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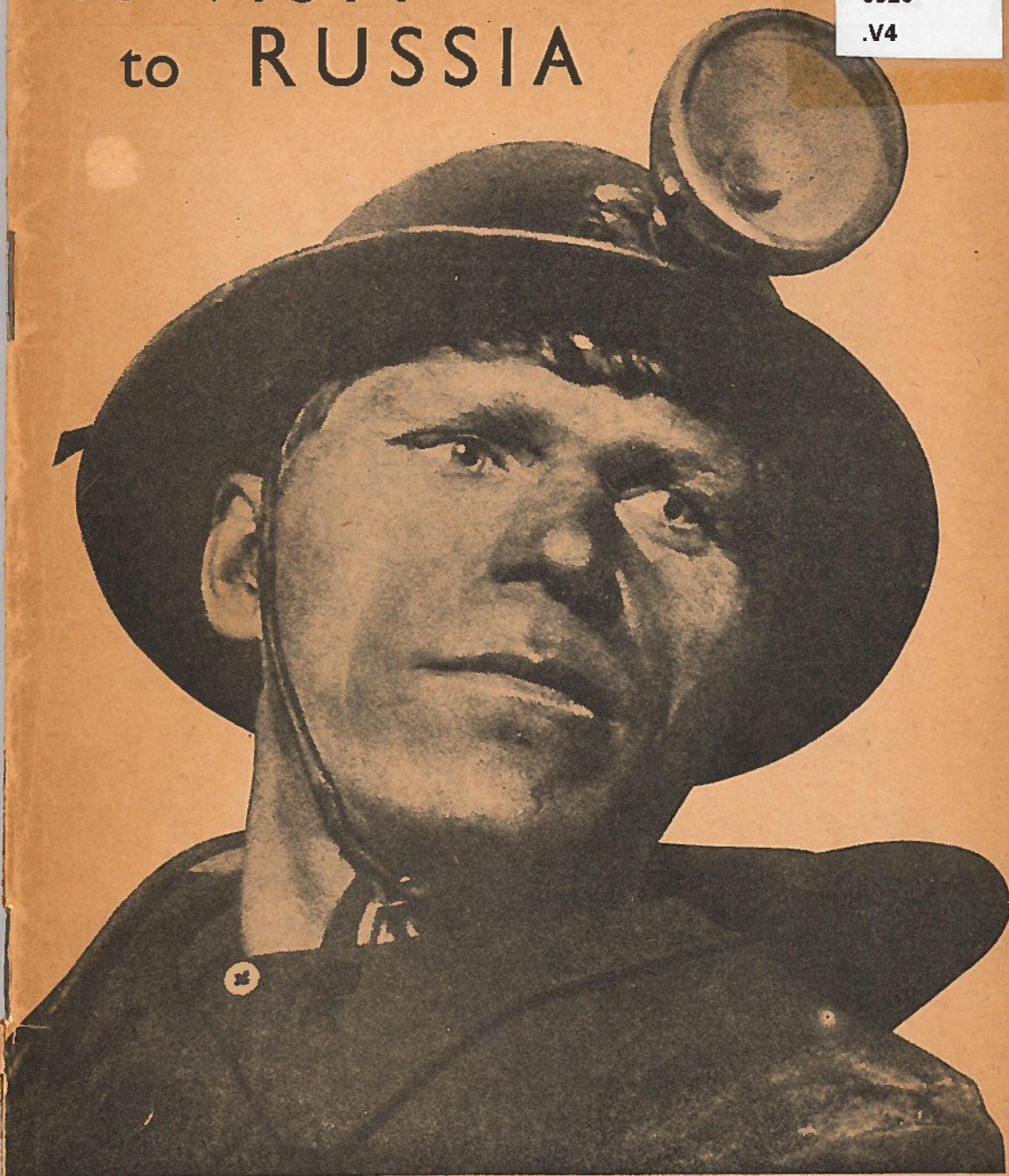
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A VISIT to RUSSIA

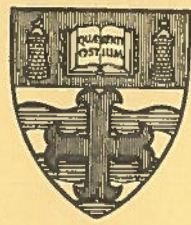


A Report of Durham Miners
on their Visit to the U.S.S.R.

DURHAM MINERS' ASSOCIATION

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REPORT OF A VISIT TO SOVIET RUSSIA

FOREWORD

In conjunction with the Mineworkers' Federation of Great Britain, the Durham Miners' Association, when approached to send a delegation to Russia, readily assented. The conflicting statements as to the efforts being made and the possibilities of Russia founding a Socialist State in the midst of an antagonistic world capitalism was considered to be a sufficient justification for sending a delegation to investigate for themselves as to whether the venture was being successful or otherwise.

Animated with a real spirit of inquiry, our delegation went out as students with open minds to observe and learn lessons from the projects and experiments being conducted in U.S.S.R. in its efforts to organise its social and economic life on a co-operative basis. They have been, have seen for themselves, have formed conclusions, as we expected they would, and have carefully written a report. Our Executive Committee have been impressed with this report, and they have decided to have the document printed and published.

The report is written with commendable clarity, and is well worth reading and thinking over. It is desirable that both the biased and unbiased should read it. It makes no pretence at being a complete survey of the social and economic conditions of mining in Russia, the visit was far too brief for any such purpose. Nevertheless, the report indicates a sincere desire to understand and discloses powers of close observation. It fully appreciates the enormous task which confronted the U.S.S.R. from the beginning, yet it has been seen that formidable as was the heritage handed to the people of Russia, it has been tackled with such courage and faith that they are winning through to the establishment of a new social order.

The report is not a vague generalisation on abstract ideas, but is a witness to concrete results from applied principles. One of the delegation had had the privilege of a visit to Russia in 1931, and had, therefore, the advantage of being able to compare conditions of 1931 with those prevailing in 1936. The report bears testimony to the change.

The observations of the delegation regarding methods and conditions in the Russian mines need no comment of mine. They were all practical miners, and the bulk of their time in Russia was spent in making close investigations down the various mines which they visited. They were quite capable of forming unbiased opinions for themselves.

It is definitely noted that each step in the progress of Russia benefits the common people. It could not be otherwise, as they are all shareholders in the State and any benefit to the State is a benefit to the individual. They are gradually raising the standard of living of all the people because they are not dominated by the motive which is the force in capitalist society, the making of private profits. Rent, Interest and Profit are not the goals to which all effort is directed.

In contradistinction to Britain, the introduction of science and machinery to industry is welcomed by the workers because the burdens of toil are reduced thereby and the industrial progress is reflected in an improved status for all, instead of the increased wealth being diverted to the benefit of an unproductive few.

The report fully realises that Russia is still in the throes of a transition period, but they are forging ahead with courage. Transport is being improved; indeed, the whole of the State is being organised with the faith and assurance that poverty can be banished. Of special interest to miners are the parts of the report dealing with Trade Unions, Holidays with Pay, Pensions, Workmen's Compensation, Hours of Labour, Safety in Mines and Mines Inspections.

We hope that the report will be widely read, not only by the miners of Durham, but by mineworkers throughout Great Britain. It ought to be read by all students of the working class movement, as it is full of ideas as well as facts. It will engender in the minds of all a great desire for world peace and a kindlier feeling towards the workers of other lands.

We appreciate the kindness and assistance given to the delegation by our Russian friends.

JOHN E. SWAN,
General Secretary, Durham Miners' Association.

Red Hill,
Durham City.

February 28, 1937.

A VISIT TO SOVIET RUSSIA

IN submitting to you this report of our visit to Soviet Russia, we desire to say at once that we have received no special training as investigators, and are fully conscious of our limitations in putting adequately before you the many matters dealt with in the Report. We hope, nevertheless, that we may claim to be practical men, that we have fair judgment, a sense of values and are possessed in some measure of the hard common sense of our own people. We hope, also, that we are not devoid of a sense of humour, a quality which we consider to be not the least of the attributes that are necessary to an investigation of this character.

In this Report we have tried to avoid sensationalism, or any straining after literary effect, and have endeavoured to record our impressions as simply, frankly, and as honestly as we possibly can. We adopted the same attitude in our dealings with our Russian comrades. When we disagreed with them we told them so. On the other hand, when we found conditions which, in our opinion, were superior to those of our own country, we expressed our views with the same directness. We were pitmen among pitmen; and we found that plain speaking, provided it was based on a balanced judgment, was greatly appreciated.

THE OUTWARD VOYAGE

We left Hay's Wharf, Tilbury, on the m.s. "Sibier," on Saturday, October 31. There were forty-three passengers on board, consisting chiefly of tourists and Russian citizens. The latter were returning to Russia after completing their business in this country, and among them were members of the Lenigrad Soviet, or City Council, who had been visiting London in order to study the work of the London County Council. An interesting group among the passengers was an American family of Russian extraction—a mother and two girls. They were on their way to join the father of the family, who was at work in the Soviet Union. Both girls had been born in New York City, and the eldest, a girl of 17, was not at all keen on the prospect which was opening out before her. Another interesting personality was an English engineer who had worked in Russia three years ago. Asked why he was returning, he said: "Oh, I don't know; except that there's something in the spirit of the whole thing that pulls at one. Things are improving, and, given peace, the country will go right ahead."

As compared with 1931, we noticed certain changes in the ship's arrangements. The wines, sweets and cigarettes sold on board were now of Russian make; while the little flags of the Soviet Union, which are normally used for table decorations, now had a companion Union Jack. As in 1931, the food was remarkably good, and we were greatly impressed with the cleanliness of the ship and the friendliness of the

captain and crew. The food of the crew was all that could be desired and their sleeping quarters were clean and commodious. They had their own rest room, known as "Lenin's Corner," and their relations with the commander were not only friendly, but in every way conducive to that comradeship which one expects to find in a Socialist state. The captain, who was at one time in command of s.s. "Krassin," had received high honours from the Soviet Government, and, in 1925, had been decorated by the German Government for saving a German ship and 160 lives.

After running into some rough weather on the first few days of our voyage, during which most of the delegation suffered severely from sea-sickness, we entered the Kiel Canal on Monday, November 2. A number of vessels, most of which were flying the Nazi flag, were passing through at the time; and we noticed that, as the German ships passed each other, the pilots gave the Nazi salute in precise military style. On our part, although we repeatedly waved a greeting to them, we could get no response beyond a half-hearted gesture or two, and it seemed as if the Germans had been told to pay no attention to the Soviet flag; a striking change from 1931, when the people on the canal banks often enthusiastically greeted the ships of the U.S.S.R. We passed one vessel from the old country, and hearty cheers were given and received.

Life on board was varied and entertaining, and on the Monday evening we arranged a concert. This was very much enjoyed, many splendid items being given by the passengers and crew. One of the crew, a splendid dancer, gave us a very fine example of a Russian dance, and the ship's company sang a number of rollicking shanties. We could not let this event pass without doing our bit for the old country, and our songs, which included a number of north-country airs, were well received. A very happy evening was terminated by our joining hands and singing "Auld Lang Syne" and, for the captain, "He's a Jolly Good Fellow."

The voyage on board the Soviet ship was a happy experience; and, before disembarking at Leningrad, we expressed our thanks to the captain and crew in a letter which we all signed, and which seemed to please them very much. We very deeply appreciated the friendly and courteous way in which we were treated, and whenever we think of our visit to Soviet Russia we shall always have very happy memories of the outward voyage in the m.s. "Sibir."

IN LENINGRAD

A COMPARISON WITH 1931

On the Thursday morning we disembarked at Leningrad, and were given a welcome to the Soviet State by the officials of the Leningrad Trade Union, whose band played us a welcome to the U.S.S.R. Besides being a beautiful city, Leningrad is one of the largest industrial centres in the Soviet Union and, incidentally, it is

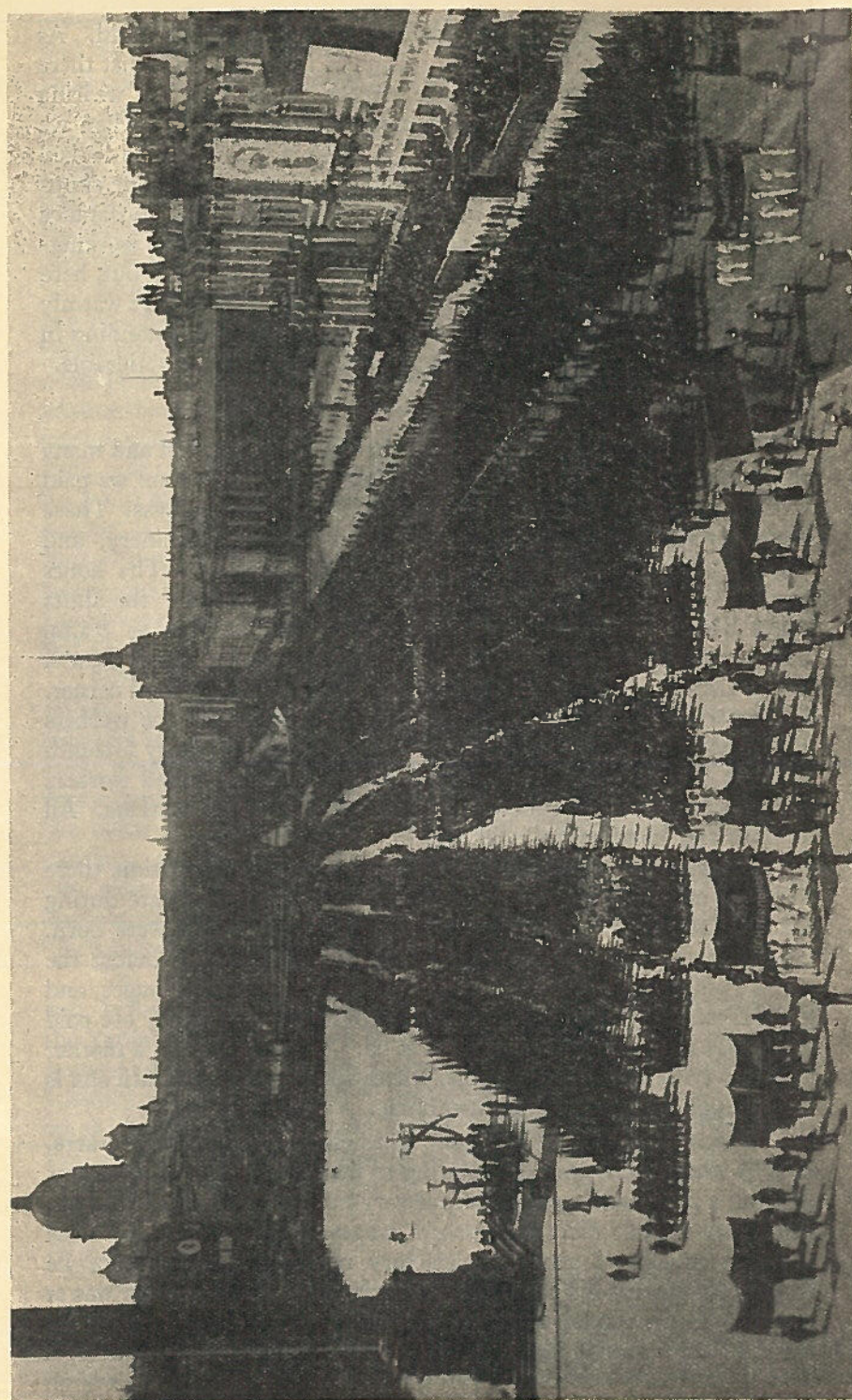
farther north than any other large industrial city in the world. As compared with 1931, our first impression of Leningrad was that there were decided improvements in the streets, shops, and the wearing apparel of the people, and this impression was confirmed when we made a tour of the streets later in the evening. The people looked happier, better fed and much more active and alert, while the shops were stocked with all kinds of goods and presented an appearance very much like that of our own shops at Christmastime. In a working-class city like Leningrad there is not a great variety in dress, but, here again, many improvements were noted, and all the people were warmly clad and booted, the children and young people being outstanding in this respect. Scent and lipstick, while not general, were noticeable.

THE KIROV WORKS

We saw several new factories in the course of erection and many old ones being enlarged and reconstructed. In the afternoon we paid a visit to the Red Putilov Works, now called the Kirov Works. These works produce tractors, rolling stock and heavy machinery, and employ 32,000 workers, of whom 16,000 are women. The hours worked are eight per day, including one hour for meals, the shifts being 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., 4 p.m. to 12 p.m. and 12 p.m. to 8 a.m. Before entering or leaving the factory every worker must show a Trade Union card with his or her photograph in the left-hand corner. Some parts of the factory work a two-shift system, and the workers have a holiday on every sixth day. Wages are paid on every fifteenth day, the earnings being 316 roubles per month for skilled workers and an average of 145 roubles per month for unskilled workers. All off-days and holidays are paid for.

We were informed that in the factory at the present time there were 900 expectant mothers, who would be given special care during the pre-natal stage and for some time after their babies were born. Expectant mothers are given light work for four months before the time of childbirth, with no reduction in their standard of wages, and for two months before and after the birth of the child, they are paid full wages and not allowed to work at all. If she so desires, a mother may also be sent to a Rest Home, where she may remain until she is well enough to return to her own home.

In this particular factory there were eight categories of workers, each of whom were graded according to their skill. All the work was done on a piece basis, and there was very little absenteeism. Sickness and injury did not affect the workers' wages, but if a worker lost time and was unable to give a satisfactory reason for his absence he received only what his piece rates brought him for the days he was at work. As is the custom in this country, sick notes are produced when work is lost through illness, but in Russia, unlike this country, a worker invariably receives his full wages when he loses work through illness.



We were informed that the practice of providing free medical accessories to the workers had now ceased. Investigation had proved that much more than was actually required was asked for, and cases had been discovered of workers having hoarded supplies which they did not really want; so to counteract this non-social attitude, a small charge of one rouble per month per prescription had been made to each applicant for the medicine or ointment which they received. The factory employed thirty-two doctors to attend to the needs of the workers employed there, and much attention was given to preventive measures, special clinics having been built within the grounds of the factory so that attention could be given to workers who were suffering in the early stages of a disease.

The menu in the workers' restaurant showed that a good variety of food was provided for the workmen. Meals were served to all who desired to have them and the charge made was in accordance with the amount of wages received by each particular diner. Naturally, those who earned big wages could afford the better quality meals. We examined the food and the factory kitchens, and found the food to be both good and appetising and the kitchens clean and well kept. The following menu shows one of the better quality meals:—

<i>1st Course</i>		<i>Roubles</i>
Soup with Meat		1½
Peas and Pork Soup		1½
Chicken Soup		1½
<i>2nd Course</i>		
Cutlets		3.05
White Fish (fried)		3.05
Chops and Potatoes		3.05
Beef		3.05
<i>3rd Course</i>		<i>Copecks</i>
Baked Apples and Syrup		80
Cream and Jelly		80

This meal would cost just over five roubles, and a better quality meal, which would include herring or ham, would cost 7½ roubles.

The cheaper meals, the quality of which was not so good as in the first menu, included:—

<i>1st Course</i>		<i>Copecks</i>
Soup, or		22
Peas and Potatoes		35
Borch Soup		55
<i>2nd Course</i>		
Cutlets with Porridge		95
Melton Chops, or		40
Porridge with Butter, or		69
Fried Fish and Potatoes, or	1 Rb. 15 Cpk.	
Pork Chops	1 Rb. 65 Cpk.	
<i>3rd Course</i>		<i>Copecks</i>
Fruit Salad, or		38
Coffee		35

(100 Copecks = one Rouble)

For the worker technicians, the most skilled of all the workers, meals were provided which cost between nine and ten roubles, and special meals were also provided for those workers who suffered from stomach troubles or were in need of a special diet. The worker who earned low wages, therefore, could still obtain a substantial meal at prices which were within his reach, and it was obvious that the meals were appetising and enjoyed by the workers.

We discovered later that the majority of the children in the children's crèches were those of the poorer paid workers, and that the worker's Trade Union paid for the majority of the children who were cared for in these crèches, the cost being from twenty-five to thirty-five roubles per head per month. The chairman of the works frankly admitted that the problem of the women presented many difficulties, and it was considered a very important question. There were not enough skilled people to cater for work of this kind.

The social side of the works was catered for by a huge worker's club, which had not been erected in 1931, and was still incomplete at the time of our visit. Many aspects of social life were reflected here, including the production of opera and ballet dancing; and, at the invitation of the Moscow Ward of the Leningrad Soviet, we visited the club on the eve of the Revolution celebrations, when, after the speech making was finished, the soldiers and airmen of the Red Army and the children of the Pioneer Movement gave a concert. To see the workers at these meetings, to watch the dancing and playing of the army units and to hear their singing was to understand just how keen these people feel about the construction of their new order.

MOSCOW

THE MEETING IN THE OPERA HOUSE

We left Leningrad on Friday morning, November 6, by the Moscow express. This train is called the "Red Arrow," and is manned entirely by young Communists. Every facility was provided on the train for the comfort and convenience of the passengers, and the service was very good. We arrived in Moscow at 11.30 a.m., and were met at the station by the officials of the Coalminers' Union. At the invitation of the Moscow Trade Unions we attended the Opera House (now called the Bolshoi Theatre) to hear an address given by M. I. Kalinin, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. All the important members of the Presidium, including Stalin, were present. Stalin was dressed in a kahki coloured tunic and looked remarkably fit and well. He received a great reception, and there was no mistaking the affection the people had for him. Those newspapers who have reported him to be a sick man would have had a great surprise had they seen how well and fit he looked. The lighting arrangements were very good indeed, and on the stage Red Army units

formed a bodyguard. Feature decorations were everywhere, red predominating.

Kalinin, in his report, made important statements on Fascism, on the recent Trotskyite-Zinovyevite trial and on the need for increasing the production of wheat and other agricultural produce. He said:—

"There is reason to believe that Fascism will not succeed in capturing power in Spain in spite of the fact that it is supported by all the reactionary powers there. The whole counter-revolution has united under the flag of Fascism against the Spanish people. Colossal means are directed to the strangling of the heroic defenders of the Spanish Republic, and yet the Spanish people are showing exceptional resistance. This shows what mighty forces are latent in it. The Fascists are sowing the wind and will reap the whirlwind which sooner or later will sweep away the régime of capitalism and its frantic defenders."

Kalinin's remarks on the trial were very interesting.

"The picture that was unfolded at the Court Sessions aroused a feeling of consternation and indignation on the part of every Soviet citizen, and, indeed, it could not be otherwise. It is difficult to find stronger words than those with which the accused branded their crimes. The betrayers of the party, traitors of the Fatherland, were associated with the basest enemies of the Soviet State; they fulfilled the instructions of foreign secret service, participated in subversive acts and wrecking, organised a number of attempts upon the proletariat, killed Comrade Kirov and on the day after the murder wrote sympathetic obituary notices of his death. Worst of all, they stood in the guard of honour and, in front of all, they gave expression to their false grief.

"The climax was the court trial, where each accused the other and where, before the people, all repented of their crimes. But here, too, as if to place the seal of villainy on the last days of their lives, they deceived the court and deceived the people. The question involuntarily arises, how could people degenerate to such a life? Lenin once said that any opposition, if it is not combated in time, inexorably rolls down into the embrace of the counter-revolution.

"At the trial the criminals painstakingly tried to show that they had no platform, no programme of activity and all they sought was an empty striving for power, and that, having beheaded the Soviet power, they would have continued its policy. Are these not tales for children? Who will believe that people who had betrayed Marxism, who had become the agents of the Fascist secret service, would desire to limit their criminal activities merely to removing the people who are hateful to them?

"They needed these tales as a smoke-screen behind which they wanted to hide their counter-revolutionary activities and their political programme of action directed against Socialism and the people. And, indeed, who will believe that Trotsky and those who were with him had no programme? They had a programme, but it was impossible for them to show it to the people, impossible for them to publish it, for its publication would reveal to the most inexperienced person in politics that it was a programme of counter-revolution. It is not the first time that counter-revolution has hidden itself behind (Left) blankets.

"People look for a written document—a futile task. The old proverb says, 'Tell me who your friends are, and I will tell you what you

are.' The connection of the Trotskyites with the Fascists and Fascist methods of struggle—are they not a document? That is just where the matter lies. Such documents are not written on paper, but are drawn up under four eyes and agreed upon in whispers, and their essence is the restoration of the capitalist order in our country. No matter how his bourgeoisie adherents whitewash him in Europe, no matter how they slur over the facts, Trotsky will not succeed in getting away from the fact that the Trotskyites are a fighting detachment of the international counter-revolution, a detachment capable of any villainy, of any infamy against Socialism.

"The enemies of the Soviet people did not succeed, and will not succeed, in tearing out of the hands of the party the victorious banner of Marxism and Leninism. No matter how our enemies rage, they are powerless to halt the mighty tread of Socialism. The party of Lenin-Stalin is strong and monolithic as never before. It is firmly leading the country on to a joyful, happy life. With such a party our Soviet people are invincible, and will be able to defend their interests no matter who may attack them."

Dealing with the need for increased agricultural production, Kalinin said that they must aim at a production of 7,000,000,000–8,000,000,000 poods, for the increase in the population made that necessary. The yearly nett increase in births was 3,500,000, and soon the Soviet Union would be within reach of a population numbering 200,000,000 persons. Stalin did not speak, and the report was enthusiastically received by the audience. Judging from the applause they received, one got the impression that Stalin and Kaganovitch were the most popular leaders.

After the report was given the members of the Moscow Soviet left the stage, and it was cleared for the concert which followed. The concert was given by workers, children, Red Army soldiers, Cossacks from the Don and Kuban, the Moscow Trade Union Choir and the Ballet Company of the Bolshoi Theatre. The entertainment was of the highest type, so much so that it is difficult to convey our appreciation of the performances. They were magnificent, and the colours, singing and dancing were most fascinating. To see these children give nearly an hour's performance and to see the enthusiasm of the people in the six-tiered opera house was to witness an aspect of life in Soviet Russia which was both startling and revealing. The children of the Soviet Union are the new aristocracy of Russia, and the cultural development of those we saw that night was of a very high standard. The Russian people are winning through to better things; and while in that process hard things had to be done and harsh measures sometimes adopted, the difficult times are now passed, and, in the words of Stalin, "life is becoming more happy and joyous."

THE CELEBRATIONS

THE MARCH THROUGH THE RED SQUARE

On the morning of the 7th we were early astir, for the celebrations were to be held on that day. We were taken by a pre-arranged route, which had been reserved solely for those who were to occupy stands in the square, and we arrived in our places at 9.45 a.m. Foreign

Embassy representatives, tourists, and the workers who had been elected to represent their fellow workmen had all to travel by this route, and it would have been utterly impossible for any unauthorised person to be present at the celebrations, for the organisation was a very efficient one. The Russian workers had to show not only their admittance cards but their factory passports containing their photographs, and our own credentials were examined four times, as were those of all other persons.

We had a splendid view of the Red Square, which presented a grim sight. The Square itself was plain and austere and the decorations on the buildings were simple and dignified. All sections of the defence forces of the U.S.S.R.—the navy, army and air force—were massed in perfect formation throughout the whole length of the huge arena, and behind them were representatives of the workers from all parts of Russia. The streets leading to the Square were filled with workers' militia, and at the moment their flags and banners were the only splash of colour to break the greyness of the morning. Women moved in and out of the assembled visitors and workers, selling hot coffee, sandwiches, fruit, chocolate and cigarettes, while high above, on the Kremlin Tower, floated the red flag. To our left stood Lenin's mausoleum. Just in front of us stood the Spanish delegation, about twenty-four persons in all, including three wounded men and four women fighters. At least six of the delegation carried bouquets of flowers, and one of the wounded walked with the aid of crutches. They were all fine alert looking people, who attracted much attention and were the cause of much comment. Later, when the workers marched past, the cheers for the Spanish people were deafening.

As 10 o'clock drew near an expectant hush fell upon the huge crowd and the band commenced to get their instruments ready. The Kremlin clock started to strike, and the echo had barely died away when the massed bands struck up the "Internationale." A brief silence followed, and then a horseman galloped out of the far Kremlin Gate right across the Red Square. It was Voroshilov, the people's Commissar for the defence of the U.S.S.R. and Marshal of the Soviet Union. He proceeded to extend a welcome to each unit of the army in turn, and each unit replied with its own particular slogan. Then he rode to the side entrance and made a detour right round and back into the Square. The cheering was tremendous. It was like thunder. Time and time again the workers cheered as the Marshal addressed a few brief words to them. His inspection finished, he dismounted and addressed the troops:—

"The nineteenth year of the power of the Soviet will go down in history as the year of the creation of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R., which the people are correctly calling after its inspirer and creator, the Stalinist Constitution. The victories of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. are magnificent, and they will steadily grow and multiply. They arouse feelings of joy in our brothers, the toilers of the world, and the gaze of the oppressed nations of

all countries, of all advanced, all honest people of the world, is fixed with love and hope on the country of Socialism, on the country of freed, victorious labour.

"The nations of the world are feeling more and more sharply the approach of a new imperialist war, and the worst enemies of the toilers—the imperialists of every shade and denomination—are continuing their frenzied preparations for new pillage and usurpations. Implacable enemies are preparing an attack on the U.S.S.R. They dream of reducing our flourishing Fatherland to a ruin, of ravaging our prosperous Socialist cities and villages, of making slaves of the free citizens of the great Soviet Union.

"The progressive peoples of all lands fully realise that the Soviet State is a powerful bulwark of peace throughout the world. We want peace in order to continue the steady progress along the road of national well-being, along the road of unchanging Socialist success. We are fighting for peace in the interests of all humanity, but while defending the cause of peace, the Soviet Government is ceaselessly working to strengthen the defence of its country, and never will our enemies succeed in crossing the inviolate borders of the Soviet land."

His words brought forth thunderous applause. Immediately he had finished, the march past of the armed forces began. It was an impressive sight. For an hour and a-half the military parade passed through the Square; foot soldiers, cavalry, artillery, naval units, motor-cyclists, tanks (large and small), anti-aircraft guns and armoured cars all marched through in turn. Overhead we could see scores of aeroplanes—huge four-engined types to single-seaters—and, suddenly, out of the blue, shot twelve peculiarly shaped single-seater aeroplanes, for all the world like flying fishes. The speed of these small 'planes was terrific.

As soon as the military parade ceased, the march past of the workers began. This part of the parade was perhaps the most impressive of all, over 1,500,000 people taking part in the march through the Square. They marched in nine columns of six to eight abreast, and almost every other worker carried an emblem—a model of some article produced in the factory, some produce of the earth, or a red flag. Among the things carried in model form were 'planes, tractors, ships, railway locomotives, buses, dynamos, dirigibles, wheat, cotton, rubber, textiles, apples, grapes, cucumbers and other fruits and vegetables too numerous to mention. Coal, gold, iron-ore, everything found in or on the earth seemed to be held aloft. It was an amazing sight—a harvest festival on a huge scale.

Slogans and placards bearing huge photos of the Soviet leaders were carried by the score, and humorous pictures on Fascism created much laughter. One huge banner, borne by a dozen workers, read as follows:—

"The future stretches straight and shining before us—a future where old age and poverty has no terrors, where the treasures of culture are spread out for everyone to share and where all this and all the increase in well-being that daily makes itself felt is assured and guaranteed by the new Stalin Constitution."

From 12 till 4 o'clock they marched, nearly 1,500,000 of them, all humble workers with an aim and purpose in life. They marched out of the Red Square and into the future.

THE AIR FORCE

Moscow's 3,600,000 inhabitants live in twenty-three districts or wards, and on Sunday, November 8, we were invited to visit the Stalin Ward and see the airport belonging to the district. There were thirty-five aeroplanes there, but the aerodrome was not yet completed. In this ward were 300 fully trained pilots, 347 persons who were in training as pilots, 800 who were learning to become parachutists and a further 150 who were in training as expert gliders. All are normally employed in the different factories, and workers of both sexes are taught after their shift at the factory is completed. They learn not only the technical side of aviation, but how to fly, to manipulate gliders and to use a parachute. The young men and women are given equal opportunities to become fully qualified pilots, and the parachutists are taught to leap with complete military equipment. We witnessed an exhibition of flying, gliding and parachuting, including the towing and release of gliders by aeroplanes, and we were informed of one particular exhibition known as the ghost-train and consisting of one aeroplane towing five gliders; the weather was too bad to allow of this particular exhibition, but we were told that it was a regular part of the training.

The air quarters were crudely constructed, but the equipment seemed of good quality. All the money necessary to purchase the equipment and aeroplanes was raised from the workers in the ward by voluntary subscriptions, and we were informed that so great was the demand of the workers to learn every aspect of aviation that as a reward for their good work in production, the different factories and workshops sent their best workers to be trained in aviation. The dress of the worker-airmen and airwomen was very neat and attractive, and both sexes looked remarkably smart and alert when dressed in their uniforms. We were informed that this desire to fly was spreading to many parts of the U.S.S.R., and in no case was the Government responsible for the capital involved, the workers themselves buying and maintaining the airport. Here we have an aspect of the workers' lives which is very little spoken of, but one which is very important, for it shows the facilities provided for the ordinary worker and the immense reserve of fully qualified young men and women air pilots which the huge country will have in a few years' time. There was no mistake about young Russia becoming air-minded. Their enthusiasm was remarkable, and we noticed that at the Red Square celebrations the air cadets were wildly cheered.

THE RED ARMY

On Monday, November 9, we visited the Army Headquarters. No soldiers live here, and they are not barracks in the ordinary sense,

but combined clubs and schools where all phases of army technique are taught. The men and commanders in this club are on equal footing: on parade they are soldiers, off parade they are comrades. We had the opportunity of putting questions to both men and commanders on the different aspects of army life, and it may be of interest to record these:—

- Q. Is military service compulsory, and at what age do recruits join the army?
A. Yes; service in the army is compulsory. The age for service was 21 years, but has now been reduced to 19 years. We lowered the age because the development of thought and culture, and the increase in the general well-being of the people enabled us to enlist strong, active lads at 19 years.
- Q. Has the international situation been responsible for the change in any way?
A. Yes; partly responsible.
- Q. What is the length and terms of service?
A. For infantry, two years; cavalry, three years; air force, three years; and the navy, four years. The pay is very low—8 roubles and 15 copecks per month. No soldier serving under two years is allowed an annual holiday, but is allowed to see his friends or relatives for a day if permission is sought from the commander.
- Q. Have they any opportunity to learn a trade in the army?
A. Yes; courses are provided where workers can learn tractor driving, motoring and mechanics; but they are not compulsory.
- Q. Are they ever unemployed when they come out of the army?
A. No; never. We cannot get sufficient workers.
- Q. Are they educated in a practical way?
A. Yes.
- Q. Are these courses held after the ordinary hours of soldiering?
A. Yes. A man is a soldier for seven hours per day, and after that his time is free.
- Q. What cultural facilities are provided?
A. All kinds. Study of languages, singing, dancing, music, and so on.
- Q. Have you a territorial army?
A. Yes. Eight months' training spread over eight years; and we have a defence army with millions of members in the factories. Every factory has facilities for military training.
- Q. Is the Red Army equipped to meet any eventuality?
A. We have many surprises for those who would attempt to attack us.

After our meeting we were asked several questions of a general character, and altogether we spent a good day. The Red Army soldier is no mere automaton, and soldiering is not the sum total of his life, but a period of training that fits him for his work in the Socialist state.

MOSCOW UNDERGROUND RAILWAY

Since 1931, there have been many great improvements in Moscow; in fact, so much has the city changed that it was difficult to recognise parts of it. In places it looked very much like a European city and had many beautiful buildings comparable with anything that can be found in Europe. One noticed decided improvements in the transport facilities, especially in the trolley-buses. These huge buses deal with the transport problem fairly efficiently, although there is still

a need for more buses to cater effectively for the peoples' needs. In spite of the fact that it was November, the streets were very clean, and it seems to be a point with the Moscow municipal authorities to keep the streets clean no matter what the weather may be. The new Metro-underground railway is an outstanding example of the many changes that have been made in Moscow. It is undoubtedly the most beautiful underground railway in the world, and everything is done to keep the stations spotlessly clean, the Government going to a huge expense and employing hundreds of people for this purpose. We visited the whole of the thirteen stations, and not once did we see any litter lying about. Smoking on the underground railways is prohibited.

We were informed that there were 34,000 workers employed on the railway, including those at present engaged in the construction of new sections, and some 3,000 women employed in administrative and constructional work. Wages for skilled workers are as high as 1,400 roubles per month, while the unskilled workers average from 200 to 300 roubles per month. Naturally, the higher paid workers enjoy a better standard of living than the lower grades, but every encouragement is given and every facility is provided for the lower paid worker to move up into a higher grade, he has only to show his ability to perform the work in that grade. If, however, after a trial performance he cannot perform the work efficiently, he is relegated to a lower grade, but if a worker is relegated to a lower grade for some reason over which he has no control he retains the wage of the higher grade in which he formerly worked. The hours of the underground constructional workers, who number about 18,000 persons, are six per day, and work goes on for the full twenty-four hours. The rest day is the sixth day, when all work is stopped.

THE DONBAS COALFIELD

VISIT TO KOCHEGARKA (GORLOVKA) MINE

From Moscow to the Donbas Coalfield is a journey of twenty-four hours, and for our visit here we were provided with a special coach. The Donbas, or Donetz, coal basin lies north of the Sea of Azov, in the south-eastern corner of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic. It provides nearly 75 per cent. of the coal mined in the U.S.S.R., and despite developments elsewhere, it will probably remain the main source of supply in the Soviet Union. 411,000 miners are employed in the coalfield, and more are required, one of the chief difficulties being to find workers for the pits and to keep them once they are there.

We were very anxious to see all we could in the short time at our disposal and to make as thorough an investigation as time would permit, and nothing pleased our Russian comrades more than our wishes in this respect. We found no desire to hide anything from us, or to "doctor" information in any way. We chose the pits we desired to visit and the sections of those pits we wished to explore, and when

we visited workers' houses in order to see living conditions we chose the houses ourselves, and invited our guides to seek admission at those particular places. We mention this because it is sometimes believed that only those places can be seen which the Russians themselves want to be seen. All we can say is, that we did not find it so, and no matter what we wanted to see or where we wanted to go, our wishes were nearly always met, and it was because no obstacles were placed in our way that we obtained information on the more detailed conditions of mining life that might have escaped more competent and practised investigators.

We did not spare our criticisms or our praise ; for example, we always condemned in plain honest pit terms the employment of women underground. There is no need to overstate the position or to moralise about it. In our opinion, the employment of women underground is wrong, and especially so in a Socialist state, and it should be made illegal. On the other hand, we were greatly impressed by the fact that no lad is employed below ground below the age of 18 years. The majority of the delegation started work below ground between the ages of 14 and 15 years, and, therefore, we could appreciate the advance the Russian miners had made in this respect. For boys between 14 and 15 years of age to get up between the hours of 2, 3 and 4 a.m. and do their shift underground is no light matter. In the Russian mining villages the boys are asleep at this time, and their homes are spared those tragedies which are so frequent in our own country of young people being killed or maimed underground at the early ages of 14 to 18 years.

For the purpose of our investigation and to facilitate our removal from one district to another, we used a first-class sleeper railway carriage as a kind of bed and breakfast hotel, and most of our other meals we got either in the workers' clubs or their restaurants. This arrangement enabled us to devote most of our time to the job we had on hand, and while it often necessitated our being without a meal from 9 in the morning until 7 or 8 o'clock at night, it did enable us to cover the ground and see all that there was to see. Incidentally, it gave us appetites that were equal to those of our Russian miner comrades, and they indeed have some appetites. Time and time again we left our carriage at 10 o'clock in the morning and did not return until midnight or after, and in the small hours of the morning we had to sort out our impressions and then write them down in order to convey some idea of what we had seen and heard. If these impressions seem somewhat sketchy, therefore, may we modestly plead in mitigation the difficulties under which we tried to do our work.

THE SURFACE

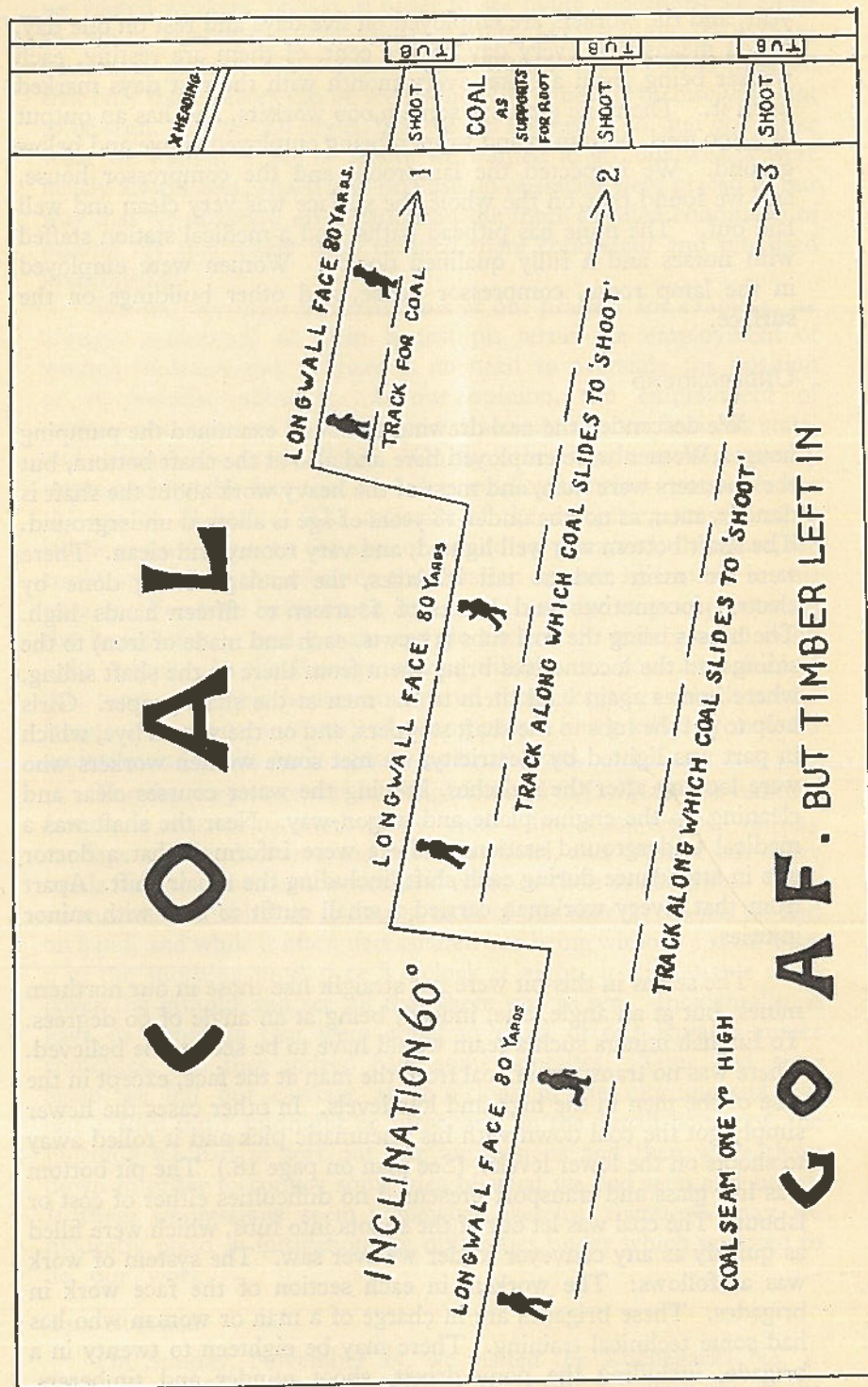
On Sunday, November 15, we visited the Kochegarka No. 1 (Gorlovka) Mine. Work is carried on at this pit every day in the

year, and the workers are employed on five days and rest on one day, which means that every day 20 per cent. of them are resting, each worker being given a ticket every month with the rest days marked upon it. The mine employs some 3,000 workers, and has an output of 3,500 tons, both men and women being employed above and below ground. We inspected the lamproom and the compressor house, and we found that, on the whole, the surface was very clean and well laid out. The mine has pithead baths, and a medical station staffed with nurses and a fully qualified doctor. Women were employed in the lamp room, compressor house, and other buildings on the surface.

UNDERGROUND

We descended the coal drawing shaft and examined the pumping house. Women were employed here and also at the shaft bottom, but the onsetters were men, and most of the heavy work about the shaft is done by men, as no one under 18 years of age is allowed underground. The shaft bottom was well lighted, and very roomy and clean. There were no main and no tail haulages, the haulage being done by electric locomotives and horses of fourteen to fifteen hands high. The horses bring the coal tubs (15 cwts. each and made of iron) to the siding and the locomotives bring them from there to the shaft siding, where horses again haul them to the men at the shaft proper. Girls help to get the tubs to the shaft stoppers, and on the way in by, which in part was lighted by electricity, we met some women workers who were looking after the switches, keeping the water courses clear and cleaning up the engine plane and wagon-way. Near the shaft was a medical underground station, and we were informed that a doctor was in attendance during each shift, including the repair shift. Apart from that, every workman carried a small outfit to deal with minor injuries.

The seams in this pit were not straight like those in our northern mines, but at an angle, one, indeed, being at an angle of 60 degrees. To English miners such a seam would have to be seen to be believed. There was no transport of coal from the man at the face, except in the case of the men in the high and low levels. In other cases the hewer simply got the coal down with his pneumatic pick and it rolled away to shoots on the lower levels. (See plan on page 18.) The pit bottom was like glass and transport presented no difficulties either of cost or labour. The coal was let out of the shoots into tubs, which were filled as quickly as any conveyor loader we ever saw. The system of work was as follows: The workers in each section of the face work in brigades. These brigades are in charge of a man or woman who has had some technical training. There may be eighteen to twenty in a brigade, including the pony driver, shoot minder and timberers. The hewers' only job is to get the coal down with their pneumatic



picks, the timberers follow them and put in the timber as they come to each section of the face. Sometimes a hewer may have two or three timberers, according to the way he cuts off the coal as he comes down from the highest to the lowest point of his section.

The individual output in the pit was high, and it was not difficult to understand why this was so. The hewer works from the top and follows down all along his section and as soon as the coal drops away, it slides to the shoots. Naturally, on an incline like this, timbering is not easy, and it must be absolutely secure, otherwise the falling coal would soon dislodge it. We tested much of the timbering and found it not only secure, but well set. The timberers are kept moving, sawing and setting the props and planks, the man who timbers on one day gets the coal the next day, and so on, and they pool their wages. The ventilation was quite good, the men working with trousers and singlets on, and when we climbed up to the different sections and felt the clothing of the hewers, it was quite dry. Hours in the mine were six per day. The workers do not take "bait" to work as they get a meal from the pit restaurant before they descend at prices and qualities which vary with their means.

THE DAY'S WORK

Perhaps it would be interesting to record in detail a day's routine in this pit, as revealed to us by a young Soviet woman miner, who, black out of the pit, answered several questions which we put to her, and who, later in the evening, brought her brigade of workers to the club to discuss mining questions with us. This young lady was Nina Litvinenko, who, for the sake of convenience, we may call a deputy, although she was much more highly skilled and educated than the average deputy in this country.

In a Soviet mine, there are no deputies, chargemen, overmen, or undermanagers as we understand them in this country, and the underground work is in charge of the chief engineer, who is assisted by foremen and people like Nina Litvinenko, who have been to a mining college for two years, and who return to the mine for practical experience prior to entering a university for complete technical education. There is also the ventilation staff, who supervise repair work, timbering, shotfiring, fring, and so on. The mine is divided into sections; each section has its gas inspector, and its foreman, and the timbering is done by a man or men other than the hewer. The pit works four shifts, three coaldrawing, and one repair shift. No written reports are made by the gas testers, but the condition of the district or section is chalked on a board at the meeting station. However, reports are made out by the people like Nina Litvinenko, and no miner is allowed in any place where there is 2 per cent. or more of gas. The gas tester carries an oil lamp, and the majority of the workers carry electric lamps.

This is how Nina Litvinenko explained a day's work to us: She meets the chief engineer on the surface before she descends, and he, being in possession of all the previous day's reports, gives her some indication of conditions underground. She then descends the mine with her brigade, tries the lamps to see they are securely locked and sets each man or woman to their job, and goes in with them. She does no actual work herself, except to visit the work people under her charge to see they are getting along all right, and are not short of timber. She meets the gas tester and discusses the state of the ventilation. The gas tester does nothing but test for gas and take samples of the air. He visits the men in each section three or four times per day, and takes three air samples per shift—one in the in-take, one in the return, and one at the coal-face. These samples are sent during every shift to the laboratory attached to the rescue-station about a mile away, and they are analysed, and a report sent back to the pit, so that the following shift is in possession of the condition of their section. Thus they have not only an oil lamp examination of the state of the ventilation, but a properly written report from the laboratory.

SAFETY MEASURES

Safety first is not just a mere slogan here, and the figures speak for themselves. During ten months in 1936, out of the 25,000 miners employed in the area, 2,500 were injured and seventeen killed, and that included every form of minor injury. This was a decrease of 75 per cent. from the figures of pre-war times. Most of the deaths were caused by falling coal. For safety work, in addition to the pit doctor, the area has a clinic with a staff of forty doctors, who not only meet the pit safety committees, but give first-aid lectures and practice to all members of the pit rescue brigade. A big catastrophe can be dealt with by eight to ten rescue stations, which are staffed by fully trained men, who do nothing but rescue work. Each rescue station has its own experimental pit. True, this is small, but all kinds of devices are used to make the conditions under which the experiments are conducted as much like actual pit conditions as possible, and all the apparatus is of the latest type. Rapid transport is afforded between the pits and the rescue stations by a railway line, and every rescue man's home has telephonic communication with the rescue station. We were much impressed by the smartness and efficiency of the rescue brigades. One of our number rang the alarm, and it took forty-five seconds for them to turn out, and they were ready and fully equipped in one minute fifteen seconds.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

It must not be thought that we saw nothing wrong in this mine; on the contrary we saw much of which we did not approve. There

were far too many women in the pit, and in our opinion, the electric lamps of some of the workers gave too poor a light. Again, there was too much broken timber in the main heading, and the sanitary arrangements at the surface were not only bad, but primitive. Further, while facilities for bathing were provided, they were by no means comparable with those in this country. We also saw poor housing, bad sanitation, and disgraceful roads; in fact, they were not roads at all, but just tracks which on a wet day would be all mud and slime. We saw and spoke against all these things, and no one denied them; but we also saw decent houses, good buildings, healthy miners in their splendid clubs, complete with cinema, and facilities for cultural development. There was also a library with 110,000 volumes, a technical school, and the clinic we have already mentioned, which dealt with preventive diseases, gave modern electric treatment, provided mud baths and anti-natal care, and treated all dental cases, including the provision of fillings. All this was free, and the number of persons dealt with was over 1,000 per day. The new buildings were the beginning of a plan for the neighbouring town which, in 1904, for a population of 2,000 persons, had only one hospital with twenty-five beds, one school with thirty three pupils, and not a single road, but which to-day, in addition to the facilities we have mentioned, had twenty-seven schools and a large public bath. Finally, we may say that we were greatly impressed with the efficiency of the Gorlovka miners. We feel quite sure that our own people would take months to adapt themselves to working on steep incline seams as these miners had to do, and there is no doubt that the miners in this pit were skilled workers, in every sense of the term.

THE MAKEEVKA TRUST COALMINES

On November 17, we paid a visit to the headquarters of the Makeevka Trust Coalmines. There are several Trusts in the Donbas Coalfields, and each Trust competes with the others for the production of the biggest output of coal. The Makeevka Trust was trying to get an output of 13,500 tons per day and during the fifteen days preceding our visit had managed to reach an average output of 13,478 tons per day. The total number employed at the seventeen mines of the combine was 26,897, including 2,010 women, and the total underground workers were 16,000, of whom 753 were women, who were employed on the levels and haulage roads.

The mines in this part of the Coalfield were not so steep as the mines in the Gorlovka district, most of the seams ranging from an incline of 6 to 32 degrees. The majority of the mines were old, and had been reconstructed to meet the output requirements of the Five-Year Plan. 98 per cent. of the coal was got by machine, and most of the haulage was mechanised, the horses having been systematically eliminated.

Wages in the Combine were as follows :—

	Per Day	
	Roubles	Copecks
Operatives of Coal-cutting Machines	19	37
Hewers	18	14
Loaders or Fillers	17	95
Electric Drillers	15	92
Packers	11	62
Operatives of Electric Locomotives	11	39
Timber-men (Repair Workers only)	12	89
Pullers-up, Conveyor, Stakhanovite Method ..	16	72
Pony Drivers	10	76
Electric Machine Mechanics at Coal-face ..	11	80
Onsetters at Shaft	8	72
Tub Drivers near the Coal-face	8	61

The wages of the datal workers, which included the women workers, averaged from 3 roubles 50 copecks to 8 roubles per day, but they had opportunities to accept piecework, and thus increase their wages. The average wages for all workers for the months of September and October were 12 roubles 39 copecks, and 13 roubles and 16 copecks, respectively.

BRITISH AND RUSSIAN CONDITIONS

Wages are difficult to explain if the comparison has to be made in English prices and earnings, for although we have read several authorities in our attempt to find the comparative value of the Russian rouble and the English pound, we find it very difficult to find a basis which will give a correct idea of the value of a Russian miner's wages, when expressed in English money. In Russia itself the exchange is 25 roubles to the pound; at this rate of exchange, the cost of articles and other necessities is fantastic. In the hotel in which we stayed in Moscow a good dinner cost not less than 15 roubles, and we were informed by one who had been in Moscow for three years, that a good suit would cost 500 roubles. Later, however, we obtained information as to the prices of the suits and boots of workers, who were staying in a miners' rest home, and found the average price to be 175 to 200 roubles for a suit, and 42 to 60 roubles for boots. Even so, at 25 roubles to the pound, these prices were high. Pat Sloan, in his reply to Walter Citrine, stated that in general he agreed with Citrine that the value of the rouble in terms of food and clothing was one-third to one-fourth of its exchange value. As the exchange value of the rouble is about tenpence to the pound, on this basis the prices of food and clothing in Russia are three to four times the British prices. We are of opinion that such a view cannot be accepted, for it is true it would be impossible for the workers to buy decent food and clothing, whereas, in fact, all the workers we saw were well-fed and clothed.

We think, however, that so far as the actual things money will buy are concerned, the employed miner in Britain is on the average

much better off than the Russian miners, but if everything is taken into consideration—holidays, rest home, surety of employment, and social insurance—then the difference is considerably less. It has to be remembered that besides having one month's holiday with pay the Russian miner has superior compensation rights to those of the British miner. If he is a member of his Trade Union, he gets two-thirds of his wages for the first twenty days, and full wages after twenty days, while if he has worked one to two years in the mine, he gets three-quarters of his wages for the first twenty days, then 100 per cent. of his wages, and if he has worked more than two years in the mines, he gets 100 per cent. from the first day of injury or sickness. A non-Unionist gets 50 per cent. of his wages for the first thirty days, and then 75 per cent. until he recovers, all earnings being averaged over a number of months not exceeding twelve. The pension rights of Russian miners are also far better than those of our miners, for at the age of 50 a Russian miner who has worked twenty years in a pit is entitled to a pension of 60 per cent. of his earnings.

On the other hand, housing, sanitation, roads, transport, water supply and cultural development are much superior in Britain, and the solving of these problems in Russia (and no responsible person in Russia denied that they were problems of great importance) will make a comparison between Soviet and British miners a less difficult problem. Until that is actually accomplished, one can only express the opinion that as regards conditions of work and employment the Soviet miner is better off than the British miner, but that in housing, municipal service, and certain social conditions, the average British miner has a decided advantage.

The hours were six per day for face workers, and seven per day for datal workers in the pit and on the surface, and were measured on a bank to bank basis. We found, however, that at one pit, where the men were "loosed" in face by their marrows, the six-hour shift was timed not from bank to bank, but from bank to the coal face.

INSPECTION OF MINES

In 1935, the number of deaths and accidents at the seventeen collieries was twenty-four persons killed, and 170 injured. We questioned this latter figure, as 170 persons injured out of a total of 16,000 employed below ground seemed a very low figure indeed, and further questions elicited the fact that the figures did not include the minor or slight injuries, but only injuries of a more serious character. Even so, the death and accident rate was remarkably low. Safety, indeed, is not an empty slogan in the Russian mines. It is an obligation upon the Trust, the mine management, the Trade Union and the miners themselves to do everything in their power to make safety in the mines a concrete reality.

The miners, at their annual conference, elect two full-time inspectors for their area, both of whom have full legal powers to give

orders for repairs, and all matters affecting safety, and the Director of the Trust has no power to overrule their decisions. They may close down any section of a mine, or the whole of a mine if they think it is not being worked in accordance with the regulations. They can also fix a date upon which all the complaints they have made must be attended to, and if the management have not carried out their recommendations within the specified time they have power to close down that section of the pit, and report the case to the Central Committee of the Donbas Miners' Union. The President of the Miners' Union also has the power to enforce the recommendations of the men's full-time inspectors, but if after inspection the management of the pit or the Director of the Trust can prove to the Central Committee of the Donbas Miners' Union that the complaints are not legitimate or that the inspectors are wrong in their statements, then they can be dealt with by the Trade Union.

In addition to the two full-time inspectors appointed at the annual conference, there are also workmen's inspectors or, as we call them, local inspectors. These men are workmen employed in the mine. They are appointed by the workmen, and can inspect the mine any time they desire. When we inquired of the men themselves, we found on the average that the local inspectors went round three times per month. Apart from this, there is a Government inspector who is responsible to, and paid by the Government. He makes a written report of all his inspections, a copy of which is sent to the Trade Union, the Director of the Trust, and also posted up on the surface. The management is under an obligation to carry out the recommendations made in this report by a certain date, and as the reports are seen by the workmen, they know exactly what the time limit is, and what has to be done, and in consequence the recommendations are invariably carried out as quickly as possible. The Government inspectors must also make periodical reports to workers' conferences, and answer any questions which they may be asked with regard to safety.

In view of the great attention which was paid to safety matters in the Russian pits, we were surprised to find that explosives were stored down the pit. It was true that these were right back at the shaft, and were well guarded; nevertheless, we felt it was quite unsafe to store explosives underground, particularly in gaseous pits, and we briefly outlined to our Russian friends the provisions of our own Coal Mines Order in this respect. Strange to say, although the explosives were stored underground, the shots were fired under such restrictive conditions that if the same conditions prevailed in England, it would be problematical whether we could secure half our present output. For example, before a shot can be fired, all the men must be brought out from the levels where the seams are steep, and a written permission must be obtained from the section manager. In the main,

most of the shots are fired in the repair shift, and in the flat seams the conditions of shot firing are very much similar to our own. No men are allowed to work in 2 per cent. or more of gas, and as soon as this figure is reached, the work in that particular place or section is stopped, and the men are withdrawn. This brief outline of the safety conditions in the Russian pits will give some indication of the efficiency of the system, and we leave our readers who have mining experience to judge whether or not we could profitably learn something on this question from the Russian miners.

THE ORDJONIKIOZE MINE

Following our visit to the Makeevka Trust we paid a visit to the Ordjonikioze mine. Conditions here were rather more pleasant than at the Gorlovka mine. The surface layout of this pit was very good, and while we were there in November and the weather was muggy and cold, one could see sufficient evidence of the flowers and green to enable one to say that in the summer months the surface would present a pleasant appearance. The pit had a huge tiled waiting-room, in which the posters and notices were posted up. We examined a huge wooden board in this room, and discovered it was a kind of output indicator for the previous day for the different shifts of the different sections of the pit. One could see at a glance what each sector got in the first shift, back shift and night shift, and what the total output was of each sector for the day.

The workers examine this huge board in very much the same way as we examine the token board which indicates the output of each set of coal-hewers and fillers in our own pits. The several sections in the pit compete with each other to see which can produce the biggest output per day and this method of competition increases both the individual wages of the miners and the total wealth of the country. It is not unlike that of a football league. A good day sends one section to the top, while a bad day drops them to second or third place, and the friendly struggle goes on until the end of the week. This method of competition is encouraged and it exists not only between section and section, but between pit and pit, and Trust and Trust. We found no evidence that it was unpopular among the workmen, but on the contrary, found it to be very popular and politically and socially useful in the sense that the workmen felt the productivity of their labour was enriching the country of their birth.

Again we found the pit head baths very much below the standard of our own. Women workers or attendants kept the baths clean, and they moved about the naked and half-dressed men, mopping up the floors and sweeping away the water, as unconcernedly as a horse moves about a pasture.

On this occasion we adopted rather a different method for our underground inspections, and came down from one level to another,

and not up from the low level to the high level. The seam, however, was much lower, being only two feet high. The distance between the two levels was just over 300 yards. Coal was won on the same system, except that it was cut by coal cutting machines and the hewer cast the coal on to a stationary conveyor shaped like a trough, and it sped away to the shoots.

The stone cover in the pit was very good, the method being to let the timber stay in the goaf until the roof pressure slowly crushed it down, and settlement took place. In reply to our queries about this method, the manager said that they had found the system most satisfactory as it had brought neither undue pressure on the main low level haulage road nor altered the nature of the coal. We took hold of a pick and tried our hands at hewing. The pick blade had only one point, was only about eight inches long, and was shaped exactly like a pneumatic pick. It would be about as much use in our seams as a tooth-pick, but in these steep low seams it was quite a useful tool, and served its purpose. The shovels had no clutch and were very small, and we are very much afraid that if they were used in our pits, we should be compelled to use one in each hand.

We again found the ventilation and timbering to be good, and the lamps were in very much better condition. In fact, right in by the main low level there was a huge electric light less than twenty feet from the coal-face. The water courses in the pit were kept clean by women workers, and while we found no trace of water at the face we found that courses running away to the sumps were pretty full. From the sump the water was pumped by electric pumps to the main pump house and then up the shaft.

One interesting feature of this pit was the method of drawing coal. No tubs come to bank in the cage. In fact, except for drawing stone and lifting the workers to the surface, no cage was used. The coal was drawn to bank by means of a six-ton bucket which held six tons of coal. All the coal was tipped by electric tippers below ground. The tippler held three two-ton tubs and a touch of the lever caused it to circle quickly around.

From the tippler, the coal went on to a conveyor, and from here was carried to what we would term a coal hopper, the descending bucket simply striking the arm of the coal hopper and automatically filling itself. Immediately the pressure was released the hopper sprang back and the bucket was free to ascend. On the surface it emptied itself automatically and the coal was carried away to the screens. It was not difficult to imagine the great amount of labour saved in a method of this kind or the amount of coal which could be drawn if necessary. Undoubtedly, these pits were laid out to deal with big outputs. If necessary, the shaft could also have cages installed, and as a matter of fact, we inspected a pit where both

systems were in operation and which, as the Russians termed it, was going "full hole."

HOUSING CONDITIONS

We visited several workers' houses in this area and found them laid out much neater and better than those in Golovka. Every one had a spacious garden, but in no case did we find the water laid on, or find any of the streets or back lanes paved or even laid, they were simply muddy tracks. With properly paved streets and roads, this mining settlement would look 1,000 per cent. better. Without them it looked none too good.

Inside we found overcrowding was prevalent. There were often two families in one house, and while there was a bathroom we found the room had been utilised as a bedroom, as the water supply had not yet been provided. All the houses, however, were spotlessly clean, but one missed the type of fireside so familiar in our own country, the ornaments and pictures on the walls, the rugs or mats and lino on the floor, and the houses that we saw had no open fireplaces like ours where one can draw up a chair and have a bit of a "crack." The cooking was done on a long brick stove, which, strangely enough, was called "an English stove." The pots and pans were placed on the top of the stove, and the food cooked in that way. Electric light was in every house, and was provided at a very low cost.

On the whole, we found the same situation as we found in other places, some overcrowding, poor sanitation, no streets or roads, and a poor water supply. But remembering some of our own conditions in the mining villages of Durham and being desirous only of being fair, we would urge no one to imagine that these conditions are confined to Russian mining villages.

We could with the substitution of names and places, say exactly the same things about some of our own colliery villages, and we must remember that, while we have had hundreds of years of local government to enable us to deal with these social evils, our progress has been remarkably slow. On the other hand, the Russian miner has little knowledge of the functions of local government and is faced with difficulties by no means comparable with those of a small country like our own. He is overcoming his difficulties slowly, and of his final triumph he has no doubt whatever, for he recalls and contrasts his conditions to-day with those of pre-revolutionary times, and he realises exactly how much he has done and how much better his conditions have become.

THE STAKHANOVITE MOVEMENT

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

All through the development of human society one ruling class has superseded another ruling class. In feudal times the land-owning

class was supreme. Feudalism was destroyed by a succession of revolutions, and gradually a new governing class arose, the capitalist class as we know it to-day. The working-class is the next and final class to attain power, and by the supersession of Capitalism by socialism it will fulfil its historic mission, and become the new ruling class. So far, this has been successfully accomplished in one country only, and even there the socialist experiment is as yet only in its first stages. The principle of Communism is "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." That is the apex of the fully developed Socialist State, but in the first stage, the principle is: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work." An important and material difference.

It is this principle of each according to his work that is predominant in Russia to-day, and one of the best ways of understanding this is to try and grasp the full implications of the Stakhanovite Movement. To capture power is difficult, but to maintain it is more difficult still. If we recall some of the great difficulties the Russian workers were faced with in their fight to maintain power, such as blockade, intervention, civil war, and famine, and remember that as a result of these, industry and agriculture were almost at a standstill, and if we remember that the vast mass of the people were illiterate, had little or no knowledge of industrial technique and industrial discipline, that industry was very backward, that the pits they possessed were flooded, and that conditions of life were very much worse than they are to-day, we shall get a better perspective in which to judge the Stakhanovite Movement and to understand why it has entered into nearly every phase of the economic life of the country. What is this movement, and what are its effects?

Stakhanovitism is not just a method of getting work done irrespective of other factors. It is not just a question of some big strong coalminer setting the pace and forcing his weaker brother to follow his example; or of getting coal where one can and how one can, and forgetting that other men have to follow. It is not a question of sacrificing safety to output and doing shoddy work just to get a few extra coals. Neither is it a question of the big "coal hewer" theory. Stakhanovitism is a method of accomplishing the job in hand in the most efficient and productive way through the medium of team work.

THE SYSTEM EXPLAINED

Take as an example the winning of coal on a longwall face with pneumatic picks on a gradient which rises two in every three yards. The Stakhanovites, if they are coal producers, allocate the work under the instructions of the section manager. It will be recalled that the young woman, N. Litvinenko, was a section manager. If the coal is "good" and the seam conditions conducive to a high

productivity, then the Stakhanovite who uses the pneumatic pick will have two or three of the section workers doing all the timbering and other work. He simply gets the coal. There is no filling or casting except in the case of the pneumatic pick men who are in the low level and in the first heading to the left of the low level. In such cases both fillers or casters are provided (as the conditions may require), as well as a timberer. All other men employed in getting coal with the pneumatic pick simply have to get the coal "loose." Once this is done, it is carried away by its own momentum to the "shoots" on the lower level. The sketch on page 18 shows the method of work in one of the seams in the Gorlovka mine. The inclination of the seam was 60 degrees.

Imagine this on the inclination mentioned, and you can easily form some idea of how such huge outputs are got. In many instances the question is simply one of working up on the cleat and working back down to the end of the pillar, and away the coal goes tumbling down to the shoot. The work is made as easy as possible by the remarkable way in which the team works together. We have worked at coal hewing both by hand and with the pneumatic pick. We may modestly claim to know what real hard graft is, and in our opinion no Stakhanovite that we saw worked any harder, if he worked as hard, as the coal hewer in the British coalfields, and further, the Stakhanovite works with practically all his clothes on. The next day the role is changed and the timberer becomes the coal-getter, and so on, alternately. They pool their earnings, and each takes his turn doing the different jobs required in the section.

They work six hours, or nearly two hours per day less than the miner in Great Britain. They meet and discuss ways and means of increasing the production and pool their ideas. They teach the new entrants into the mine how to master the technique of coal mining, and the proper use of the machine. They teach the value of proper care of the machine and how to manipulate it so as to get the best results. The same is true of the coal cutting operators, the pullers-up, the drillers and stonemen. Each is a separate grade, but none works against the other, and all are out to increase their knowledge of pit work and to master the machine. Hence, the great thing in the Stakhanovite movement is team work, each grade doing its job, but having in mind the final result for the whole of the section.

A RECORD OUTPUT

We met many of the Stakhanovites, and although we did not meet Stakhanovite himself, we met the famous Stepanenko. He is at present in the navy, but was on leave while we were in Gorlovka, and was present at a little function which the miners of that part of the Donbas provided for us. There was present, too, a young fellow called Grushko, who is probably better known throughout the Soviet

Union than any other worker by virtue of the fact that he produced 640 tons in one shift of six hours.

Kalanin, the President of the U.S.S.R., mentioned the Stakhanovite Grushko at the meeting in the Opera House at Moscow on the eve of the celebrations. He paid him a very high tribute indeed, and said it was due to workers like Grushko that they had been able not only to increase productivity and master the technique of mining, but to minimise the anti-mechanisation spirit. Grushko is barely 23 years of age, a big strapping young fellow, about 6 feet in height, and rather modest and retiring. At the age of 16 he was a shepherd lad, and by no means fully literate, and as was the case with thousands of similar lads, when he entered the mine at 18 years, the knowledge he had of mining was less than that of a trapper lad in Durham; but he was drawn into the Stakhanovite movement, was taught the correct use of the machine, and given instruction in pit work generally. Facilities were also provided for him, as for other workers, to equip themselves with more general knowledge, and it is stated that it will be the Grushko's who will represent their miner comrades in the Parliament set up under the new Constitution.

THE CREATIVE IMPULSE

We put questions to Zorin, the head of the Gorlovka Trust, to Schmidt, the president of the Donbas Miners' Union, to Revin, the head of the Makeevka Trust, and to Dr. Egoroff, the chief doctor of the miners' sanatorium in Sochi, about the effect of the Stakhanovite movement on the health of the worker, and whether it increased the physical strain. In each case we got a reply to the effect that there was no extra strain nor was the health of the worker affected in any way. Having watched these fellows at work, and sang and danced with them in their workers' club, we are of the same opinion. Hard work is hard work the world over, but six hours is six hours, and what a lot of graft a miner can stand in a six-hour shift! We think our people are working harder than the Stakhanovites, and under less favourable conditions of labour. Moreover, in England, the adoption of this system would lead to unemployment and wage reductions. To us, more production and better technique means just the opposite to what it means to the Russian miner under Socialism. The more he produces the higher his wages, the greater his security, the better his conditions and the sooner will he reach the standard of life enjoyed by those in permanent employment under Capitalism. For him at least there is no question of producing too much, and the Stakhanovite movement is the method by which efficiency and skill are combined to secure the highest productivity with the minimum of energy.

No one can understand the Stakhanovite movement unless he considers the social side of it. This movement originated from the

bottom, that is, from the workers themselves, and, in fact, it is the only way it could originate, for the creative impulse cannot be forced, it must germinate purely by its own power. And that is the success of Socialism. It releases creative impulses in the working-classes that would be impossible under any other order of society, and it is by the concrete results arising from the release of the creative impulse that Socialism stands or falls. In the final analysis, mankind accepts a new social order only if it gives him better material and spiritual improvements than the old, and Socialism, therefore, does not succeed merely because it is Socialism but because it gives rise to a higher productivity and a higher technique than the order it displaces.

To succeed finally, Socialism must produce better quality and cheaper products than Capitalism. It must give better conditions and higher wages, provide better facilities for cultural development, and open up the possibilities of a fuller life in every sense of the word. If it fails to do these things, then decay and stagnation set in. History will record that the main reason for the stagnation and decay of Capitalism was because in its final stages it contained no means whereby the creative impulse could be released to save it, and because of this it became destructive and found its outlet in Fascism and war. Therefore it is not difficult to understand why any movement calculated to consolidate or help forward the productivity of labour becomes one of vital importance in a Socialist state, and why those who are the creators of it are, even though they are miners, among the best respected people in the whole country. It is another stepping stone on the way to the complete Socialism.

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

The Stakhanovite movement opens up great possibilities for the workers. It lays the basis for providing all the material things they need, and in its later stages it will provide the means for a proper enjoyment of the leisure it creates. For as production increases, the material and cultural conditions increase, too, and instead of millions of men and women being thrown out of work, as under Capitalism, the working day can be shortened and production planned.

It is only common-sense to believe that when men work together in harmony, and under conditions which contain within themselves some relationship to that harmony, they will get along better than those who try to delude themselves into believing that harmony is essential to production but not to distribution. Under Capitalism, Capital and Labour cannot work harmoniously together because their varying interests make it impossible for them to do so. In essence that is why Capitalism needs Fascism to bolster it up. "Harmony" is reintroduced with the iron fist, and it is this kind of "Harmony" which is so harmful to mankind in every phase of social life, educative, scientific and economic. The creative impulse is thwarted and

stified. Egoism and narrow nationalism make their appearance. War and destruction are glorified and militarism and oppression raise their heads to usurp the quiet dignity and inner peace of mankind. And all because the economic basis of Society in these countries is Capitalism and the forces of productivity are kept down.

What has this to do with Stakhanovism? Everything. Arising as it does out of Socialism, Stakhanovism represents a new phase in the development of society. When democracies waver and show signs of decay, this opens up the possibility of a better and truer democracy by bringing thousands of workers to an understanding and management of industry. The problems and difficulties and their solution thus rest on a much broader base. Each individual, as he masters the technique of his job, feels his responsibility and duty in making his pit or factory a success. Labour becomes dignified, and in the process the worker assumes an entirely new outlook and an entirely new role. No one understands more than the Stakhanovites the great difficulties that still face their country. They have a long way to go and they know it. We believe it may be many years before all their problems are solved, but the end is not in doubt.

The movement has spread very rapidly and there are hundreds of thousands of Stakhanovites. They are to be found in every sphere of the economic life, and they have done more to minimise the anti-mechanist spirit and to increase the industrial technique and discipline of the worker than any other movement hitherto. It is not that they are superior workmen to our own. On the general average, their skill is lower. It is rather that they have lessened the gap between the skilled and unskilled worker, and by the spirit of team work, improved the technique of the average worker. Socialism would have progressed in Russia at a much slower rate had it not been for this movement, and since its inception production has increased and goes on increasing month by month.

THE NORM

The movement is based on a progressive piece rate system which can be simply stated as follows: (The figures are fictitious, but the principle is correct.) A Stakhanovite miner must, first of all, produce his norm (NORM), for which he receives a standard daily wage. To make it clear, we put it like this: He must produce four tons for 7s. Then he is paid so much per ton for every ton over four tons, and each extra ton has a slightly higher price. Thus the fifth ton would be 6d., the seventh 6½d., the eighth 7d., and the ninth 7½d., and so on. And if he increased his norm, by four tons (100 per cent.) every day of the month, that is, if his production for the month worked out at eight tons per day, he would receive an extra bonus on top of his wages. The more he increased his norm over the 100 per cent. the higher would be his wages.

We asked for the norms of the different classes and got them and, honestly, any average pitman in the British coalfield could fulfil the norm three or four times over. Sometimes the norm is increased, say, for instance, from four tons to six tons, but in every case the daily wage or standard wage for filling the norm is increased *pro rata*. The worker loses nothing in the mining industry by the norm being increased, but we do not know whether this principle applies to other industries. If he should fail for some reason over which he has no control to fill his norm, then he receives the standard wage. But if the fault is his own, and it is proved by the Conflict Committee (which is composed of his own comrades) to be his own fault, then he gets what he makes. We asked if any such cases had arisen and we were informed that they had not.

The fixing of the daily norm is one for the miner, his Trade Union and the administration. In fact, the collective agreement which governs wages and conditions is subject to the same principle for fixing wages, norms, and conditions. The norm is different in every seam and depends upon the nature of the coal, the height of the seam and other matters such as the state of the seam and the inclination. We found on the average that the norm was somewhere between the highest and the lowest proposed, but on the word of the workers themselves it was not difficult to fulfil the norm. We have an abbreviated copy of the collective agreement covering the whole of the Donbas, but it is written in Russian, and until it is translated we can add little to what we have written above.

We found, owing to this intensive piece system, sometimes a great disparity between the wages of the Stakhanovites and other unskilled labour. We have great disparity in our own countries between the wages of the skilled workers and the so-called unskilled workers (*i.e.*, the piece worker and the daily worker), but it is nothing like the disparity we came across in the Soviet pits. Often the amount was five to six times higher, and in one case ten times higher than some of the other workers. Then the Stakhanovite has other privileges. He can buy better food and clothing and other household utensils. He is first to be considered for cultural and educative facilities, and all other things being equal, he is given preference in housing accommodation and so on. All this is according to the law "From each according to his ability. To each according to his labour."

Is it right in the present stage of Socialism that this should be? This question often cropped up. We are of the opinion that it is entirely right. The greater the production and the quicker the workers become skilful and efficient, the better for everybody in the country, and the sooner will the general standard of living be increased. The Stakhanovite gives to the best of his ability, thus making it possible for the unskilled worker to better his position and to become a Stakhanovite too. This system debars none. It is up to the worker.

The sooner he becomes efficient the sooner he advances into a higher category and receives higher wages. Every assistance is given him and he is encouraged to "stick in."

We have already expressed our opinion as to the relative difference between our miners and the Donbas. We feel quite certain that a few more years of the Stakhanovite movement will wipe out the difference, and once this position is reached, then we leave it to our readers to imagine the future possibilities of such a system in regard to wages, hours, conditions, culture and leisure.

History will record whether our impression is a correct one, but we believe this movement will take the Russian workers one step nearer to the full development of their economic and cultural powers and will make possible the fulfilment of the highest moral law mankind has yet to achieve.

"From each according to his ability.
To each according to his NEED."

SOCIAL INSURANCE

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION

In the preceding parts of this report, we have given details as to the amount and conditions on which compensation is paid to Russian miners, and here we propose to give information in regard to the medical examinations and to the methods which are adopted to find out when an injured miner is fit to resume work. The basic principle upon which the question of whether a man is fit for work is decided, is whether a resumption of work is in the interests of the worker himself. No doctor, we were informed, would declare a man fit for work if he thought the man unfit, and, moreover, the man has the right of appeal against a decision of the doctor. The final authorities are the Medical Commission, composed of a number of doctors and not one Medical Referee as in this country. Further, there is not the vexed problem of opposing interests, and the main regard is for the man's health, and not how soon can he be bundled off to work. Nor are there the repeated medical examination we have in this country, or the constant interference with the injured workman's compensation and the subsequent appeals to Court. The Soviet miner has none of the intimidation and fear of losing all or part of his compensation and consequently he responds to the fair treatment he gets, and a social impulse is developed which in itself prevents a workman from attempting to stay away from work. Rather does he desire to get back to work as soon as he is fit and well, and we were informed that they had little or no difficulty over this problem. We outlined our own methods in regard to compensation, and the Russians were amazed at the waste of time and expense which the procedure involved. The average amount of compensation paid to injured miners in the Donbas in the year 1935 amounted to 94.4 per cent. of the workmen's wage.

INVALIDITY PENSIONS

There are three kinds of pensions, all of which are administered by the Trade Unions. All pensions schemes are non-contributory, and are part of the social services which the Government has handed over to the Trade Unions. There are:—

- 1st.—Invalidity Pensions.
- 2nd.—Old Age Pensions.
- 3rd.—Pensions owing to death of breadwinner.

To qualify for a pension as an invalid, the worker must have worked in some form of industry or work from one to eight years, according to his or her age. The older the applicants are, the longer they must have been in some employment. An applicant 20 years or under is entitled to an invalid's pension without any qualification as to the period of employment. If a worker falls sick, and is in receipt of his benefit from the insurance fund, he can continue to receive such sickness payment for a period of four years, during which he is entitled to come on to the pension fund.

There are three groups of invalids:—

- (1) Those who cannot look after themselves, and need help.
- (2) Those who cannot work, but can look after themselves.
- (3) Those who cannot follow their original employment, but who can be employed in other work of a light nature.

The group to which each person is allocated is decided by a Medical Commission, upon which sits a representative of the Trade Union Movement. To qualify for any of the above pensions a miner must fulfil the following qualifications:—

If he is 50 years of age he must have worked six years.
" 40-45 " " " " five "
" 30-40 " " " " four "
" 25-30 " " " " three "
" 21-25 " " " " two "
Under 20, no qualifying period is necessary.

Payments are made as follows:—

- Group 1.—69 per cent. of his wages for the last twelve months at work, with a progressive increase in payments if he has worked for twenty-two years in industry. The maximum payment is 80 per cent. of his wages.
- Group 2.—49 per cent. and as above.
- Group 3.—35 per cent., and up to a maximum of 66 per cent. if the applicant has worked twenty-two years. If the applicant has worked over twenty-three years in industry he receives 100 per cent. of his wages. In these cases, however, namely, where the applicant cannot be employed in his original occupation but may be able to work in another occupation, the combined wages and pension may not exceed the actual wages for the class or grade of work upon which he or she is engaged.

Invalids who cannot work because of an accident (either at work or away from work) are not required to prove any record of work in industry before qualifying for a pension. All such cases who fall into Group 1 receive 100 per cent. of their wages, in Group 2., 75 per cent. of their wages, and in Group 3., 50 per cent. of their wages.

OLD AGE PENSIONS

Miners who have been in the mining industry for twenty years are entitled to receive an old age pension on reaching the age of 50 years. The age qualification for other workers is 60 years, and for women 50 years. The pension paid to a miner is 60 per cent. of his actual earnings and this is paid irrespective of the earnings should he continue to work.

DEPENDENTS' PENSIONS

Dependents are accorded a pension the amount of which is determined by (a) the number of years spent in the industry; (b) the number of dependents left by the breadwinner. The pension is paid irrespective of whether the cause of death is from natural causes or arising from his work. If a breadwinner leaves one dependent, the dependent is entitled to a pension of 24½ per cent. of the breadwinner's wage. That is the minimum. If the breadwinner has been twenty-two years in the industry, the dependent is entitled to a pension amounting to 40 per cent. of the breadwinner's wages. That is the maximum amount. The number of years the breadwinner has spent in industry will determine the amount of the pension, with a minimum of 24½ per cent. and a maximum of 40 per cent. If there are two dependents, the same principle holds good, the minimum being 36.8 per cent., and the maximum (for twenty-two years in industry) 60 per cent. For more than two dependents the scales are:—

- Three dependents, 49 per cent. up to 80 per cent.
- Four dependents, 61 per cent. up to 100 per cent.
- Over four dependents, 100 per cent.

If, however, the death is from other than natural causes, the amounts are somewhat higher.

We are informed that with some slight differences of detail, such as the qualifications periods and the minimums, the principle holds good for practically all Soviet industry. We are quite sure that in the basic principles of Socialism as revealed in the social services, the Soviet worker has made headway unprecedented in working-class history, and if the basic principles are correct, then the rest will follow and we repeat that the next two or three decades will put them ahead of any other workers so far as social services are concerned.

We append some figures relating to Social Insurance in the Donbas area for the year 1935:—

SOCIAL INSURANCE IN THE DONBAS FOR THE MINERS FOR THE YEAR 1935

	Roubles
INCOME	124,000,000
EXPENDITURE:	
Sick Benefit	46,000,000
Maternity Benefit for working mothers	3,000,000
Funeral Benefits	400,000
Medical Aid	300,000
Paid to mothers for the first nine months of the child's life	4,300,000
Assistance to workers with large families	2,055,000
Children of school age—expenses to Sanatoria, etc.	2,500,000
Rest Homes, Sanatoria and payment of fares to same	21,700,000
Equipment for Sanatoria, etc.	1,000,000
Special diets for workers at Sanatoria	6,200,000

The miner, when he goes to the Sanatoria, is expected to pay a small cost towards the cost of his diet. The amount he contributes depends upon the amount of income per head in the family. This rule is applied to enhance the discipline of the scheme. (A miner receives full wages when he attends the Sanatorium.)

	Roubles
Construction of Rest Homes, Parks, etc.	2,600,000
Upkeep of Labour Inspectors	800,000
Office Costs	700,000
Pensions to those who are working	8,800,000
The Donbas Miners' Union hands over to the Central Organisation for Hospitals, Creches, etc.	19,000,000

PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS IN TRADE UNIONS ON APRIL 1, 1936 (PER 100 EMPLOYED)

	Percentage
For the whole of the Soviet Union	83.5
Industrial Group	83.7
Builders' Group	77.6
Transport Group	87.1
Communication Group	87.7
Municipal Group	80.1
Trading Group	82.1
Public Catering Group	91.5
Education Group	87.3
Art Group	90.2
Protection of Health Group	90.9
Institutions	82.7
Agricultural Group	75.0

The percentage of the Donbas miners in their Trade Union is 80.8. Red Corners in Trade Union Branches, January 1, 1935, averages 2.5 per cent. per Branch.

THEATRES, CINEMAS, CLUBS, MUSEUMS

	1914	1935
Theatres and Circuses	176	673
Cinemas	1,150	34,990
Clubs	222	12,924
Cottage Reading Rooms in the Villages ..	nil	45,858
Museums	112	768

EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION

1913	1935
182,000,000 Roubles	8,310,000,000 Roubles

PUPILS IN SECONDARY AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

1914	1935
7,800,000 pupils	25,569,100 pupils

ADULT PUPILS

1914	1935
21,000	4,395,000

FOR EVERY TYPE OF EDUCATION No. OF PUPILS

1914	1935
8,214,000	31,519,000

THE WORK OF THE TRADE UNIONS IN THE DONBAS COALFIELD

"In conformity with the interests of the toilers, and in order to develop the organisational initiative and political activity of the masses of the people, the citizens of the U.S.S.R. are ensured the right to unite in public organisations, Trade Unions, Co-operative Associations, youth organisations, sport and defence organisations, cultural and technical and scientific societies."
—(Article 126 of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.)

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The delegation was naturally interested in the work of the Trade Union of the miners in the Donbas. We obtained quite a lot of information on this question but it is only fair to say that the time at our disposal was too short to make a really thorough investigation. No one could come to Britain, for instance, and hope to grasp the functions and details of the British Miners' Union in three weeks. However, we were careful to sift most of the data, and we record here our views on the information we received.

At the outset it would be better perhaps to record the views of Schmidt, the President of the Donbas Miners' Union:—

"Naturally, the functions of our Trade Union under Socialism are quite different from what yours are under capitalism. To you, for instance, increased mechanisation of the mines, with its resultant increased production, leads to a dismissal of miners, short time working and sometimes the closing of the mine or mines which cannot produce coal sufficiently cheap to enable it to keep its employees at work. Therefore, because of these things, you do not regard increased production and increased mechanisation of the mines in the same way as we do. To you they are weapons which are ultimately turned against you. With us it is not so.

"In the Donbas, as elsewhere, the workers are vitally interested in the success of the pit or factory in which they work. They have meetings called production meetings, at which they discuss how to increase production, how to make themselves more efficient, how to reduce working costs and how to make the mine more economic and efficient.

"In your Trade Unions a vast amount of time is taken up with disputes that arise between worker and employer. On the one hand, you have the worker fighting to safeguard his present conditions, and on the other, you have the employer trying to impose conditions worse than the workmen possess at the time of the dispute.

"We have no such fight. Under Socialism it is not necessary to fight so, or to strike. The mines belong to the people, and the more efficient and productive a mine is the better are the conditions of the miner. The more they produce the more wages they earn, the greater is their security and the richer the country as a whole becomes."

Much of this is quite true, for labour saving machinery in this country has undoubtedly led to thousands of miners being thrown on the dole, and the obstinate fact remains that under Socialism in the Russian mines, mechanisation has led not only to greater productivity but to a constant demand for more labour and the development of more pits. It is part of the function of the Trade Union Movement to expedite the introduction of machinery into the pits and, moreover, to provide facilities whereby the miners can be taught how to use the machine to the fullest possible advantage. That is to say, in such a way as to increase the production of the machine, and at the same time to save his own energy by making the machine do the work. The Trade Union and the Administration, therefore, are not two separate opposing bodies, one wanting one thing and the other wanting another, but separate units of the same whole, both desiring the same thing.

THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Naturally, the influence and importance of the Trade Unions are immense. First, they are responsible for the fixing of the collective agreement between the Trust and the miners. There may be as many as seventeen mines in one Trust, and there are many Trusts in the Donbas. The heads of the Trust are responsible to the Commissariat of heavy industry, and the Trade Unions are responsible to the workmen who comprise its membership.

This agreement governs wages and conditions and is discussed very thoroughly by the miners before it is finally signed and accepted. In their meetings the miners put forward their demands. These are sent on to the Central Committee of their Trade Union. Some of the demands or suggestions are accepted, others are rejected, but the agreement is signed only when the membership instruct the Central Committee to do so.

We were interested to learn that the price of coal is not fixed by agreement between the head of the Trust and the Trade Unions, but

by the Government *after* the Collective Agreement is signed, and it is this price which each pit is expected to get when the coal is sold at the pit head. We also learned that not one pit up to the present had made a profit. All had sustained "losses," but it was hoped that by the end of the year owing to increased mechanisation and output, a small profit would be shown for the year 1936. The State provided all capital and all machinery, gave grants for housing, etc., and naturally bore the losses.

This collective agreement also fixes the norm. That is the amount of work which must be done each day for the standard wage. For instance, in the case of coal cutters it is so many yards. In the case of coal hewers, fillers, etc., so many tons. In the case of drillers, so many holes. In the case of pullers-on, so many yards pulled, and so on. For this amount of work a standard wage is given, and for all work done over and above the norm a piece rate system on a progressive scale is adopted. If a worker doubles his norm every day in the month, or if at the month's end the total output is double the total daily norm for the month, then he is given a further bonus. For instance, assuming the norm for a coal hewer was two tons per shift for a standard wage of seven roubles, and he produced 100 tons in the month (*i.e.*, four tons for the twenty-five working days in the month), then he would also get the bonus as this is double his daily norm. We have already referred to this in our remarks on the Stakhanovite movement so will not deal with it further.

The collective agreement also fixes the holidays, namely, one month's annual holiday with pay, three days for the November celebrations, two days for May 1 and 2, one day on March 18, to celebrate the Paris Commune, one day on January 1, New Year's Day, and a day on January 22, which is the anniversary of Bloody Sunday and Lenin's death. All holidays are paid for, and if it is necessary owing to urgent repair work for a worker to work on any of these holidays, then he is entitled to double pay.

Rent payments and coal allowance are also the subject of agreement. To those who are entitled to a rent allowance, the sum of 6½ roubles per month is paid. This is a very small payment indeed, and much less than the 10d. per day received by our own people in Durham, but the rents are much lower, only 30 roubles per month, which, whether computed by the amount paid in ratio to the amount received, or by the percentage of wages earned, is much lower than what our people pay. Coals are provided on the general average at one ton per month, but no one is kept short of coal and a single man in lodgings is entitled to his coal, while two families in one house are each entitled to coal.

SOCIAL SERVICES

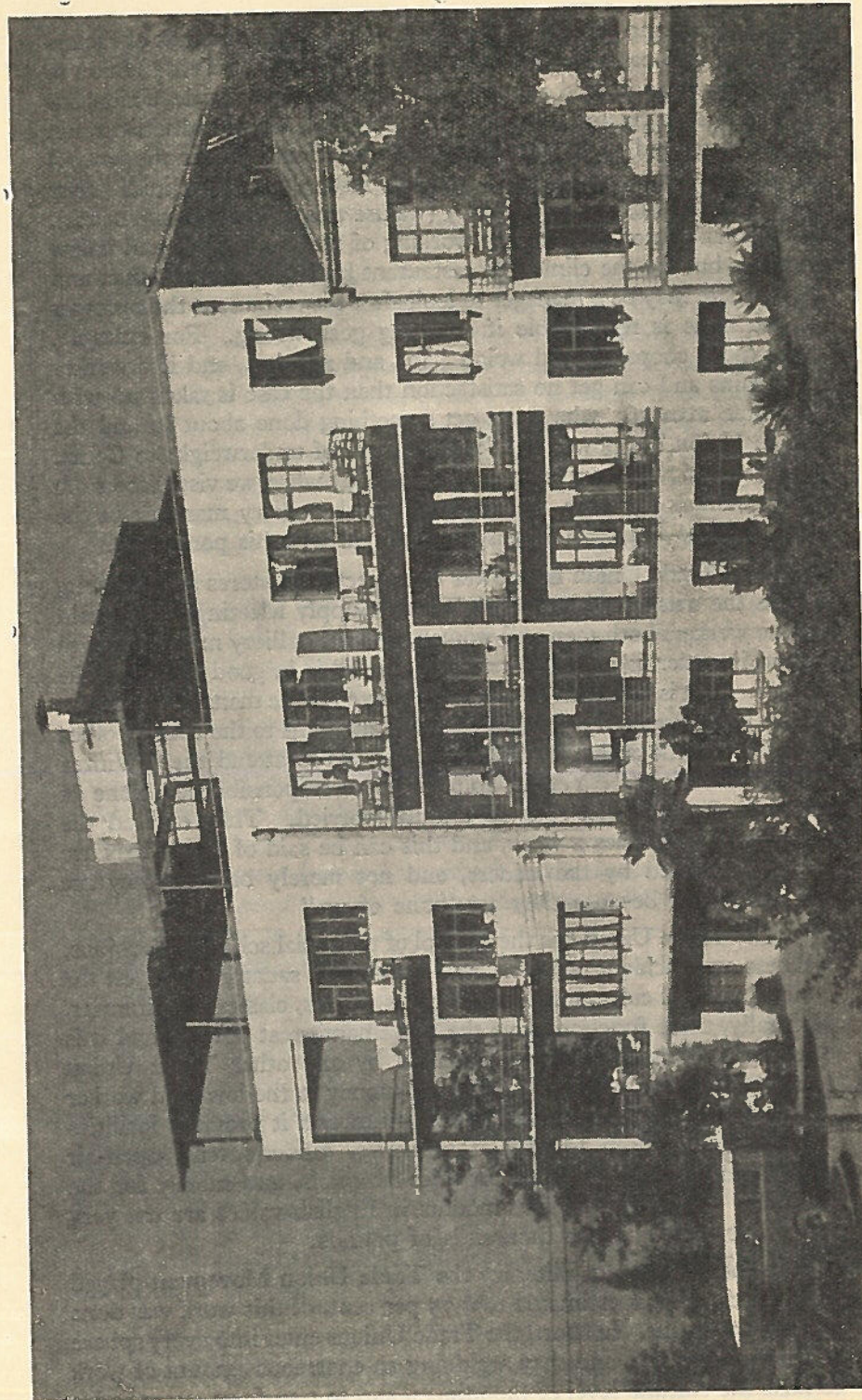
The Trade Union is also a party to the allocation of houses. This problem is on a much bigger scale than ours. There is a

constant demand for houses, and in granting them all kinds of factors are taken into consideration, and it is the duty of the Trade Union to see the balance is held as fairly as possible. The Trade Union has power to investigate all the books and reports of the administration of the mine and to inspect all institutions coming under the control of the administration, such as schools, restaurants and clinics. For instance, the manager of a colliery (we use this term for convenience), is responsible not only for the working of the mine above and below ground, but for the clinic and restaurant belonging to the mine, and while there may be a manager to look after the restaurant the manager of the mine is responsible if anything goes wrong. For example, meat (pork chops) should weigh ½ lb., and not less, and if a worker complains and can get no satisfaction then the case is taken up with the mine manager, who must get something done about it, and the Trade Union has power to take such cases of underweight to Court. This seemed rather amusing to us, especially when we visualised such circumstances at home. Fancy an English colliery manager in the dock because Dick Smith was underweight with his pork chop.

The Trade Union has power to inspect food stores and housing, and as the winter approaches, "Winter Supply Meetings" are held by the workers both men and women, and the colliery manager has to attend in order to assure the miners that all is in good order for the winter. If it is not, then so much the worse for the manager. Workers whose houses need repairs don't send deputations to the colliery office to interview the manager. The manager has to attend the "Winter Supply Meetings." Yet, in spite of these responsibilities, none of the managers we met seemed unduly worried. They entered the pit about three times a week, and this can be said of them, they are highly respected by the miners, and not merely because they are managers, but because they are "one of us."

The Trade Union has the control of the social schemes, pensions, sickness and accident payment, rest homes and sanatoria, and on the educational and cultural side it has clubs, circles, classes and libraries. Naturally, these functions give the movement great powers, and it is doubtful if these powers are equalled by any other Trade Union Movement in the world. It can grant money to the low paid worker to pay his fare to a rest home or sanatorium, and it provides facilities for miners' children to stay at nurseries, kindergartens, open-air schools and camps. It also provides hospitals, and money for the students. True, as yet, the amounts in English values are not very large, but they run into thousands of pounds.

In the abolition of illiteracy the Trade Union Movement played a big part, and it is estimated that 75 per cent. of this work was done by the Movement. In short, the Trade Unions enter into every sphere of the worker's life, and they are doing an enormous amount of work to raise the cultural level of the miners, and to transform every active



Trade Unionist into a conscious builder of a Socialist Society. Nor do they neglect the international education of their members. Links are established with workers in other countries by means of correspondence.

The workers themselves are the foundation of the major portion of all this activity. One has only to visit their clubs to see how broad this activity is, ranging from societies for international defence, to anti-religious propaganda. The huge sums collected for Spain and the Spanish workers in their struggle against Fascism is an example of the strength of the Trade Unions and the reaction of the workers to international events. Thousands of pounds have been collected in the Donbas coalfield for the Spanish workers and the first question one was asked was about the Spanish situation.

Most of the delegation have had years of experience in our own Trade Union Movement, and the majority have been in close contact with its inner workings. We are of the opinion that, if the standards of the Russian workers are compared with those they had before the revolution, and with those they have now, and a similar test is applied to the British miners as between 1919 and now, then on this method of comparison more success has attended the efforts of the Russian Trade Unions than has attended our own. But the national economy of a big country like Russia with its immense and only partially developed resources, is very different from an old industrial country like Britain, and therefore this would hardly be a proper comparison to make.

RELATIONS WITH THE STATE

Naturally, the question is bound to be asked: "How far are the Trade Unions dependent on the State," or as someone else has put it, how far are they "Puppets of the Communist Party." We asked many questions on this phase of the Trade Union Movement for one wanted to know just how independent the Trade Union Movement was, and as to whether it would take independent action on behalf of its members. We got the answer "that the Trade Unions are entirely independent and under obligation to no authority." Frankly, of course, we do not accept this, for in a Socialist State, political necessity is a prime consideration. That the Trade Union Movement has very great power and influence and can use them to develop and stabilise the Socialist State, we are prepared to accept, but that it is entirely independent, and can, in any circumstance, act independently, we cannot accept. Conversely, we are not prepared to accept the view that it is a puppet body which simply passes on instructions from above without coming to any independent decision itself. The ramifications of the Trade Unions are so wide that such a statement is unworthy of acceptance. We believe that in scores of matters affecting their members, the Trade Unions are entirely independent, but that they are inter-dependent in matters of policy affecting the Socialist State as a whole.

We would never accept, for instance, a statement that the Trade Unions could act against the interest of State, even though they might think it would be in the interests of their members. But we must confess we could hardly visualise such a situation arising for the interests of the State under Socialism and the interests of the whole of the workers are identical. It would be political foolishness to assume that a section of the workers could act independently in their own interests if in so doing they injured the interests of the rest and *ipso facto* the interests of the State. Article 11 of the Draft of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. is evidence of this:—

"The economic life of the U.S.S.R. is determined and directed by the State plan of national economy for the purposes of increasing the public wealth, of steadily raising the material and cultural level of the toilers and of strengthening the independence of the U.S.S.R. and its defence capacity."

In relation to the right to organise, the Constitution states that:—

"In conformity with the interests of the toilers and in order to develop the organisational initiative and political activity of the masses of the people, citizens of the U.S.S.R. are ensured the right to unite in public organisations, Trade Unions, Co-operative Associations, youth organisations, sport and defence organisations, cultural and scientific societies."—(Article 126.)

These rights are undoubtedly wide, but they do not carry with them the right to act inimically to the State and for our part, we believe the Trade Unions have wide powers to create warriors for Socialism and to strengthen the Socialist cause and so long as it bends its entire energies to that end we are not unduly alarmed about its dependence on the State, for in the final analysis, the workers are the State, and to ask them to work against their own interests, is as foolish as to expect anyone to believe that the Trade Unions are entirely independent and under authority to no one for any action they may take.

EDUCATION

We were informed that very large numbers of workers were studying in some form or other. This desire on the part of the Soviet workers to acquire knowledge is remarkable. Both sexes are very keen on it, and as the great majority of the Soviet miners are between 20 and 35 years of age, it takes very little imagination to foresee what results this desire to assimilate knowledge will have in the years to come. Naturally, they are helped by their shorter working day, and during their shift they by no means expend their entire energy in the mine, as so many of our people do.

Every encouragement is given to a boy or girl who is desirous of studying. Many facilities are provided and all who desire, can utilise them. The personnel of the Trusts and Administration were just miners themselves, and their accomplishments on the mechanisation of the mines and the method of working and general lay-out are

not only evidence of the educational facilities at the disposal of the miners in the Soviet Union, but a tribute to their own ability and skill. Classes are held to cover all phases of the work in the pit, and the miner can learn how to master the technique of mine machinery in all its forms. He is taught how to handle a coal-cutting machine, to work a pneumatic pick, to operate an electric drill and to acquire pit sense. If he has ability to go further in the study of mining, facilities are provided for him, or, if he cares, he can study other subjects. At present, most of the studying is done by those who are desirous of mastering the machine and the Stakhanovite movement, for naturally the more skilled and capable a worker becomes, the higher becomes his earnings and his standard of living.

This method of study is undoubtedly having good results so far as the miners' safety is concerned, and, moreover, is giving him the opportunity to develop social and cultural ideas which will make him a worthy citizen in a Socialist State. So far, civilisation has only known educated *classes*. We know of no educated *nation*; but the Russian workers are making big strides, and there is every hope of an educated State being an accomplished fact in the future.

ORGANISATION

In Russia, Trade Union members are organised on the basis of industry, and no separate unions are in existence such as we have in England to cater for the different grades of work in the one industry. The Trade Union meeting admits workers under 18 years of age, but confines itself to those of all ages who contribute to the Trade Union. Its decisions within its own sphere of action can be vetoed only by the Central Committee of the Trades Union. The minimum age for entry into the Trade Unions is 16 years, and no one under the age of 18 is entitled to vote at elections. Voting for the election of officers is by show of hands and a candidate for office must get 60 per cent. of the total number of the votes before he is elected, and at such election meetings there must be 75 per cent. of the Trade Union members present who are actually working at the date of the meeting. Where multiple shifts are in operation arrangements are made to meet the requirements of the night shift by holding a morning meeting. Inquiries were made about the political opinions of the candidates, and we were informed there is a very large number of non-Party members holding positions in the Trade Union Movement.

We examined the Union cards of several miners, some were members of the Communist Party, and others non-Party members. Each card bore stamps as token receipts for money paid. The Trade Union subscription is approximately one per cent. of wages, but other contributions are paid in addition to this. The contributions of Trade Unionists to the Communist Party, that is those who are members of the Communist Party, are graded according to wages

received, and are from 3 per cent. to 5 per cent. of wages earned. In many ways the function of the Soviet Trade Union is similar to our own. It is essentially the organisation of the workers. It has a subscription like ours, except that it is collected monthly, and is not the same amount.

The contributions are collected by a dues collector or cashier, and a stamp is given in exchange and affixed to the Union card. Of the total amount collected in the Donbas, 40 per cent. is retained by the local Committee, 47 per cent. is sent to the Donbas Miners' C.C., 8 per cent. is sent to the local Donbas Trade Union Council (the territorial organisation of all Unions—not unlike our Trades' Council), and 5 per cent. is sent to the Central Committee of the Trade Unions of the Soviet Union.

The total income from all sources of the Trade Union Movement in the Soviet Union in 1935 was the huge figure of 1,792,654,200 roubles. The total expenditure for the same year was 1,657,788,000 roubles.

Details were as follows:—

	<i>Roubles</i>
INCOME per individual member	67.90
EXPENDITURE per individual member	67.42
Consisting of:	
Cultural Work	35.95
Measures to improve living conditions of Union members	9.24
Capital Works (Clubs, Parks of Culture, Rest Homes, Physical Culture Equipment, etc.)	2.08
Administration and Economic Expenditure	19.08

Membership is optional and less drastic steps are necessary to make men and women join than are resorted to by our movement. In fact, the amount of non-Unionism in Soviet Russia is less than ours by far, although certain conditions make their difficulties much greater than ours, as for example, the frequent changes from one occupation to another.

METHOD OF SETTLING DISPUTES

The means adopted for settling disputes is one of the most interesting features of Russian Trade Unionism. This is done by means of a triangle (the word was given us by the Russians themselves), consisting of representatives of the Administration, the Trade Unions, and the Communist Party. This triangle exists in the higher and lower sections of the Administration. In the pit it consists of the section manager, the Trade Union secretary, and the Party secretary. Complaints and disputes at the pit are first dealt with by the pit triangle, and then if no settlement is reached are referred to the higher triangle. If no agreement can be reached the case is heard by the Trust Administration, the Central Committee of the Trade Union and the Party secretary.

The fact that the movement has its base in the pit committee (for the triangle is a sort of committee) makes it easier to deal with complaints and disputes, and, moreover, the triangle is in constant touch with the workers, and able to give immediate attention to any question which may arise. These committee hold office by virtue of the work they accomplish on behalf of their members, and any member of the Trade Union who fails to carry out the duties imposed upon him by his office is soon dispensed with. We were much impressed by the quiet method of passing on orders, and by the regard that the workers had for their representatives. There seemed to be a comradely bond between them, based on mutual respect. No one posed as being something better than his fellow workmen, and there was no attempt at snobbery; in fact, the president of the Donbas miners was one of the best liked men in the coalfield, yet his wages were far less than those of the skilled Stakhanovites.

The Trade Union Movement in Russia is a great training ground for the future worker citizen, a citizen versed in the manifold aspects of a full and free life under Socialism. After 100 years of Trade Unionism in Great Britain, we are far from being as well organised as the Soviet workers, and in many respects the efficiency of the Trade Union Movement there is in advance of our own. Indeed, as a training ground for future citizen workers, we consider that the Soviet Trade Union Movement is the best in the world. The total membership of the Soviet Trade Unions is 20,629,500 (more than the rest of the world put together), and 83 per cent. of the workers in the Soviet Union are members of the Trade Unions.

OTHER INTERESTING FEATURES

STATE LOANS AND PROPERTY

By the end of November we had concluded our visit to the Donetz coal basin, and the time for our return journey was rapidly approaching. By this time we had visited four mining districts, spent two days at the rest home of the Donbas miners, had been in factories, schools, homes and clubs, and had inspected kindergartens, creches, clinics, and schools. Before setting down our general conclusions on our visit, we should like to call attention to certain interesting features of Russian life other than those which we have already described. One of the most interesting of these was the State Conversion Loan. Everywhere, huge notices were posted up urging the workers to invest in the State loan. We inquired if many workers had invested in these loans, what the rate of interest was, how it operated, and so on. We were told that the workers were exceedingly interested in the success of the conversion scheme, that they got annual interest, and they fully realised that the greater the resources at the command of the State, the quicker would they build up a Socialist country. Were not such schemes, we asked, likely to create class

distinction? No, it was impossible to create classes where the means of production and distribution were socialised and exploitation by man was impossible. Naturally, a worker who saved could buy goods and a home with his savings, if he desired. Why not, if he preferred it that way? But he was still a worker and the moment he ceased to work he ceased to enjoy the rights and privileges of a working citizen.

MUTUAL AID SOCIETIES

Another interesting feature of Russian life are the Mutual Aid Societies, which exist in nearly every factory, mine, workshop and office. These societies are non-contributory and are administered by the workers themselves. In general, the administrators are old trusted workers who are well acquainted with the members inside the Mutual Aid Society and command their respect. The funds of these societies are derived from the Trade Unions and the Social Insurance Fund. The workers can obtain money from the society. Sometimes it is given in the shape of grants and sometimes it is part loan and part grant. No interest is charged on the money loaned, and all the work in connection with the societies is carried on by voluntary labour and the administration is independent of the Trade Unions. We inquired how this money was allocated. Again it was a question of meeting the conditions of the applicant. There are no hard and fast rules. Each case is dealt with on its own merits, and not all who apply are successful in getting help. 50 per cent. of the money is spent on grants to the newer workers, such as peasants from the country who have entered industry and are not earning big wages, and need clothing. Such cases receive fairly liberal help.

A young fellow desirous of getting married may make application for a loan or grant to buy furniture and other household goods. He may get 50 per cent. in loan and 50 per cent. in grant, or 20 per cent. and 80 per cent., or 40 per cent. and 60 per cent., depending upon circumstances. Or a worker's parents who live hundreds of miles away may die, and the worker wants to visit the family home and attend the funeral. Naturally, the cost of travelling such a distance is heavy, so he makes application to the Mutual Aid Society for a grant to enable him to go home. Invariably such cases are attended to immediately and a grant given. One can well imagine circumstances in one's own life where a grant or loan would be welcome. The Soviet workers have the same troubles and difficulties and the existence of the Mutual Aid Society helps many to overcome their immediate problems. We were told of one case where a worker who was one time a peasant made application to the Society for a loan to buy a cow, and he was given 50 per cent. in loan and 50 per cent. in grant.

The housing problem was extremely acute, especially in Moscow. There was far too much overcrowding, and it was estimated that it would take ten years to liquidate this problem in its entirety. Another important aspect of the Russian worker's life was the care of children and pregnant mothers. We have already written on this, therefore we shall not cover the ground again, except to say that apart from the holidays with full pay before and after pregnancy, the mother receives a grant from the Social Insurance Fund of fifty-five roubles when the child is born and fifteen roubles each month until the child is nine months old. If, however, a worker's wife is at home and does not work and is capable of work, and the worker earns more than 300 roubles per month, she does not enjoy these privileges. But if the husband's earnings are less than 300 roubles per month, then the grants are paid.

Then there are the funeral benefits payable to the worker and all the members of his family. Workers who are sent away to rest homes or sanatoria are granted full pay while they are away, and although a worker earning good wages is expected to pay his fare, the maximum he pays is fifty roubles.

MONEY FOR SPAIN

Everywhere we found a tense interest in the Spanish situation, and millions of roubles had been collected by the Soviet Union and by the Trade Unions for the Spanish workers. It is foolish to believe that this money has been extorted from the workers, for we discussed the Spanish question with them time and time again, and after these discussions we always felt convinced that the Russian workers would give every spare copeck to the Spanish people. One could not doubt their sincere desire to help Spain in the fight against Fascism, and in spite of the fact that their country had less to fear from the menace of Fascism than any other democratic country, they were more concerned with the international situation than many countries which are nearer to Spain, and have more to lose if the Spanish people should fail in their struggle.

MASTERY OF INDUSTRIAL TECHNIQUE

Our meetings in the factories with the Leningrad and Moscow workers were not only interesting but instructive, and being workers ourselves we knew what kind of questions to ask in order to get the information required about their daily lives. One got some idea, too, of how keen is the struggle to master technique. There have been great changes along these lines since 1931, and as one watched the workers at their job, this was very noticeable. It does not take an expert to see whether a man or woman is master of their job. The way the Russian workers handled their tools and the way they went about their job gives the impression that they were "on top" of

their work, and although the "finishing touch" lacked that completeness we find in the finished product of our own factories, it has improved tremendously during the past five years.

In general, however, there is still a need to "finish the job off." You know the term we use in England to express the pride in our job and give it that bit of extra finish. Well, generally speaking, technique has to be mastered still further in order to accomplish this, and this is one of the many sided aspects of the Stakhanovite movement—to give that pride in work so that in quality, finish and beauty it satisfies the æsthetic sense of the craftsman. We want, however, to emphasise that many kinds of products in the factories are perfectly finished and seen to be of the highest quality. It is, however, of the general average we speak, and only in the particular sense of the "completeness" of the finished product.

HOME AND MARRIAGE

We talked with a young factory worker who, if one spoke slowly, could understand English. She had seen the film of Charlie Chaplin, "Modern Times." It was, we suppose, very popular in Moscow. Little details that seemed unimportant when we saw it were given a political and social significance, not altogether unjustifiable. We certainly saw the film in a new light, namely, the conception of the newer type of worker in Russia of the development of the capitalist system in all its aspects.

This same worker had read many of the English poets and authors and was especially keen on Dickens. She had a different conception of life altogether from the average English girl. Home and marriage were to her aspects of life, something to be proud of. She had, however, no desire to give up her job and live at home all day. She wanted to take an active part in the building of Socialism, and the overcoming of the many difficulties facing her country. She wanted to master English thoroughly and then German, because many of the best technical books on engineering were in these languages, and she was studying to be an engineer. In short, she wanted to be a fully equipped warrior for Socialism, and when we asked her if she did not want better clothes, more dresses, and a home all complete with furniture, she stated they would come in time; at present, they were not at all important. She believed the social questions came first, the building of Socialism and the establishment of a classless society in which she as an educated engineer could play her part.

CONCLUSIONS

And now, as to our conclusions! We have not attempted to make anyone believe that Russia is "Kingdom Come," nor have we any desire to do so, for that would be neither good for Russia nor creditable to the delegation, and, moreover, it is not true. But great improvements have been made, and although the goal is still some way off, life in Russia is full of purpose and hope, and millions of keen, clear eyes are looking towards the dawn. When one remembers the cities of Moscow and Leningrad in 1931, with their ration cards, and when one recalls the general air of drabness, and the bitter struggle which was being waged against odds, we are able with quiet joy to bear witness to the beneficial changes that have been effected. Many problems still exist—lack of housing, overcrowding, backward transport, and so on—but the determination to overcome and conquer these difficulties is there, and new creative impulses and possibilities are being born out of the struggle for Socialism, and the classless society; impulses which would be thwarted under any other system. As a young engineer said to us:—

"A world full of big problems is better than a world full of little ones. We are under no illusion. We have no desire to hide our difficulties. We understand we have not yet mastered technique like the advanced workers of Western capitalism. We know we have a long way to go in many respects; that many of our people have not a high cultural level; we know and understand all that and do not hide it from ourselves. We are by no means satisfied with many things in our land to-day. We accept your criticism of many of them, but we also know how far we have come and what we had to start from. We know the price that had to be paid to battle against the dark heritage we received from Czarism. It has not been easy and not always pleasant, but we are coming through and things are improving year by year, and we shall overcome all our difficulties because we are realists and not afraid to face the truth. Yesterday's wind will not blow again, but we profit by the experience of it, and it is the same in all our tasks. When our workers have mastered the technique of the Stakhanovite movement we shall enjoy a standard of economic life that is equal to anything that has been enjoyed by workers anywhere and at any time, and from there we shall go forward to still better labour conditions and standard of living."

With these remarks we are in full sympathy. Undoubtedly, the Russian people are in every way better off than they were in 1931, and if peace is maintained this improvement will continue. In conclusion, may we state that we considered ourselves ambassadors of friendship and goodwill to the Russian workers, and we brought away from that country happy and pleasant memories of those whom we had conversed with in pit, factory, opera, cinema and club. Naturally, we were proud of our own Federation, and we did or said nothing which could be considered discourteous or disloyal to our own people. The poet said, "One touch of Nature makes the

whole world kin." Our touch was that of comradeship, and we felt that in that touch was a kinship which in the not distant future will lead to closer unity between the British and Russian miners.

(Signed) { E. MOORE
T. PIGFORD
H. PREST
J. ROBINSON
F. COLLINDRIDGE
J. D. MURRAY
S. WATSON

February 13, 1937

FIGURES QUOTED BY COMRADE SHVERNIK AT THE RECEPTION TO THE FOREIGN WORKERS' DELEGATIONS

THE GROWTH OF NATIONAL ECONOMY IN THE U.S.S.R.

During eight years of the first and second five-year plan the total capital investments in national economy amounted to 150,000,000,000 roubles.

70,000,000,000 invested in industry.
24,000,000,000 " agriculture.
32,000,000,000 " transportation and communications.

During the years of the first five-year plan capital investments amounted to 50,000,050,000 roubles, while during the four years of the second five-year plan it was almost 100,000,000,000 almost twice.

During the first and second five-year plan more than 2,500 factories and shops, which are modern enterprises in their technical equipment, were built.

GROSS PRODUCTION OF LARGE INDUSTRY
(IN MILLIONS OF ROUBLES, PRICES OF 1926-27)

Year	Entire Large Industry	In percentage to Previous Years
1913	10.251	—
1928	16.883	—
1929	21.183	125.8
1930	27.726	130.9
1931	34.173	123.3
1932	38.826	113.7
1933	42.030	108.2
1934	50.477	120.1
1935	62.136	123.1
1936 (plan)	77.000	124.0
1936, actually for nine months	57.947	—
1936, nine months in percentage to nine months of		
1935	—	133.7

AVERAGE PRODUCTION PER WORKER IN LARGE INDUSTRY
(IN ROUBLES, PRICES OF 1926-27)

Year	Entire Large Industry	In percentage to Previous Year
1928	4.764	112.2
1929	5.378	112.9
1930	5.900	109.7
1931	6.348	107.6
1932	6.513	102.6
1933	7.080	108.7
1934	7.837	110.7
1935	9.060	115.6
1936 (plan)	11.017	121.6
1936, eight months in percentage to eight months, 1935	—	125.5
1936, eight months in percentage to average for year 1935	—	118.2

GROWTH OF WORKING-CLASS AND NUMBER OF TRADE UNION MEMBERS

From 1928 to 1936, the working-class increased from 10,060,000 to 25,130,000, and makes up to-day 30 per cent. of the whole adult population, compared to 16.7 per cent. in 1913.

The number of Trade Union members grew during the same period of time from 10,994 to 21,229 by July 1, 1936.

EARNINGS AND GROWTH OF CONSUMPTION OF ARTICLES OF FOOD AND CLOTHING

Steadily, from year to year, the earnings of our workers in industry keeps increasing. Thus, the average monthly earnings of the workers in 1935 grows by 264.3 per cent. in comparison to 1928, all through industry. And in 1936, it rose an additional 21.8 per cent. In separate branches this rise is still higher. In the coal industry it amounts to 338 per cent., to which must be added another 23.4 per cent. in 1936 above 1935; the output of oil rose correspondingly by 292.3 per cent., and another 28.4 per cent. in 1936. Ferrous metals rose 275 per cent., and an additional 23.9 per cent. in 1936.

These are only average figures. In each factory we have hundreds of Stakhanov workers whose earnings are several times larger than the average figures. Many Stakhanovites do not only over fulfil their norms of production, but they earn 1,000 roubles a month and more.

The sharp rise in the level of living conditions of the working-class is also confirmed by the data received by those who are investigating workers' families' budgets; this work is being carried out by the central office of People's Economic Statistics.

According to these data, the average money income per person in a worker's family increased during the first half of 1936 by 25.5 per cent. compared to the first six months of 1935.

The most important fact is the growth of meat consumption, which equals 36 per cent. per person; the consumption of pork increased 83 per cent., that of poultry and game over 150 per cent. The consumption of lard increased three times. Sugar is consumed by 61 per cent. more, fruit and berries by 200 per cent. The consumption per person of milk increased 26 per cent., of cheese 31 per cent. The consumption of vegetable oil increased more than double, and that of eggs nearly 2½ times.

During 1936, workers' families have acquired many more articles of wear and household. The quantity of ready-made clothes and underwear purchased increased 24 per cent. per person during the first quarter of 1936 compared to the same period of time in 1935. Woollens and woollen goods were purchased three times as much.

The amount of money spent to purchase clothing, cloth and footwear during the first half year rose 67 per cent. compared to last year, while 65 per cent. more was spent on furniture, household articles, etc.

SOCIAL INSURANCE

In our country social insurance is entirely at the expense of the State. All insurance premiums for the workers are paid by the enterprise without any deductions whatsoever from the workers' pay.

The State transfers all funds of social insurance to the Trade Unions. The Trade Unions use these means for the following: Free medical help to workers and members of their families, paying the sick, expectant mothers eight weeks before they give birth and eight weeks after birth, help for feeding the child till the age of eight months, pension during disability (no matter what the reason, old age pension and cures in sanatoria and health resorts). Every worker in the U.S.S.R. receives at the expense of the place he works in a vacation from two weeks to a month each year. During vacation many workers, employees, engineers, technicians, scientific workers and others enjoy a rest in rest homes at the expense of social insurance. Social insurance funds also take care in part in the maintenance of kindergartens, creches and pioneer camps.

GROWTH OF SOCIAL INSURANCE FUNDS IN THE U.S.S.R.

						(in millions of roubles)
1929	..	..	..	..	..	1327.1
1930	..	..	..	..	..	1808.9
1931	..	..	..	..	..	2849.5
1932	..	..	..	..	..	4400.8
1933	..	..	..	..	..	4799.8
1934	..	..	..	..	..	5157.2
1935	..	..	..	..	..	6680
1936	..	..	..	..	..	8380

CHANGE OF SOCIAL INSURANCE FUNDS EXPENDITURES IN CONNECTION WITH THE INCREASE OF THE BUDGET

	1929	1936
(in millions of roubles)		
(1) For medical treatments of workers and members of their family ..	264	2,272.5
(2) Pay while ill	311	1,590
(3) Pensions	271.8	1,300
(4) Funds for feeding and care of children until the age of nine months	64.9	169
(5) For children's creches, kindergartens and Pioneer camps ..	3.2	751.5
(6) Rest homes, sanatoria, health resorts and travel	41.6	675
(7) Building workers' homes	118.4	800

HEALTH PRESERVATION FUNDS IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA AND IN THE U.S.S.R.

(in millions of roubles)				
1913	1928	1932	1934	1935
128.5	660.8	2105.8	3222.6	4000.0

NUMBER OF WORKERS, ENGINEERS, TECHNICIANS, EMPLOYEES, SCIENTIFIC WORKERS, DOCTORS, ETC., MAKING USE OF SANATORIA AND REST HOMES AT THE EXPENSE OF SOCIAL INSURANCE

	1928	1936
Health resorts and sanatoria	74,020	265,000
Rest Homes	437,020	1,626,000

THE RISE IN THE CULTURAL LEVEL OF THE TOILERS

From 1928 to 1936, the number of pupils in schools of general education increased by 13,500,000 people, those studying in technicums by 440,000 and universities by 350,000.

In 1935, 515,090 children of workers, peasants and employees studied in universities, 698,000 studied in technicums and 276,000 in workers' faculties.

In 1935, 1,778,000,000 roubles were spent on stipends for students in universities.

This year 25,000,000 children go to school in the Soviet Union, compared to 7,000,000 in 1914.

In the factories of the heavy industry, during 1935, 797,000 workers passed their examination for minimum technical requirements, which means that not only in practice, but also in theory, did they master the technique of modern machinery.

3,000,000 workers and working women in industry study during free time (in the evening), raising their general level of knowledge.

The Trade Unions own clubs and palaces of culture as follows:—

1928	1930	1932	1935	1936
3.857	4.081	4.477	5.055	5.123

Each factory and shop has its own Red Corner in which Trade Union organisations carry on a mass-cultural and political activity. Altogether there are 53,558 such Red Corners.

PHYSICAL CULTURE IN THE U.S.S.R.

	1929	1932	1935
Number of adult physical culturists (in thousands) ..	759	4,700	8,706
Financing in thousand roubles	16,532	60,000	185,000
Number of physical culture buildings:			
Stadiums and grounds	2,425	4,032	4,550
Halls	311	2,000	2,300
Water and ski stations ..	156	650	800
Physical culture houses	41	185	200

EXPENSES OF TRADE UNIONS IN 1936

	Roubles
Culture service of members of Union ..	958,000,000
Among which:	
Abolition of illiteracy among members of Trade Unions	72,800,000
Raising of general educational level of workers and employees during free time	29,200,000
Libraries	94,400,000
Plays, concerts, movies	101,600,000
Organisations of bands, musical and dramatic circles and amateur orchestras	90,500,000
Physical culture	106,200,000
Maintaining Trade Union clubs ..	121,000,000
For various needs	271,200,000
Among which:	
Material help to members of Union ..	136,500,000
Passes for rest homes, sanatoria, trips, etc.	11,300,000