five years for horse stealing; the latter was also to suffer loss of civil rights for a further five years. They both looked healthy and well fed, and told us (in the absence of the Governor) that the prison food was very good and that they got plenty to eat. They also had the right once a week to receive any food supplies brought by their relatives. They could see their friends once a fortnight, in forty-minute visits. There was no restriction whatever on speaking to fellow prisoners, and they could smoke at any time; cigarettes and tobacco could be got from the canteen or from their friends outside. They had nothing whatever to complain of, and told us, with evident sincerity, that the Governor and warders were "most comradely" with them. There was a fixed basin in the cell, and a radiator for warmth; a shelf of food tins, washing apparatus, chairs and table, electric light, and two comfortable beds gave the cell the appearance of an ordinary bed-sitting room. The prisoners told us they could get any books or newspapers they wanted, but they themselves had never learnt to read. In reply to questions they said that they were given every encouragement to learn in prison, but that they thought they were too old to begin. The younger of the two said he was forty-two years old, and when we urged that this was very far from being too old he merely shrugged his shoulders and said that perhaps if he had learnt younger he would not have been in trouble. These two had also decided not to do any work in the prison; there was no compulsion whatever. One had been in four months and the other six months. In the first instance the Governor allotted the companions in each cell, but if they did not get on together or wanted to share a cell with anyone else in the prison, the transfer was made on a simple request to the Governor.

We noticed, however, that this cell was not particularly clean and was rather untidy, and when we went out we asked the Governor about it. He told us that the condition of the cells, so long as they were not insanitary, was left to the people themselves; in the cell which we had struck the prisoners were of a relatively low type, as we had gathered ourselves from their unwillingness to learn to read or to work. But he said that as time went on it was quite likely that even these two would be drawn into the social life of the prison and would develop considerably.

We wanted to see a cell occupied by a better type of prisoner, and the warden suggested one into which we went. This cell was occupied by two Latvian spies who had been caught in Moscow and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. One was lying on his bed and took no notice of us, but the other was very ready to talk. The cell itself was in excellent condition, clean and tidy, with pictures on the walls (including, by the way, a picture of a Latvian priest who was a friend of the prisoners), and there was a small bookshelf. The prisoner was well and warmly clad. This prisoner also said that the food was good and plentiful, that he had nothing to complain of, and that he was using his time in study, for which he was given every facility. He admitted that the sentence on a spy caught in Latvia would certainly have been twelve years, and that a prisoner in Latvia would certainly not have got such conditions as he himself was enjoying. He also agreed that the Governor and warders were extremely friendly, and just as we were going the Governor came in and joined in the conversation, the prisoner telling us quite freely that he would remain in opposition to Soviet Russia, while the Governor told him that if he advanced in his studies he would probably get to realise that Soviet Russia was right. The whole atmosphere was most unlike anything that one usually associates with prison life.

We were then taken along to the prisoners' club room, a beautiful little hall which had formerly been the prison chapel. Here, we were told, the prisoners met in the evenings for games, dramatic circles, musical circles, study groups, etc.; and it was also open for the prisoners on Sundays and holidays. There was no restriction whatever on them when they were there, and the Governor told us that it was through this social intercourse that the lower type of prisoners came to develop mentally and were drawn into the social life and working life of the prison. The whole idea of the prison he

explained to us by a slogan across the walls; it read "In Soviet Russia there are no prisons, but training centres where those who have not had opportunities can learn to become useful citizens." He laughed at the idea of any useful purpose being served by "discipline"; and we also learnt that in the case of criminals (but not political prisoners) leave was allowed for them to go back to their villages to help their families at harvest time. They went without guard, but had to report to the authorities in the village and had a fixed date for returning. He said that in his experience no one had ever attempted to run away, adding that if anyone did run away, he would either become a useful member of society or would soon find himself in prison again.

We then went through a portion of the workrooms, being unable to see all owing to lack of time. The workrooms were just like any ordinary factory; there was a warder at the door, but no other sign of constraint. There were supervisors and instructors, who were training the prisoners in the use of various machines. In the section which we saw, spinning and weaving was in process, and there was also a cutting and tailoring section. There was one old peasant using a spinning wheel, but most of the other prisoners were working at looms driven by electricity. They were very proud indeed of their work, and some very attractive articles were being produced. All were being paid on piece rates, on the trade union scale, and one of the foremen told us that the average earnings were between twenty and thirty shillings a week, the more skilled earning up to fifty shillings. The products were sold through the State Universal Stores in Moscow, and the profits came back to the prisoners in the shape of more up-to-date machinery and also equipment for games, sports, their various dramatic and study groups, etc. There was an arrangement by which they could send all or part of their earnings to their homes, and they had opportunities of buying anything they wanted at a canteen run on co-operative lines with a prisoner elected by them in charge. In the workrooms also the general atmosphere was extraordinarily good; the only driving force was the desire to learn a trade and to be able to earn more than they could when they first went in.

We then went back to the club-room, where the musical group had been gathered to show us their talent. Of the dozen performers three were political prisoners and the others criminals; the instruments were a piano, fiddles, mandolines,

and a kind of guitar, the balalaika. They told us that only one of them had had any knowledge of music before they went in, and he had taught the others. They played several pieces extraordinarily well, and last, but not least, the International. Like all the others, they were obviously very well contented and interested in what they were doing.

We then had to go, but gathered one last point of great interest. It appeared that there was no automatic remission of part of the sentence for good conduct. There was, however, a perfectly fixed arrangement whereby two days of productive work counted as three days' imprisonment; this applied also in the case where the prisoners were working at the harvest in their village.

The Governor himself was obviously extremely well suited to run a prison on these lines. He had a perfectly clear idea of what they were attempting and was personally of a kind and gentle temperament. It may be added that while we were there a group of four warders came in from another prison in Moscow province to look over the prison and study the conditions, and the Governor told us that this was a regular arrangement whereby new ideas and experiences were carried through the whole of the prison system.

We visited also the Sokolniki Prison in Moscow. Here prisoners sleep in cells containing 14 beds. There is a library for their use, and relatives can send in newspapers. We noticed the *Daily Herald* in one cell. The social life of the prisoners is given every facility; there is a concert room, where the prison orchestra plays, and lectures, etc., are organised by a committee of the prisoners. Political and criminal prisoners are mixed. There are workshops for boxmaking, weaving, tailoring and furniture making. In the cells there are wardrobes and lockers, bedsteads, etc. We noticed wireless equipment in several cells. In this prison trade union rates are paid to prisoners for their work. One-third is paid direct, one-third is deducted for their food, etc., and one-third is saved for when the prisoner is released, or is sent to his dependants.

After serving half of their sentence prisoners are allowed one to two weeks' holiday from the prison per annum. Married men can take their holiday in visits to their home for a day monthly if desired. Very few fail to return. Peasants can work on farms in their villages during harvest and this time counts, being deducted from their sentence. Two working days count as three days of sentence.

An old colonel, a political prisoner working in the prison office, was expecting his release owing to the Tenth Anniversary Amnesty. He was asked what he would do for a living and he replied that he had requested to be allowed to keep his prison job and to live with relatives in Moscow. No religious services are allowed in prison, but at the Moscow Lefortovo Prison a priest is serving a sentence as a political prisoner, and the delegates saw an altar set up in his cell, with lighted candles. The priest was in his vestments saying mass. He said that his parishioners provided him with candles, etc.

Another prison visited was in Baku. This was, in Tsarist day, a military prison, and is now known as a "House of Correction." Conditions in relation to food, accommodation, holidays, wages, etc., were similar to those in Moscow prisons. Trades were learnt by both men and women to be of use to them when released. Every facility was given to talk to prisoners, and we have no hesitation in declaring that, compared with prison conditions in either Britain or Ireland, these are as day to night. Amongst those who visited this prison were several who had been prisoners in American, Irish, English and Scottish prisons, and therefore we could judge better than ordinary visitors. To see a man who was doing a ten years' sentence for murder, who was illiterate when the offence was committed, displaying photos that he had taken and pointing out the processes, gave an idea of the superiority of the Soviet methods as compared with the degrading tasks imposed in British prisons. Every member of the party was given a bust of Lenin that the prisoners had made, in order to demonstrate to those who imagine that our statement is overdrawn that real artistic work can be developed where the opportunity is given. Prisoners wear their own clothes, have their own dramatic circles, orchestra, wireless sets, etc., and in every aspect of the prison life, those in charge are using every endeavour to demonstrate that a real, lasting change can be made in the character of prisoners provided they are given proper opportunities. To see prisoners smoking, playing chess and dominoes, and sitting in rooms that have 6 to 12 beds as against the single cell with its wooden bed on the floor in British prisons, is an indication of the tremendous change in the outlook on the treatment of crime. We are prepared to state here what we signed in Baku, that prison life in Soviet Russia is better than the conditions that many British miners have to endure to-day.

VIII CO-OPERATION

Co-operation has found its highest expression within the Soviet Union. In capitalist countries co-operation is surrounded by hostile interests; in the U.S.S.R. it has become the means of achieving Socialism. Socialism through co-operation is a slogan one hears on all hands, and the workers and peasants of Russia have realised that Socialism cannot be imposed from above but must be built up by their individual and collective efforts through their numerous and varied co-operative organisations.

The great task confronting those who were charged with the enormous responsibility of rebuilding a mighty country, suffering as no other European country had suffered as a consequence of the world war, a country which was devastated by counter-revolution and famine, was to reconcile the interests of a class-conscious proletariat with a war-weary peasantry. Co-operation was the means employed of bringing about this great union, and town and country became partners in the Socialist plan which aimed at uniting the whole of the efforts of the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. in the task of building up Socialism. In the following paragraphs the Co-operative Delegates summarise their investigations and impressions of various types of Co-operative organisations.

Consumers' Co-operation

Consumers' co-operation, the economic achievement of Rochdale, is developing in the U.S.S.R. at such a rate that in ten years it will control practically all the retail trade of the country. We visited towns where 80 per cent. of the retail trade was in the hands of the co-operatives. Where science has been applied to store-keeping, as at Rostov, and where rationalisation has had an opportunity of eliminating the waste inevitable in an almost improvised system of consumers' co-operation, progress is simply phenomenal.

Seventy per cent. of the trade of the Co-operative Movement of the U.S.S.R. is done by Consumers' Co-operative Societies, and when we realise that the co-operative trade is 52 per cent. of the whole trade in the Soviet Union the enormous part that consumers' co-operation plays in the enormous of Socialism can be fully realised.

If figures ever speak volumes they do in the Consumers' Movement in the U.S.S.R. The trade of the movement

during 1925 increased by 90 per cent. in one year, and in 1926 another 84 per cent. over the preceding year. So much energy is being placed in the efforts to extend still further the boundaries of co-operative trade that it is expected that the increase this year will be 42 per cent., making a total turnover of £1,000,000,000.

The Leningrad Union of Co-operative Societies, a union of six Co-operative Amalgamated Societies in Leningrad—which, by the way, was a union of three hundred small Societies five years ago—has grown at such a remarkable rate that its whole system of store-keeping has had to be revolutionised and great building schemes are in hand so as to provide members with up-to-date services not possible to provide in the old stores and in the private stores acquired by the Society. Thus an enormous modern bakery with travelling ovens is now in course of erection and great central stores are being built which when completed will be an object lesson to movements in other countries.

The Moscow Union of Consumers' Co-operative Societies is another example of rationalisation and the concentration of societies in spite of the quick growth of enterprises. The concentration began in 1926; a glance at the figures will show how great the movement is in this direction. In 1926 there were 616 societies within the Union, in 1927 the number was reduced to 562, and the plan for 1928 is to reduce to 477 societies. This reduction goes on while the number of enterprises increases, for example, in 1924 there were 2,266 enterprises and in 1927, 4,060, which includes shops, buffets, restaurants, cafés, etc., with a total annual turnover of £58,000,000.

Consumers' co-operation, by reducing the price of goods until they are now between 15 per cent. and 20 per cent. below the prices charged by the private trader, has made a very substantial contribution to the wages of the Russian worker. In textiles it is estimated that the co-operative price is 30 per cent. below that of the private trader. This may be accounted for by the fact that the demands of the purchasing public are far beyond the available supply, and were it not for the existence of the Co-operatives, the private traders would be able to charge fabulous amounts for such commodities.

The store is not merely a trading concern: it is becoming the centre of all the communal activities of the members. For instance, the Leningrad Union spends 10 per cent. of the annual surplus on culture, which is expressed in an ever-

widening field of social, educational and recreational pursuits. The Society publishes a weekly journal which is distributed free to members; a co-operative corner where workers study the many and diverse problems confronting a rapidly expanding organisation is established in every co-operative factory, and many classes for employees are promoted so that those associated with co-operative enterprises may be trained, not only to be more efficient technically, but to understand the principles underlying mutuality in an order of society making for Socialism. Technical Schools are conducted by the co-operatives for the education of those who have to undertake the organisation of Co-operative Societies, and it is interesting to note that many old employees who were working for the movement prior to the Revolution have voluntarily undergone a course of re-training so that they might be more fitted to work on behalf of a system in which, owing to its enormous expansion, entirely new trading methods have to be employed.

Wholesale Trade

During the whole of our stay in the U.S.S.R. we were the guests of "Centrosoyus," the Co-operative Central Consumers' Union and Wholesale Society. Interpreters were placed at our disposal and every opportunity was afforded us of seeing the whole structure of co-operation in action, from a small village primary Society to the great Federations.

Some idea of the enormous trading transactions conducted by the Centrosoyus may be gleaned from the fact that during the past year its turnover amounted to £144,000,000. If we take into consideration the transport and central workers' section which deal with Centrosoyus on the wholesale side, the actual combined turnover amounted to £190,000,000.

Centrosoyus acts as the Insurance Department for the Consumers' Co-operatives at rates 40 per cent. cheaper than rates charged by Insurance Companies before the war. Centrosoyus has its own fisheries on the Caspian, Black and Aral Seas; it purchases 20 per cent. of the flax grown in the U.S.S.R., and about 15 per cent. of the furs. It has a close relationship with Selskosoyus, the Union of Agricultural Co-operative Societies, and Joint Committees work out schemes for transferring agricultural produce collected by the Agricultural Unions from the peasants to town consumers' societies. It is computed that 25 per cent. of all the grain

grown in 1926-27 was handled by Consumers' Societies, and 18 per cent. of the eggs and butter produced in the U.S.S.R.

Real wages in the Co-operative Movement are 3 per cent. higher than they were in 1913 (after taking into account the increased cost of living); and hours of labour have been reduced from 10—12 hours per day to 7—8. Over 95 per cent. of co-operative employees are Trade Unionists, although membership of a Trade Union is not compulsory. All workers obtain two weeks' holiday per annum, and if they are engaged in dangerous or semi-dangerous occupations they are granted four to six weeks' holiday.

A District Union

As an example of the activities of a District Union of Co-operative Societies we give some details of the Rostov Union. We visited the offices of the District Union, which has in association with it 1,160 Consumers' Societies with a membership of 910,000. This Union almost covers the field of co-operative requirements, for it supplies societies with 70 per cent. of their goods, its turnover being £35,900,000. Its development has been so thorough that it is now supplying 46 per cent. of the city and 50 per cent. of the rural requirements of the whole market. It is responsible for many Technical Institutes and a High School catering for 362 students. 25 per cent. of the workers in the Co-operative Movement are trained in these schools, and during 1927 1,500 employees were re-trained in the new store technique resulting from rationalisation; included in this number were many lay officials. In all, 80 courses were promoted and over 3,000 workers passed through the Colleges. Eight hundred correspondence courses were held in 1927 and 137 workers' circles were formed for the purpose of training workers by correspondence. This Union has three publishing houses for supplying peasants with literature and a journal which was issued originally for officials now circulates amongst the members, the circulation being 8,000. Within the Union it is computed that there are 183,000 active women, which, they shyly told us, is three times the membership of the English Women's Co-operative Guild. Within this district, 2,285 women serve on Boards of Directors of Co-operative Societies, Auditing Committees, etc., which is 7.6 per cent. for Boards of Directors, 50 per cent. Auditing Committees, and 35 per cent. for Store Committees, 19 per cent. Central and District

Councils and 5.7 per cent. on Agricultural Committees; the representation is therefore far more complete than in this country, in spite of the fact that 75 per cent. of the members are men, whereas the percentage is reversed in this country.

An Institute has been opened for training women canvassers and it was stated that a good woman canvasser can obtain 400 new members in three or four months. Special educational work is done among women and 50 centres have been opened for this purpose, and already 2,000 women have been prepared for practical work, such as stock-taking or for serving on Store Central Committees. One hundred and fifty-seven Welfare corners have been opened at Consumers' stores within the Union, 30 crèches for 900 children, 14 playgrounds, 12 maternity consultation centres and 65 restaurants.

A Town Store

Kiev is a delightfully modern city situated in the Ukraine where we spent three days studying various aspects of co-operative development. The central store, No. 2, of the workers' co-operative organisation of Kiev is an imposing building used before the Revolution as a drapery emporium by private trade. The store opened for eight hours per day except for the sale of food and perishable articles, when the hours were 12, arranged in two shifts. This Society, with a membership of 97,000, was only one of a number of rapidly growing societies in Kiev. They paid no interest on share capital, which was £1 per member, but paid interest of 8 to 10 per cent. on loan capital. Every member was compelled to have one £1 share. The profit made last year was 20 per cent., out of which all interest charges, depreciation allocations, grants for cultural and social services had to come besides a liberal amount for reserves. Only a three per cent. dividend was paid to members upon purchases, which equals a little under 7½d. in the £. Ten per cent. of surplus is allocated for cultural services and in every factory a co-operative corner is installed where co-operative literature and statistics are available for the workers to read. Scholarships are awarded to employees to attend technical schools, and special correspondence courses are arranged for those who aspire to the controlling bodies in the Society. The prices of co-operative goods are stated to be 26 per cent. lower than those retailed by the private trader. Credit facilities for a period of 4½ months are granted to

members for such articles as fuel, and six months for furniture. This Society, which is run in connection with large factories in Kiev, has a membership largely composed of workers in these factories, but a campaign has been conducted to induce their wives to join, and already 20 per cent. of the membership consists of women, 60 per cent. of whom are active workers, many of them serving on Store Committees.

A Co-operative College

We welcomed the proposal to visit a Co-operative College, and we had notions of a place on the lines of our own Co-operative College at Manchester. Imagine our astonishment when we were ushered into a University building, which we soon learnt accommodated over seven hundred students. The Kiev Co-operative Technical Institute filled the whole Delegation with astonishment. Having been in existence for the short space of eight years its progress has been of a phenomenal nature. Its main purpose is to prepare workers, and we are using the words of the Principal of the Institute, for leading positions in the Co-operative Movement in the faculties of agriculture, credit and consumption. Each faculty is divided into specialised sections, such as cattle breeding, baking, accountancy, banking, etc. Of the 797 students whom we met in a large lecture hall, 151 were workers from factory and store, 327 peasants who were taking courses in agriculture, 258 employees in administrative positions seeking information on the new technique of administration and organisation, and 68 who had not so far entered industry. The majority of the students were scholarship holders, the State providing for 200 and the Co-operative Movement for 203. The staff of the Institute consisted of 80 lecturers and professors, and the libraries, museums, laboratories and scientific departments were a credit to a country which has to make up for an appalling pre-revolution record of backwardness. Already 400 students had obtained responsible posts in the Co-operative Movement. This Institute has a library of 100,000 books, 7,000 of which are in foreign languages. The course lasts for a period of four years and in the agricultural faculty students do practical work during the summer months. Before students are accepted at the Institute they have to undergo a course of training at a Co-operative High School, there being 34 such schools in the Ukraine. For the upkeep of the Institute, apart from the scholarships,

the State makes a contribution of 70 per cent. and the Co-operative Movement 30 per cent., an instance of the benevolent attitude of the State towards co-operation.

An Agricultural Union

We were very fortunate in having sufficient time to visit the Ukraine, the centre of so much Agricultural Co-operation. "Wukospilka" is the All-Ukrainian C.W.S., a Union of town and village Consumers' Societies, and we soon discovered that considering the depredations caused by the famine and the counter-revolutionaries, astonishing progress has been achieved during the short period of five years. Thus in 1927 the Union consisted of 328 town Consumers' Societies with 4,300 stores, and 8,385 Peasant Consumers' Societies, with 11,500 stores.

In 1922 a Co-operative Book Union was formed by the Wukospilka for the purpose of publishing books necessary for the educational work of the combined co-operative movement of the Ukraine, and by 1927 this Union (Knigospilka) had issued 14,000,000 books and pamphlets under 1,500 different titles.

The average division of surplus in the Ukraine is 20 per cent. dividends, 10 per cent. reserve, 10 per cent. for helping peasant co-operators and 60 per cent. for consolidation purposes. Grants are made from the 60 per cent. fund for housing the workers in houses built by Housing Co-operative Societies.

Village Co-operatives

At Gogol we inspected an agricultural primary store which had a membership of 600 and a yearly turnover of £28,800. This store is gradually pushing out the private trader, the stores of which we also visited. They presented a poor appearance compared with the Co-operative Store. A profit of 9.8 per cent. was made last year, and we elicited the interesting information that after amounts had been allocated to cultural services and interest on capital, the remaining surplus was allocated by the vote of members to the building up of reserve capital. This store did not sell to non-co-operators, and 92 per cent. of the goods sold were purchased through the regional Union. So as to absorb the unemployed of the villages a Bootmakers' Artel was started in May, 1927, and sixteen men were taught to make boots and shoes. This Artel or Producers' Co-operative Society, similar to our Productive Societies federated in the Co-operative Productive Federation,

is affiliated to the Handicraft Co-operatives, another large Union which federates the Co-operative Societies of the crafts men and women of the villages. This Society does not distribute surplus, but uses it for development purposes, a policy some of us have been advocating in England without success for some time.

Conclusions

In reviewing the tremendous achievements of the five years of co-operative construction in the U.S.S.R., we can understand how untiring the efforts of those responsible for this construction have been, and we can also realise the need to establish here a closer bond between the co-operative organisations, the workers' organisations and the labour movement than that which exists now. If encouragement could be given here, as in Russia, to Trade Unionists in factory, mill, and mine, to open a branch of their local co-operative society within the walls of the factory, mill, or mine, then much valuable work would be done in uniting all the workers with the co-operative movement. But such encouragement can only exist where the workers themselves control both the State and industry.

We have seen what can be done in the short space of time (five years) in the U.S.S.R.; we have seen that, if given a complementary state of society, co-operation can be the means to establish Socialism.

In our visit to the U.S.S.R., and in meeting with co-operators from a number of other countries, we found that our ideas were their ideas, and that friendship between the workers of the world was what they were striving for. But friendship between the workers of the world means that a large amount of hard work has yet to be done, and the ideas of our international co-operative friends understood. The co-operative movement can, by continued friendship, make war impossible, by encouraging international trade, by local societies corresponding and exchanging ideas with societies in other countries, by sending delegations to visit. These are but a few ways of isolating war.

We, of the Delegation, hope that every endeavour will be made on the part of the co-operative movement in England to strengthen the friendship between the two great co-operative movements of England and the U.S.S.R.

IX THE PEASANTS

Before the Revolution, the low economic and cultural level of the peasantry was perhaps the most characteristic feature of Tsarist Russia. The Revolution itself was carried through by an alliance of the workers and peasants, and that alliance has been maintained and developed in the interests of both groups of the population.

With a rural population of over a hundred millions, the task of raising the economic and cultural level of the peasants has been a heavy one, and the drought of 1921, following on the dislocation and destruction caused by the war and the counter-revolutionary attacks, increased the difficulties with which the Soviet Government was faced. Nevertheless, during the last five years enormous progress has been recorded, and the total output of agriculture is now 8.2 per cent. above the pre-war output, while the number of cattle (88.6 millions) is 4 millions higher than in 1913. The material basis for an improvement in conditions has therefore already been created; and the existing social system ensures that there is a more satisfactory distribution among the peasantry of the agricultural wealth.

In the first place, the large estates, which in European Russia (excluding the Ukraine) occupied 24 per cent. of the land, and in the Ukraine constituted 45 per cent., have in the main been distributed among the peasantry. The peasantry now holds 96 per cent. of the land, the remaining 4 per cent. being occupied by State Farms, factory land, etc. There is a single agricultural tax, payable to the State, from which the poorer sections of the peasantry, constituting 35 per cent. of the total number, are entirely exempt, while the scale for those subject to the tax is a graduated one which bears very lightly on the less well-to-do peasants.

Apart from these leading factors, which by themselves show what the peasants, and especially the poorer peasants, have already gained from the Revolution, the Soviet Government has taken definite measures to raise the whole economic level of agriculture, by improving the methods in use as well as the technical equipment. Systematic efforts have been made (already with considerable success) to induce the peasants to abandon the old three-field system and to adopt the rotation of crops. Special encouragement and financial aid are being given with a view to extending the area sown

with industrial plants—cotton, flax, etc.—and factories for the working-up of these products are being established in the rural areas, in order to give more opportunities for the young peasants, and generally to widen the social life of the villages. New railways are being constructed to link up the countryside with the towns. Agricultural machinery of all kinds is being introduced as rapidly as financial resources allow. Within the last three years new agricultural machinery to the value of £267,000,000 has been provided, 54 per cent. of which has been bought with credits from the State and Co-operative Societies. Electricity is being brought to the villages from the new great power stations; the electrical scheme was, of course, originated by Lenin, and it is interesting to note that in every village which has been reached by the scheme a "Lenin Lamp" is always burning.

The whole of this economic progress has been accompanied by a steady and expanding campaign of education of the peasantry, which has taught large numbers even of the adult peasants to read and write, and has particularly concentrated on the rising generation. Some members of the Delegation came across a striking illustration of the new life that has been opened up for the peasants. In the train from Minsk to Moscow they got into conversation with a peasant woman of about 50, who told them that she herself had never had the chance to learn to read and write under the Tsar, but that her daughter, growing up after the Revolution, had got a good education, and was now at Moscow University studying electrical engineering, in order to come back to Minsk and take her share in the extension of electricity to the villages. The mother was then going up to Moscow, on a free pass, to visit her daughter.

In the social and economic development of the peasantry a very important part is played by the Co-operative movement. One of the greatest obstacles to progress has been the existence of over 20 million individual peasant farms. But the Communist Party and the Soviet Government have recognised that it would be madness to attempt any general organisation of large-scale agriculture on Soviet farms, and as an alternative have concentrated on spreading co-operation in every form, thereby developing the spirit of joint activities and gradually breaking down the traditional isolation of the peasants. At the same time, the co-operative organisations are of considerable material help to the peasants, marketing their produce, providing their requirements, and financing

the purchase of seed, agricultural machinery, cattle, etc. At the present time there are over 66,000 separate agricultural co-operatives, with an aggregate membership covering seven million peasant households, or rather more than a third of the total number.

The Government, by the publication of artistic posters, wall newspapers, charts and diagrams, endeavours to bring home to the peasant, already released from the domination of the landlord, the advantage of co-operative action and the use of machinery in agriculture. The State Bank and the Co-operative Banks loan sums of money at low rates of interest to Agricultural Co-operative Societies for the purchase of tractors and agricultural machinery so that production may be carried on more economically and scientifically. An enormous amount of literature on agricultural methods is published in many languages for the education of the peasant, and besides the special educational facilities which are provided through the ordinary State channels, Agricultural Museums and Exhibitions (some of them travelling Exhibitions) are provided on an extensive scale.

Thus while the Co-operative section of the Delegation was in Kiev they had an opportunity of visiting such an Exhibition which, although only opened two years ago, revealed a whole field of patient research work diligently conducted in a most elaborate manner for the purpose of stimulating the imagination of the peasant and spurring him on to co-operative action in every aspect of agriculture. This Museum, which prior to 1917 was one of the Palaces of the mother of Nicholas II., has been organised for the purpose of demonstrating to the peasant the actual results of the application of science and co-operative organisation to agriculture, and no peasant interested in his calling could fail to be impressed with the social advantages of scientific organisation over the old-fashioned methods. Excursions are arranged so that peasants from the villages can visit the Museum and Exhibition; students from High Schools and Technical Institutes study there. Correspondence courses are promoted and travelling exhibitions, consisting of charts, books, sample seeds, moving pictures, are organised, and so every opportunity is taken to develop further the sphere of co-operation.

Special mention must also be made of the fact that the peasants are taking a very active share in the administration of the country; they form 84.4 per cent. of the total membership of the village Soviets throughout the country, and in

the Central Executive Committee, the Supreme Legislative body in the Soviet Union, the peasants constitute 21.3 per cent. of the total number.

Apart from those peasants who are working farms of sufficient size to make them independent, there are still a large number of "poor peasants" who are forced by the lack of sufficient land to work some part of the year as hired labourers. This lack of land in certain areas is due to the increase of population and the unwillingness of the peasants to leave their own districts, in spite of the opportunities for emigration to fertile land in Siberia. There are also hired labourers in the forest areas worked by State trusts, and also on the State farms (which are run mainly as experimental and instructional centres). These hired workers are catered for by the Agricultural and Forest Workers' Union, which in 1927 had a membership of 1,122,000. This Union, as all other Unions in Russia, is on an industrial basis, and covers specialists and managers as well as agricultural labourers of all kinds. It plays a considerable part in the preparation of legislation affecting the countryside, and also in the administration of local affairs and social insurance.

Special legislation protects the interests of the hired agricultural workers. In all cases written agreements must be concluded between the employer and the worker or trade union acting on behalf of a number of workers, and the agreements must be registered (free of charge) at the office of the village Soviet. The employer is compelled to provide "suitable living quarters and food such as is usually consumed in the employers' family." There is a general liability on the employers to pay full wages during sickness lasting up to a month, and where three workers are continually employed they must be brought under the State Insurance scheme, the contribution of 10 per cent. on wages being entirely paid by the employer. Generally speaking, the legislation affecting town workers is applied as far as possible to the country workers.

On the four days' journey to Baku we passed by towns and villages in which imposing churches and palaces and great houses contrasted vividly with the mean huts of the peasantry which are the relics of centuries of oppression. Now the exploiters have gone or are reduced to impotence. The halls and palaces, which formerly housed one family and a horde of minions, now house hundreds of sick and tired workers and peasants who are getting good medical attendance, good food

and physical training, and are becoming accustomed to an environment of light, space and cleanliness. In the houses of the petty exploiters the former thralls of capitalism are now living, five or six self-respecting, free and independent families in each house; whole villages of houses of rotten and vermin infested wood and with dirty thatched roofs, more like pigsties of the bad old days than habitations for human beings, have been destroyed and replaced by trim little stone, brick or concrete bungalows, with tiled roofs, standing up white, bright and cheerful against the rich, dark earth. Where the old villages have not yet been destroyed, you will see here and there trim little cottages built by the new Government; but hampered as they have been, especially during the first five years by war, by blockade, by famine, and by every obstacle that counter-revolution and capitalist imperialism could place in their path, even the efforts of the leaders of new Russia have only sufficed to touch the fringe of the great problem. But the work of rebuilding is going ahead, and each year brings new houses, new villages, and new life to an ever-widening number of the vast peasant population of Russia.

To sum up, the position of the rural population has undoubtedly improved, and is steadily improving. Economic, cultural and social opportunities which were absolutely unobtainable from the Tsardom have been brought to the peasantry. Undoubtedly there is a terrible legacy from the Tsardom of ignorance and poverty. It will be many years before the older generation is replaced by a younger generation brought up since the Revolution. But in the meanwhile the peasants are contented and appreciative of the better conditions they now enjoy, while each year raises those conditions to a higher level, and each year scientific agriculture is being extended. Above all, there is a new life in the villages, and the peasants—men and women—have the consciousness that they are free from an age-long oppression, while the younger peasants have already developed an active interest in the task of Socialist construction which will be the fulfilment of the Revolution.

(NOTE.—The British Delegation wishes to express its thanks to the Irish Delegation, which made a special study of agriculture and of the conditions of the peasantry and placed its material at our disposal for incorporation in our Report.)

X

NATIONALITIES WITHIN THE SOVIET UNION

Under the Tsardom, as is well known, the central government made every effort to suppress the separate culture of the various nationalities which had been brought by force within the Tsarist Empire. From the first days of the Revolution in 1917 the principle of self-determination of all the former subject nationalities were laid down by the Soviet Government; in pursuance of this principle what are now known as the Border States (Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Poland and Lithuania) separated themselves from Soviet Russia, while the other parts of the former Empire formed a number of separate republics which subsequently united to form the U.S.S.R.—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—each constituent republic retaining the right of withdrawal from the Union at any time.

At the present time there are six republics in the Soviet Union—the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.), and the Socialist Soviet Republics of the Ukraine, White Russia, Transcaucasia, Uzbek, and Turcoman. Within some of these, in turn, there are 14 smaller republics and 17 autonomous regions, so that the various national groups are in a position to carry on their own government, protect their own interests, and develop their own language and culture.

But the central government of the Soviet Union does not merely allow these national groups to carry on their separate existence; it gives them every encouragement to develop both in the educational and in the economic sphere. In the first-grade schools throughout the Soviet Union instruction is now given in 62 separate languages; the reading rooms have books and papers in 52 languages. The social development of some of the most backward Eastern peoples can be illustrated by the fact that in the republic of Uzbekistan, where before the Revolution women were in a condition of semi-slavery, there are now 276 women's educational institutions with 13,200 students. The economic aid given to the separate republics can be illustrated by the continuous assistance in the introduction of new methods of agriculture, by the loans for this and other purposes, and by the steady building up of the scheme of electrification to cover the whole Union.

The Georgian Republic, in Transcaucasia, was visited by a large group of the British Delegation, and special steps were taken to investigate the position there in view of the interest

taken in Georgia by the British Labour Party and the allegations made in some quarters of repression of the Georgian people by the government of the Soviet Union. As a result of our investigations, we are satisfied that Georgia has made and is making very rapid progress, both cultural and economic, under the present constitution—an independent republic forming part of the Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Republic, which is itself a constituent part of the Soviet Union. Georgia is an agricultural country, the peasant population predominating. Great efforts are being made to industrialise the country, especially to introduce those factories which are closely connected with agriculture, so that whilst the peasants can participate in these industries they can still continue their agricultural and peasant life, but broadened and made secure and comfortable by the many ways in which these industries will better their standard of living. In this respect good progress has been made, tea plantations, silk culture, cotton growing, tobacco plantations, and several other entirely new industries having been started in the peasant area. Special mention should be made of the new woollen factory now in course of completion near Tiflis; some of the machinery for this factory has been imported from England. Great assistance has been rendered by the Soviet Government in financing these industries, with the object of helping in the industrial development of the country and improving the conditions of the mass of the population. A great hydro-electrical scheme is under way, which is already developing both industrial and agricultural work, and will bring many city comforts into the villages and brighten the life of the peasantry.

It has been the fashion to deride what is called "Lenin's dream": the electrification of Russia. Speaking for Georgia, here is the result of an investigation. About 30 miles up the river which divides Tiflis, a dam has been erected, a canal formed, and three kilometres below the dam a hydro-electric station set up, which actually works 4 turbines with a production of 18,000 kilowatts, soon to be doubled, 8 turbines and 36,000 kilowatts, the whole done in excellent style, and working perfectly.

Up the river, 120 kilometres higher, a new station is in progress which will furnish 60,000 kilowatts. These two, linked and working in conjunction, will supply electricity, not only for ordinary purposes, light and power, but for the electrification of the surrounding railway system. For a third

station still higher up, surveys are being made, and ere long one can expect the whole isthmus, from the Black Sea to the Caspian, to be electrified. As the plan was first formed in 1922, and already in 1924 was working in its first part, there does not seem to be much of a "dream" about it, and as far as Georgia is concerned it is a most striking example of the benefits which the Georgian people are getting from the Soviet Government.

There are also oil deposits, which are being prospected and will shortly be developed. A concession has been arranged by the Soviet Government with a Belgian firm, which has undertaken the development work.

As the Delegation was anxious to know more of the history of Georgia, an interview was arranged with Comrade Mackaradza, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissaries for the Georgian Republic, and the following paragraphs give the replies to questions put by the delegates.

Georgia was an independent republic, with its own national life and culture, until the early part of the nineteenth century, when Tsarist Russia offered military protection against the Turks and Persians, and eventually established control of Georgia, which was considered by the Tsarist Government as a stepping-stone for further imperialist expansion in the direction of Turkey and Persia. Heavy taxes were soon imposed upon the peasants, and legal and social disabilities upon the nobles; the Georgian language was banned and Russian made the official language, and every effort was made to stamp out Georgian culture and traditions and to make Georgia a Russian Province.

This persecution of the Georgian people resulted in continuous uprisings of the peasants against Russian domination; and as the nobles were also feeling the oppression, some of them took part in the revolts and very often were the leaders and chief instigators. But no results were obtained; the movement was too weak, too narrow in its basis of support, and no concessions were forced from Russia.

In 1880, however, the railways commenced to penetrate Georgia and various industries were set under way, resulting in a small measure in the industrialisation of Georgia, but more important still in the formation of a working class, an artisan population recruited from the small handicraftsmen whose livelihood was destroyed by the competition of the large industries, and greatly strengthened by the number of peasants who had been deprived of the land and were

forced to seek work in industry on one pretext or another. Their class views were at first vague but under economic pressure gradually crystallised, and soon, under the influence and with the help of the Russian working-class movement, a definite working-class movement was brought into being in Georgia. This movement participated in the revolution of 1905, fighting on a class basis, but, of course, meeting the same fate as the Russian movement—failure and rigorous persecution.

After 1905 the Mensheviks within the Georgian movement, shaken by the persecution following the revolution, put forward a programme based on the demand for sufficient autonomy to allow the development of national culture, attempting by this method to separate the national struggle from the class struggle. The Bolsheviks opposed the Menshevik programme, on the grounds that it was abandonment of the class struggle and that it also weakened the national struggle by withdrawing from it the support of the workers. In 1917, when the first revolution broke out, the Mensheviks succeeded in confining the issue to a purely nationalist programme, and the revolution ended in the setting up of an Independent National Georgian Republic with a Menshevik Government absolutely controlled by the bourgeoisie, with the result that from 1918 to 1920 the workers and peasants, striving for revolutionary aims, were cruelly persecuted. When the October revolution took place in Russia, and the Soviet Government was set up, that Government recognised the Georgian Republic on two conditions, first that the Georgian Government should not interfere in Russian affairs, secondly, that they should not allow Georgia to be used as a base by the Imperialist armies of Great Britain, France, etc. Despite this agreement the Georgian Menshevik Government sent troops to aid the rebellion of the Kurds in Russia, cut the oil pipe line from Baku to Batum, and allowed first the Germans, then the British, to make Georgia a military base.

After three years of Menshevik repression, the workers and peasants, led by Georgian Bolsheviks, revolted against the Menshevik Government, and succeeded in setting up a Soviet Government; but owing to the combined attacks of the Mensheviks and the Imperialist armies, they appealed to the Russian Soviet Government for help. This help was not given at the time as Russia was fighting desperately herself; but when the Russians had succeeded in driving out the foreign and internal enemies, the Red Army finally reached

Georgia and helped the Georgian workers to drive out the British Government's Menshevik puppets, and the Georgian Soviet Government was firmly established. The Georgians at once joined the U.S.S.R. in their own interests, as they would have been the target for imperialist attacks if they were outside the U.S.S.R., and would not have been able to resist these attacks without the joint help of the other Soviet Governments; and this action was fully endorsed by the national, district, and local Soviets throughout the country.

Regarding the question of insurrections against the Soviet Government, we were informed that when the Menshevik leaders fled from Georgia, they provided their adherents in Georgia with outside help against the Soviet Government. Inspired by these leaders, the Menshevik factions, together with the ex-nobles, officers, merchants and ex-landowners, rose in rebellion, expecting the promised aid; but no aid arrived, and the insurrection was crushed in three days, the Menshevik organisation was broken up, and the leaders shot and imprisoned. The failure of that attempt destroyed any influence the Mensheviks had, and at present they have only a small secret organisation which has no support whatever among the masses.

As to the present position, the Georgian Soviet Republic is based on the system of local, district, regional and national Soviets (the three national minorities of Abkhasia, Adjaria, and Ossentinia have their own Soviet Assemblies); and in all respects Georgia is on an equal basis with the other independent republics in the Soviet Union. There can be no question of oppression by the central government of the Soviet Union, on which, of course, Georgia is represented. The whole economic structure of Soviet Russia involves the absence of any economic advantages by one group over another: there can be no imperialist exploitation, which is the cause of the "problem" of nationalities in the capitalist world, especially as it affects the subject colonial peoples.

The Delegation considers that within the Soviet Union the problem of nationalities has been solved, and that small nations and national minorities which have entered of their own free will into the Soviet Union have found that by this Union they enjoy not only liberty to develop but active assistance from the combined resources of the Union towards that development.

XI

THE JOURNEY, MEETINGS AND IMPRESSIONS

The voyage from London to Leningrad in the steamer "Soviet" was a fitting introduction to what we were to find in Soviet Russia itself. The kindness and comradeship of every member of the crew deserve acknowledgment; and in conversations with them we began to realise the high level of political consciousness which now exists throughout every section of the Russian workers. We saw the conditions of the seamen and firemen—their quarters, rest room and Lenin corner—and especially appreciated the comradely relations existing between captain and officers and crew. It was a remarkably pleasant voyage in every way—but for one day's rough weather to which most of us succumbed.

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Our reception at Leningrad was thrilling. We were met on the quay by representatives of the Leningrad Council of Trade Unions, amid tremendous cheering from an enthusiastic crowd of workers, soldiers and sailors. In response to their welcoming speeches we presented a manifesto signed by all members of the British and Irish Delegations congratulating the Russian workers and peasants on their magnificent and inspiring achievements, and pledging the assistance of the British workers against imperialist attacks. Our manifesto also assured the Russian workers that the rupture of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee had been carried out without consulting the rank and file of the Trade Unions, and we pledged ourselves to work unceasingly for the re-establishment of Anglo-Russian Trade Union unity as the medium for closer contact and for the defence of the gains of the Revolution. After the reception on the quay we were driven to a rest home—a magnificent building which had formerly been a nobleman's palace—and after a meal and further speeches of welcome the main part of the Delegation left for Moscow.

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Those of us who went overland had our first thrill when the train ran into Soviet territory under a great banner stretched over the lines and inscribed "Welcome to the workers of other countries; Communism knows no frontiers!" At the little frontier station of Niegerolye, British, German, Czecho-Slovakian and French delegates were taken to the station hall, where a meal was given us and speeches of

welcome and solidarity exchanged. It was wonderful to see the hall packed with workers, soldiers and peasants, who had come in from the surrounding villages to welcome us; their interest in the speeches and their enthusiasm were really inspiring.

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Everywhere we went we were astonished at the tremendous interest and the great knowledge displayed by the Russian workers in connection with Britain. In factory after factory, at meeting after meeting, we were asked what were the prospects of the Baldwin Government attacking Russia; whether the British workers would prevent it, or whether they would be held back by their leaders as they had been in connection with the sending of troops to China; why the British workers had not put up a fight against the Trade Union Bill; why the General Council had "let the miners down"; whether the miners could resist a further worsening of conditions; whether there was going to be a Labour Government and what it would do; why the General Council had broken up the Anglo-Russian Committee; whether the British workers had been consulted; and so on. There can be no doubt whatever of the keen interest in these subjects and the real sense of solidarity with the British workers.

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The question of Anglo-Russian Trade Union unity, which met us at every turn, was brought up by us at meetings with Tomskey and Melnichansky. The point of view they expressed was that the British General Council had agreed to set up the joint committee with the Russian Trade Unions with a definite programme, namely, to secure joint action against capitalist attacks and against war. When the capitalist attacks came on the British workers in May, 1926, the prompt help sent by the Russian Trade Unions had been refused by the British General Council; and subsequently the latter had refused to discuss joint action to stop coal shipments, which action, the Russians consider, would have brought victory for the miners. Therefore the Russian Trade Unions consider that the British General Council failed to carry out the agreed basis of the joint Committee; and that the Russians were fully justified in making the most vigorous protests, and finally, when they felt that the British General Council was avoiding the issue, in sending the telegram to the Trades Union Congress, which the British General Council utilised to effect the break.

Questioned as to whether they desired the re-establishment of the Committee, Tomsy said that they considered unity between the Russian and British workers essential in the interests of both; that it was not, however, a question of uniting the leaders, but the workers, as it was the workers and not the leaders who were threatened by the capitalist attacks; and finally, that mere formal unity, or the establishment of a machinery for unity, was absolutely useless and would merely deceive the workers unless it was unity for a definite purpose, with a machinery that would actually be used in fulfilment of that purpose. This point was made clearer at subsequent meetings, when we raised the question of what conditions the Russian Trade Unions would insist on before agreeing to the re-establishment of the Anglo-Russian Committee. At one meeting Melnichansky said that he had no authority to name any conditions and that as the British General Council had created the break he thought any proposals would have to come from the British. Subsequently, however, Tomsy, presumably after consulting his colleagues, intimated that the Russian Unions were quite willing to accept the former constitution, involving joint action against capitalist attacks on the workers and against war, as they thought this was the only possible basis and one which required only loyalty in carrying it out to make the joint committee of real service to the workers in both countries. The Delegation greatly appreciated the frank discussions with the Russian Trade-Union leaders, and realised more than ever the urgent necessity for the establishment of the closest possible unity between the British and Russian workers.

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There was also an extremely interesting meeting between us and the Chinese delegation. It was held in a large hall; the British, American and Chinese delegations sat in front, and all the rest of the hall and galleries were filled with an excited, jolly crowd of Chinese students. There were many girls among the students, looking extremely attractive with their black hair and beaming countenances; the audience was the most enthusiastic we have ever experienced, and the whole meeting went with a swing. The statement made by a Chinese delegate on the present position in China was of absorbing interest. He pointed out that the temporary defeat of the revolutionary movement had been chiefly due to the protection given by foreign imperialist troops to the

reactionary elements; that nevertheless it was a profound mistake to think that the revolutionary movement is now extinct; that, on the contrary, strikes and local peasant revolts are constantly recurring in spite of the murderous repression by the reactionaries; and that conditions are such that a new revolutionary wave is inevitable. When it comes, he considered, its fate will depend on whether the British workers will give it active support, or whether they will allow themselves to be bullied into inaction; and he finally appealed to us to realise that the Chinese revolution was, after the Soviet revolution, the most important factor making for the world overthrow of capitalism. After a number of other speeches we asked the Chinese to sing us a revolutionary song, so they sang the International in Chinese with immense zest and then we all sang it together. Then they gave three long and complicated cheers in Chinese, and the meeting dispersed in an indescribable spirit of enthusiasm and goodwill. The British Delegation were glad to have had the opportunity of learning the present position and outlook in China; the indication that the revolutionary movement in China was still in active existence awakened new interest, and made us feel the necessity for closer contact also between the British and Chinese workers.

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In all parts of Russia which we visited it was made evident to us that the Trade Unions were, through the agency of the clubs, classes and so on, the training schools of the workers, men and women, boys and girls, in a wider, higher, brighter and happier social and cultural life. In Moscow, in Baku, in the other towns and districts, we found that the Trade Unions and the Trade Unionists had always the pick of the best public buildings. Why not?

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The workers of Britain can learn many lessons from the accomplishments and work and organisation of the workers of Russia. One of the principal lessons is the need for 100 per cent. Trade Union organisation and the amalgamation and concentration of our Trade Union funds. In Soviet Russia there are only 23 industrial Unions, while here in Britain we have well over 1,000. Complete Trade Union organisation of the workers is an essential starting point for any real progress we can make in this country, and is the only guarantee of conscious solidarity and realisable strength.

When that state of organisation has been achieved we can then embark upon a programme for making the Trade Unions those training schools for the building of Socialism in which our Russian comrades have set us such an example.

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Obviously exaggerated statements are made in English newspapers about the "millions of homeless children in Russia," and therefore we were particularly anxious to find out the truth about them. After the Revolution, as a result of famine and continuous fighting, vast numbers of children of all ages became orphans. Forced to look after themselves or starve, they robbed and even killed to get food and shelter, and defied all authority. As soon as any kind of organisation could be arranged by the Soviets, the children were rapidly collected into homes. It was a difficult matter to collect them, but even more difficult to keep them in homes, for they had found that freedom to wander at will had its charms. They would stay in the homes during the winter, and as soon as the weather became warm again, would run back to the country districts from which they came. After a time, however, the task of keeping them in the homes became easier and now a very small percentage of them run away. No force is exerted on the boys to go into the home, even the police cannot compel them if they find them in the streets; they can only try and persuade them to go to the homes. Inside the home, too, there is no compulsion used. Doors all day are unlocked, and the boys have the free run of the buildings and garden. No corporal punishment is ever used, misdeeds being punished by the forfeiting of privileges such as visits to cinemas, concerts and museums, to which they are often taken as part of their education. On our journey to Baku, we saw many wandering boys who were travelling south (jumping the trains) to get to warmer country. We questioned some of them regarding their refusal to remain in the comfortable homes, and they replied that they preferred their freedom to roam about the country, using the homes only when it suited their purpose, as the vagrants use the casual wards in this country.

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From Moscow to Tiflis via Rostov on the Don and Baku—a long journey, nearly four days and five nights. The vast North Russian plain seems unending. Immense distances, snow-covered, dotted here and there with peasants' huts,

here and again a village, occasionally the silhouette of an orthodox church on the horizon; a few peasants moving about on sledges, and a notable lack of trees. Near Voronezh came the first high ground, a semi-circle of low hills, and the sparse trees gathered together into a forest covering their slopes. As we went further South the monotony of snow-clad steppes became more and more marked. Then Rostov was reached. This is a very large town, built on low hills above the Don, alert and busy, but bearing strong traces of the Civil War. Clearing the ground and building are going on gaily, and Rostov should soon recover. A little to the south-west of Rostov is the mouth of the Don, and also the port of Azov, from which the shallow sea of Azov is named. The snow had disappeared, but as we crossed the Don and struck across the huge flat plains which lie on the eastern side of the sea of Azov, it began to fall again, and driving snow and the dark winter night soon hid from our eyes the deadly monotony of the grey levels.

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Twice on this part of the journey deputations of workers had met us at the stations and fraternal greetings were exchanged to their great satisfaction. Indeed, the sympathetic interest shown by the people whenever a stoppage of the train allowed us to descend and stretch our cramped legs was astonishing. We ran for miles along the edge of the Caspian Sea, and as darkness came on we saw the lights of the ships, piers and harbours in the distance. Baku is immensely interesting. It is very large and the movement of the population is great. This population itself is astonishing. It includes Russians, great numbers of Turks, some of whose women go veiled even yet, Circassians, Georgians, and many other races, all in characteristic dress. A quaint mixture of East and West. Eastern in its porters, carrying huge weights; in the gay cotton dresses of the Turkish women; in the bright coloured head wraps, and in the costumes; the Kirghizes, the Caucasians, with their bandoliers of cartridges and the curved Caucasian dagger; in the vendors of quaint wares; in the camels formerly used for transport but now disappearing. Western in the field grey of Russian soldiers, the business-like street police, the trams and automobiles, the new electric railway to the oilfields, and the commonplace dress of Europeans who could at once be distinguished—there is little of the picturesque about them. The marks of the

Civil War are fast disappearing, but one of them remains permanently—the cemetery in the centre of the town where lie the bodies of twenty-six murdered Commissars, shot during the British occupation of Baku, a monument of shame to every member of our imperial nation. All the American, British and Irish delegates marched in solemn procession to lay a wreath on the little plot in the centre of the garden, and representatives of each nation paid their tribute to the departed heroes.

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The oilfields lie outside the town, a fantastic sight. They spread over some 100 square miles, and they recall a Gustave Doré nightmare. The stagings for the drills and pumps, each a miniature Eiffel Tower, rise as thick as trees in the forest. The sandy ground is cut, ravined, kneaded into a thick mud of peculiar tenacity. Ironwork of all descriptions lies around. A network of pipes crawls snake-fashion for untold distances, and the wooden supports of these add the last touch to a scene unkempt in the extreme.

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We pulled out from Baku in the early afternoon, and for hours crossed immense sandy steppes skirting the Caspian shores. An occasional camel train, or a short file of laden donkeys were the only objects to break the monotony of the steppes, save for the little dwellings of the rail tenders, which turned up with a regularity in itself monotonous. But the short day soon ended and we knew no more of the outside world till we woke at Tiflis. Beautiful indeed is Tiflis. Nested in a high mountain valley with peaks rising all around, snow clad or snow patched, the city fills the valley and climbs up the slopes on either side. It is large, teeming with life, and under a clear Georgian sky was truly good to see.

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The care and attention given to the health of delegates was quite remarkable. Doctors and nurses appeared at the slightest sign of illness, and every possible step was taken for health and comfort. One of the delegates fell ill with influenza in the Donetz coalfield and was taken back to Moscow under the care of a doctor and a nurse, whose unremitting attention she received throughout the 36-hour journey. She was taken to the Kremlin Hospital where she was treated by the best physicians in Russia. This hospital, which is free to the workers, has better beds and furniture

than an expensive London nursing-home. The patients receive four excellent meals per day and unlimited quantities of milk in addition; the best caviare, such an expensive luxury in England, is served each morning for breakfast. There was a conspicuous absence of the atmosphere of scurry and overwork which is so prevalent in British hospitals, a fact which is undoubtedly due to the hours worked by the nurses—*six per day*—and to the paid holidays they get—two to six weeks, according to the strenuousness and danger of their work. Medical men have not the same hold as in this country; their prescription is attached to the medicine bottle, and is in Russian, not Latin.

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A striking feature everywhere was the simplicity and comradeship of the soldiers and police (militiamen as they are called). They regard themselves and are regarded by the workers just as workers. The police are in the Municipal Employees' Union. A soldier possesses all civilian rights and is encouraged to join a co-operative society; indeed, the army has special representation upon the local society as the regiment is a purchasing member. Soldiers, sailors and police salute when the International is being played: they do not salute officers. Officers and men of the Red Army are equal when off duty and at all times address each other as "Comrade." At the Friends of Soviet Russia Congress the chiefs of the Army and Navy mixed with soldiers, workers, peasants, Trade Union officials and members of the Soviet Government, as a perfectly united family, with joint responsibilities to the whole people and to the international working class.

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On leaving Moscow for home on November 30th, the Delegation received a wonderful send-off from a large crowd of workers and Red Army soldiers. Two hours before the time for our train the open space in front of the station was packed with workers and peasants, who had brought their banners and also a band, which enlivened the proceedings with revolutionary tunes. When the delegates arrived they were greeted with rousing cheers. Speeches were delivered by representatives of the Moscow Trade Unions and the Moscow garrison of the Red Army. Will Lawther and others made short but effective replies from the station steps thanking the workers of Russia for giving us such a splendid

time and congratulating them on the immense progress they had made. The enthusiasm of the crowd showed the heartiest goodwill towards the British workers, and messages were sent to them expressing hope and confidence in their power to throw off capitalist oppression. It is impossible to describe the thrill of seeing the entire length of the platform packed with a solid mass of Russian workers and soldiers shouting, cheering, singing, as the train carrying the delegates steamed out of the station. The final sounds which will live in our memory of Moscow were the slogans—"Long live the British Workers!" "Up the World Revolution!"—and the strains of the "International."

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What an awful business money is! Money in use on the homeward journey included English notes, American dollars, Dutch guilders and cents, German marks and pfennigs, Polish zlotys and groszy, and Russian roubles and kopecks.

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On our arrival at Berlin on December 2nd, we were greeted by representatives of the Red Front Fighters and the Central Executive Committee of the German Communist Party. They took us to the Headquarters of the German Communist Party and afterwards arranged a brief charabanc tour round the city. The hospitality and welcome of our Berlin comrades during the couple of hours we were in the city were greatly appreciated by the whole Delegation. We were given a hearty send-off at Berlin and again at Hanover, where a small but enthusiastic demonstration cheered us on our journey.

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The Hook of Holland was reached late on the night of December 2nd and at 8.38 a.m. on the following day we arrived in London, exactly 34 days after our departure. What a contrast there is everywhere! Capitalism rampant, as against Socialism being built up. But we come back with new courage and inspiration for the struggle.

XII

THE CONGRESS OF DELEGATIONS

The proposal that there should be a Joint Congress of the various delegations from all parts of the world was put forward by the British, and met with enthusiastic support from all the other delegations. The "Congress of Friends of the U.S.S.R." accordingly met on Thursday, November 10th, in the Colonnade Hall of the Trade Unions House. Before the Revolution this building was the meeting-place of the nobility, and the most brilliant society balls and receptions were held there. In one room where the provincial councils of the nobility used to meet, there are still preserved the chairs bearing the crests of the nobles, set at various levels in accordance with the status of each nobleman. In November, 1917, the building was taken over by the Moscow Trade Unions and since then it has been used for important Trade Union Congresses, while various rooms are used for the Moscow Provincial Trade Union Council, the Central Workers' Library, the Trade Union Bureau for the distribution of theatre tickets, etc.

At the Congress on November 10th, the Colonnade Hall was filled with nearly a thousand delegates from 43 separate countries, constituting the most widely representative Congress ever held in the history of the world, in spite of the fact that some Governments had succeeded in preventing the sending of delegates for the Tenth Anniversary celebrations. The Congress was formally opened by Melnichansky, and Will Lawther, as Chairman of the British Delegation, explained that the initiative had been taken by the British in the organisation of this Congress, because the British Delegation did not think it sufficient merely to participate in the celebrations of the Tenth Anniversary, but considered it also necessary for all delegations to meet and discuss concrete measures in defence of the first Workers' Republic against capitalist attacks.

After the election of a Presiding Committee and the Standing Orders Committee, and the adoption of the agenda, covering first the Achievements of the Ten Years, and secondly the War Danger, Mikhailov, Chairman of the Moscow Trade Union Council, greeted the Congress on behalf of the Moscow workers, stating that the Moscow workers were happy to realise that the Moscow of the Tsars, nobility, merchants and manufacturers, had now become the meeting-

place of International Labour. He noted also that at the time of the revolution in 1917 the Moscow Trade Unions had only 170,000 members, and that their membership was now 1,390,000; that the real wages in Moscow were now 37 per cent. above pre-war level; that industry in Moscow had reached, and in some sections had already exceeded, the pre-war level; while tremendous developments had taken place in educational and social organisation.

Rykov, Chairman of the Soviet Union Council of People's Commissaries—that is, the Prime Minister—had been invited to give a report on the ten years' work of the Soviet Government, and this report occupied the remainder of the evening session. In previous sections we have already referred to Rykov's remarks in connection with the extent to which the workers and peasants have been brought into the general administration of the country (section III), and also the figures given by him in regard to the economic progress of the last five years (section V). Rykov pointed out in his opening remarks that his report to the Congress was not merely an expression of friendship, but indicated that the Soviet Government felt a responsibility not only to the Russian Workers but also to the workers of every other country. He also pointed out that in their investigations of conditions in Soviet Russia the delegates must remember the heritage from the old Tsarist régime, and to realise the full achievements of the Revolution they must compare present conditions with past conditions in Russia, and not with present conditions in advanced capitalist countries. Apart from the economic points dealt with in section V., Rykov made a number of other interesting points, among which we may mention his insistence on the policy of developing industry to balance agricultural production; his special emphasis on co-operation as the best means for a gradual transformation of peasant farming into social farming; and the determination of the Soviet Government to prevent the development of a rich peasant class exploiting hired labour. In connection with the Government's Manifesto on the seven-hour day, he pointed out that within the last two years Soviet Russia had definitely reached the stage of "rationalisation," which under the capitalist system inevitably meant greater exploitation of the working class, but under a workers' government was necessarily bound up with a steady improvement in the conditions of the working class.

Rykov dealt at some length also with the question of the imprisonment of Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, against which protests had been made by certain sections of the working class in other countries. He pointed out that the struggle of the workers in Russia had not been limited to the actual revolutionary period of 1917, but had continued right up to the present and must continue in the future as long as Soviet Russia was surrounded by hostile capitalist States. In this revolutionary struggle certain Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had tried to set up alternative Governments, or had supported other elements hostile to the Soviet Government. Workers in other countries must realise that those Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who during the struggle had been definitely ranged against the Revolution must be subjected to repressive measures by those who are responsible for the defence of the Revolution. There were still within the Soviet Union some remnants of the old capitalist class, and also of the richer peasantry, who were always in latent opposition to the Socialist progress that was being made, and who were constantly being supported by international capitalist groups by financial and propaganda aid. In the transition period towards Socialist society, and particularly in the surrounding conditions of hostile capitalism, direct measures of coercion are absolutely unavoidable.

But this repression, though unavoidable, is not the main reason for the successful existence of the Workers' Government for the last ten years. The main reason of its success is that it is the most progressive type of State organisation in existence, and that the workers realise that it is securing a determined advance towards the human society of the future.

Perhaps the most important part of Rykov's speech in its bearing on the relations of Soviet Russia with other countries was the section in which he emphasised the absolute need for peace, and foreshadowed the disarmament proposals which have now been put before the Disarmament Conference of the League of Nations at Geneva. He also emphasised the fact that the Red Army was certainly not an organisation which could be exploited by anyone for militarist adventures; it was closely connected with the workers and peasants, and the education which it receives is an absolute guarantee against any attempt to use it for any war policy.

We may end this brief report of Rykov's speech with his own summing up of the position:—

“ In comparison with the old Tsarist Russia we have made a gigantic step forward. We have uprooted all the relics of Feudalism. We have destroyed private ownership of the means of production and transport. We have abolished private ownership of land. We have put political power into the hands of the workers. Science and technique in the Soviet State are instruments in the hands of the people for building up a Socialist Society. . . . All this does not mean that we have already traversed most of the road which leads to a Socialist order. Construction of Socialism has only just begun. In the course of the last ten years we have only made the first steps towards the organisation of a Socialist Society, and many more years of stubborn struggle will be required to complete this work. . . . We are convinced that the successes with regard to Socialist construction in our country will facilitate the struggle of the working class of the world for the reorganisation of the whole of society on a Socialist basis.”

Four further sessions of the Congress were held on the Friday and Saturday, November 11th and 12th. A resolution on the ten years' achievement was moved by a representative of the German Delegation; G. Waddell, President of the A.U.B.T.W., spoke in support on behalf of the British Delegation. It is impossible to give in detail the full list of speakers; it is sufficient to say that members of the delegations from France, Ireland, Scandinavia, China, Belgium, United States, Switzerland, Poland, Italy, Czechoslovakia, South Africa, Mongolia, and other countries, spoke in support of the resolution, which was carried unanimously and with the greatest of enthusiasm. The resolution declared, on behalf of the workers represented by the delegates, their immutable solidarity with the workers of the Soviet Union in their struggle to reorganise society on a new Socialist basis, and recorded the achievements of the ten years. The important passages in the resolution are as under:—

“ Industry is growing from year to year, and in spite of backward technique the U.S.S.R. is becoming industrialised. In industry and trade the Socialist element in the country's economy is steadily growing in strength. The intense concentration of wholesale and retail trade in the hands of the State and the Co-operative Movement gives great advantages to the workers and peasants as consumers.

“ New factories are springing up. The worn-out plant in the old factories is being renewed. Speedy progress is

being made in the electrification of the country, and the villages, kept in subjection under the Tsarist régime, are developing economically.

"In no other country in the world is such care taken of the workers' material, cultural and political position. In the U.S.S.R. alone the eight-hour day is an unassailable achievement of the working class. The proposed introduction of the seven-hour day, in spite of the economic weakness of the U.S.S.R., is one more example of the determination of the Soviet Government to improve the position of the working class. Labour Palaces, Garden Villages, and Rest Homes for workers, sanatoria, protection of motherhood and childhood, crèches, children's homes, clubs, libraries, all these are only indications of the fundamental tendency to raise the material and cultural level of the workers. The country where under Tsarism most of the population was illiterate is undergoing a gigantic cultural revolution. Ideas of solidarity and brotherhood of nations, respect for labour, and ideas of social justice are instilled into the minds of the young in school. Education, from the schools to the universities, has become accessible to workers and peasants, and the cultural level of the masses is growing day by day. In no other country in the world are such enormous sections of the population drawn into participation in the political and intellectual life of the country."

A resolution on the war danger was moved by J. Jagger, President of N.U.D.A.W., on behalf of the British Delegation, and supported by Henri Barbusse (France) and a number of other speakers from various countries. The important parts of the resolution, which was carried unanimously at the last session, ran as under:—

"We call upon all honest citizens of all countries, and on all manual and brain workers, to fight relentlessly the war preparations against the U.S.S.R., the country where the workers rule, no matter whence this attack be directed, by whom it be supported, or by what ideological slogans it be disguised.

"The Congress declares that the policy of the ruling capitalist classes is inevitably causing conflicts between the capitalist States, and a fierce struggle against workers' Russia. The Congress points out that the so-called League of Nations has shown itself in its true colours as a militant alliance of big predatory capitalist States, an alliance directed first and foremost against the U.S.S.R. . . .

"The Congress welcomes the peace policy of the Soviet Union and declares that war has been averted hitherto only

owing to the firm will for peace exerted by the Soviet Government. The Congress welcomes the initiative taken by the Soviet Government, which has adopted a genuine peace and disarmament platform in connection with the Disarmament Conference convened by the League of Nations. The Congress calls upon all workers and all honest opponents of imperialist war to support in every possible way the peace policy of the Soviet Government in order to expose to the full the deception practised by the League of Nations and by all organisations which are supporting it.

"We, the representatives of workers and peasants, of the revolutionary intelligentsia and of the oppressed nations; send out a call for courageous support of the U.S.S.R. and of the Chinese Revolution. Only systematic organisational and agitational preparation for action can be recognised as honest struggle for the cause of Socialism, for the abolition of capitalist wars. The Congress calls upon all workers and peasants, upon all genuine advocates of peace, all true supporters of culture and civilisation, to prepare for the struggle by all means against war directed against the U.S.S.R."

The delegates from all countries undoubtedly regarded the Congress as one of the most important in the history of the world. It consolidated their realisation that Soviet Russia was the first Workers' State, that Soviet Russia was developing steadily and even rapidly towards the full establishment of a Socialist society, and that the workers' organisations in every other country must rally to the support of Soviet Russia in defence of the first victory that had been won in the fight of the working class to overthrow the capitalist order of society. All the speakers emphasised the fact that the progress of the workers in other countries was now essentially bound up with the successful development of Soviet Russia; that its further successes during the coming years would put the Russian workers and peasants in a position immeasurably superior to that of the workers in capitalist countries, and would be a tremendous incentive and inspiration to the workers in those countries in their struggle against their own capitalist masters.

In concluding our report, we wish to say that it is our considered opinion that the resolutions adopted and speeches made at the Congress are an accurate reflection of the state of affairs to-day. From the whole course of our investigations into every aspect of life in Soviet Russia we are convinced that in no other country in the world is there such widespread

participation of the workers, in the towns and in the village in the whole political, economic, and social life of the country. The material resources of the country are being developed on a careful and well thought-out plan for the benefit of the workers and peasants. The Soviet Government has the enthusiastic support of an overwhelming proportion of the population, which realises both the sincerity of its policy and the practical successes it has achieved.

In such circumstances the only danger is the danger of war, of imperialist attacks on Russia because it is Workers' Russia, because it is an inspiration to the workers in other countries and to the races suffering from imperialist oppression. We consider it our duty to put the facts regarding Soviet Russia before the British workers, and to ask them, in their own interest and in the interest of the working class of the world, to offer a determined and united resistance against the British imperialist policy of hostility towards Soviet Russia which may at any moment break out into open war.