

20 YEARS AFTER : Seeing Socialism

BY TOM MANN

I WAS VERY GLAD to be an invited guest of the Central Council of the Soviet Trade Unions, to visit the Soviet Union and take part in the 20th Anniversary Celebrations in Moscow. With Ben Tillett, my comrade in arms of 48 years ago and on numberless occasions, I was invited to join up with the British delegation under the auspices of the Friends of the Soviet Union, and did so, leaving London for Leningrad on October 30, 1937. On board the vessel, also bound for Moscow, were the two South African delegates, one of them being W. H. Andrews, my old friend and Trade Union colleague of many years standing.

It might be interesting to give an account of the earnestness and concern shewn by each of the delegates, American and British, to fraternise with each other and hold conversations on set subjects during the voyage, to get close acquaintance with the problems of chief interest, but this would take too much space. At Bremerhaven we took on board the crew of the Soviet ship Komsomol, which was sunk by a Franco warship, the crew being saved but imprisoned. These were Russians of course, so that plus the Spanish delegation of about fifteen and the others previously mentioned, we made an interesting contingent.

We duly arrived at Leningrad on Friday, November 5, travelling the same night to Moscow, reaching there Saturday morning. With suitable meetings of welcome we were ready on Sunday the 7th for the great celebration in the Red Square. Over a period of many years in the Movement, in many countries, I have seen many demonstrations; but never, not even in Russia, had I seen anything approaching this magnificent celebration of efficiency in all departments. Of necessity, the Red Army was there, in many thousands. The great march past was extremely impressive, every section of the fighting forces in full equipment telling of millions of others, ready on the instant to spring to the defence of the Fatherland.

We watched with keen interest and highest admiration the marching workers of both sexes, with banners and emblems, beautiful and numberless. Officers of the Army, Navy, Aviation, industrial toilers of all occupations, with hundreds of bands, and hundreds of thousands of streamers, banners, bannerets, flags and other exhibits, were marching. After six hours on end of this, our eyes and legs felt the necessity for relaxation, but we had to be ready again for six in the

evening to continue without any break till one in the morning.

Space will not admit of further descriptive matter as I am anxious to deal with what I consider by far the most vital questions affecting the workers of the whole world. It is not sufficient to be able to declare and to prove that the standard of life of a whole people is higher than formerly; it is not enough that education is certainly higher and better than before; nor is it sufficient that it can be proved beyond doubt that material betterment is the universal characteristic. All these things may be, and yet, if there is lacking a planned system of the production of all life's essentials, in such abundance and in such manner, on a basis of assured distribution of these essentials that they shall reach all, not just for long spells but for *all* the time, with no fear of economic crisis, and therefore no fear of spells of unemployment, there is no economic security for the people. Planned production on a co-operative basis; producing for use and not for profit—this, and nothing less than this, is fundamental for the continuous well-being of a whole people: and this they assuredly have in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

We had opportunities of speaking with workers in a quiet and private fashion, carefully returning again and again to the same point until we were clear. We had similar chances of submitting any questions to officials and getting replies, and made use of these opportunities. When we were not clear as to the control of the workers in factories and shops we were directed to the Factory Committees. The Factory Committees are very real functioning agencies. The Trade Unions are indeed the controllers of industry, working in conjunction with all the agencies for ensuring the highest economic efficiency and the building up of the Socialist State. In no other country on earth is there economic security, nor can there be on a basis of profit trading. Production for profit must repeatedly destroy attempts at stabilising industry and so leave people in idleness.

If we know these things, why dare we not declare in favour of applying such principles in this country? Are we to go on for ever tolerating and excusing the systematic legalised robbery we see being carried on by the capitalist exploiters? Trade Unionists, we know the real causes of economic crises; do not let us be fearful to play the man and determine to act upon that knowledge. Upon the Trade Union Movement of this country rests a great and serious responsibility. To the millions of sufferers employed and unemployed we are in duty bound to make it known, nation-wide poverty can be cured; industry can be stabilised, but not under capitalism. Universal co-operative ownership of the means of life and the co-operative principle of production for the well-being of all, guarantees the abolition of poverty and with it the meanness of life, its accompaniment.

I am proud and privileged indeed to have seen the realisation of planned production in so vast a country as the Soviet Union, with a population of one hundred and eighty millions of people. For this

glorious example they are showing to the world, let those of us who rejoice over it because of the hope it holds up to all peoples, let us joyfully express our thanks. May they go on, as of course they will, from victory to further victories, always in the interests of the peoples of the world on the basis of SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL.

Long live the Soviet Union! Long live the Workers Organisations of all countries. May OUR TRADE UNIONS SPEEDILY REALISE THE GLORIOUS WORK AWAITING TO BE DONE, AND DO IT !

Mighty Democracy

BY BEN TILLET

RUSSIA IS HEADING for a mightier democracy than was ever conceived by the Utopians, for it unites altruism with utility in all its plannings for the future. The five year plans are but a definition of an instruction; what is behind it all, is the building up of a great democracy, built to meticulous detail in relationship of parts to the whole conception of equity in control and constitution.

Evolutionary constructiveness is built on family life, providing maternity with scientific and medical aid of the first class. First, the pregnant, future Mother is guarded with clinic and medical care, two months before accouchement she must not work—together with a two months after birth care. Her clinic aid means nursing, feeding, care of child, creche; and if returning to work, she has the factory creche of skilful nursing to help her offspring, while she herself is assured of every help to efficient motherhood. This is a normal condition safeguarding the mother and child, and there is no “ Nosey Parkerism ”; the mother as such is revered. Medical care follows mother and bairn up to the creche and the kindergarten period, where physical and mental training is gently evolutionary to the child and juvenile schooling.

All this time the matter of home-life, feeding and care, is still followed up by the State authorities. Then there is the most practical of schooling undertaken, and technical training, cultural education follows in efficient manner. Technical, industrial, scientific and cultural education of every quality and degree is encouraged by every aid and form of maintenance by the State schemes of advancement in learning and practical industrial science. There being no class except merit, every position in the state and society is open to all—with proficiency encouraged by the anxious and alert administration in every scope and area. Manhood comes with health and courage improved to manifest