

Russia To-Day

An Australian Trade
Union Delegate's
Report

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CONCLUSION.

IN summing up the progress made by the Russian workers it must be remembered that as yet they have had only six years of peace in which to carry on their work of socialist construction.

Already, however, it is possible to see in outline the framework of the new social order wherein the whole of humanity, free from class divisions and antagonisms, will march forward as one united whole.

No longer in the Soviet Union is profit-making the incentive to production. All industrial production is conducted according to plan and is determined by the needs and resources of the nation. In the workshop the conditions of labor are the first consideration.

No longer in the Soviet Union does the process of industrialisation of the country mean the intensification of the social evils inherent in capitalist society, wars, unemployment, crime, prostitution, etc.

The Workers' Republic can have nothing in common with the various capitalist imperialisms which conduct wars of aggression and oppress the hundreds of millions of colonial and semi-colonial peoples. For this reason their representatives at the League of Nations disarmament discussions are the only ones who can propose the total abolition of armaments. The only struggle in which the Workers' Republic can participate is armed defence against attacks directed by capitalist governments.

Unemployment no longer has terrors for the workers, nor have accident, sickness or old age,



A Red Army Soldier returns to his village.

etc., for the benefits of social insurance and the trade unions guarantee absolute protection against want. The unemployment which does exist differs from the unemployment of capitalist nations. There still survives from the days of Czardom millions of country poor, many of whom drift into the city. Industry, developing with giant strides, absorbs great numbers of them, but it is in the villages, where unemployment has its origin, that the problem will be solved. To this end vigorous measures are being employed to improve agricultural production and industrialise the countryside. Also it is anticipated that the recent campaign to establish the seven-hour working day in all industries will mean, through the introduction of shift work, the absorption of one-third of the present number of town unemployed.

The new economic and social status of women has tremendously reduced prostitution. It has become in Russia a crime for which the man and not the woman is held responsible.

The continual improvement in material conditions for the mass of people means a progressive reduction in most forms of crime; the removal of economic insecurity and the extension of opportunities to "fit" into the social organisation eradicate crime at its base.

Despite the necessity for retaining as great a surplus as possible from production for improving the technical basis and extending industry, socialist organisation in Russia is very rapidly advancing the economic and cultural conditions of the workers. This is witnessed in many different fields. Housing, which was neglected during the years of war, revolution and counter-revolution, is being improved rapidly.

In every centre visited I saw extensive building operations in progress. In some places there were large blocks of workers' houses being built. Often each block was an organised unit including co-operative stores, a school, laundry, club, etc. The

houses compared very favorably with the workers' houses of other countries. Rooms are large and airy and fitted in the most up-to-date manner.

The workers of Russia have entered into the spirit of cultural development and spend most of their leisure hours at the workers' club or performing some useful function in connection with the work of the Communist Party, trade unions, soviet organs, etc. In their previous squalor many Russian workers had been addicted to drink, but to see a drunkard in the streets of Russia's cities to-day is an unusual event.

Already education has become enormously extended and there is commencing a new and higher period of culture in which science and art have already made many notable advances. There survive, of course, many of the worst features of the old order in but little diminished intensity; for example, superstition of the most backward kind is still prevalent. In regard to religion it is evident that it is still deeply rooted in the mass of Russian people. In Moscow and Kharkov I visited big churches while services were in progress. They were attended by fairly large congregations. However, while it is true that there is no hindrance to the free practice of religion, it is evident that a considerable amount of propaganda is carried on by various organisations against religion.

It is obvious, from the general spirit of solidarity displayed, that the workers of the Soviet Union are quite conscious of their role as the builders of socialist society. The population is intensely interested in all political and economic questions and in every field of activity, from factory meetings to mass demonstrations, a tremendous enthusiasm can be observed.

Mass demonstrations of the Russian workers are a thing to marvel at. In Baku I attended a demonstration in celebration of the International Day of Youth. All the young men and women of Baku marched through one of the public squares, past

leading members of the Soviet, Red Army, trade unions and Communist Party. They marched in units representing various factories, Young Communist League, Society for Chemical Defence, etc. Slogans were shouted to them from the tribune as they marched past and the demonstrators shouted in reply. In Russia the workers do not look on at demonstrations; they join in as demonstrators, and they exhibit enthusiasm such as one would not see in any other part of the world.

There is equal enthusiasm displayed in the factories, where the workers enter whole-heartedly into the task of building up the productive forces and preparing the technical basis of the new society.

We must watch closely the progress of the Russian workers, for in their work of socialist construction is outlined to us the tasks which we ourselves have yet to face.

The Russian Workers' Republic to-day stands as a beacon light to the workers of the whole world.

Workers of the World Unite!