

ment of social conservation,' continued the Jesuit, 'you already have in your possession. You hold it in your hands. I mean the newspapers. Found papers of all shades of opinions, even the most subversive, so that you may pass for Liberals; but be sure to make them cheap and interesting, and to flatter the mob. Make your newspapers the daily brain food of the populace. Make them indispensable for a working class which has been judiciously educated. In this way you can destroy all individual opinion in that class. The brains of the people will be conscious of no other doctrines than those which you inculcate. Your readers will think *en masse* what you want them to think, and they will follow you the more docilely because they fancy they are acting independently. But in order to do all these things, the people must be educated. People may be educated without acquiring independence of mind. Only the highest education can give the latter, and it will be a long time before the rank and file reach that highest standard.

'The lower classes will never be able to control the journals you will found, because that requires large sums of money. If our rich middle class citizens will take care to establish enough popular newspapers, rival publications started by the lower classes will be sure to fail. You will be the exclusive manufacturers of public opinion.

'What our country needs,' concluded the Jesuit while the others were silent with surprise, 'is free, obligatory, public instruction; and I may add, lay instruction. If France adopts that system which seems to you now a mad one, I prophesy, without the slightest fear of being in error, that the common people will fall so completely under your influence as to rejoice in their condition, and will readily ally themselves with the middle classes against

any revolutionary factions which may arise. If in days to come the government of any nation is overthrown, it will be a government whose subjects are largely illiterate. For complete education makes a man free; but half education merely makes him overconfident, and an easy prey to the persuasion of men who would rule him.'

Thiers made no reply when the Father ceased, but remained plunged in silent meditation. Twenty years later, when fate raised him to the presidency of the Third Republic, he had not forgotten the arguments of the Jesuit so many years before. His school policy and his use of the press were tokens of homage to that advice.

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THREE MONTHS IN BOLSHEVIST RUSSIA. I

BY E. COLOMBINO

[The following is from the report of the delegate of the Italian Metal Workers' Union, a Socialist, who was sent to Russia last May to make an exhaustive investigation of industrial conditions in that country for the information of the Labor Union to which he belongs.]

We are at Yamburg, the first town in the soviet Republic. The fact is impressed on our attention by hearing 'The International' played and sung. The railway station is decorated with red festoons and banners. Lenin's picture forms the centre of countless allegorical Bolshevik propaganda posters. A phonograph is repeating to a group of soldiers and peasants, speeches by Lenin, Trotzky, and other orators. This is our first example of the way propaganda is conducted here.

Before reaching Russia's former capital, our train stops for two hours at the station of Gachina. A good sized crowd is clustered behind a

detachment of Red soldiers ranged on a little platform. To the rhythmic waving of Red flags, they chant the solemn air of 'The International,' with almost religious fervor. When this hymn is played, soldiers stand at attention, and the citizens uncover. It is a picturesque and moving spectacle. Many of us, even though we may be somewhat skeptical, wipe away a furtive tear.

Short addresses of welcome are delivered, and we resume our journey to Petrograd. When we arrive, Comrade Zinovieff, Mrs. Balabanoff, and others meet us at the station. There are salutes, and embraces, and tears, mingled with cheering and military music. As we leave the station, a guard of women soldiers drawn up along the way presents arms. They are handsome, young women, erect in their dark and almost elegant uniforms. We pass in an automobile between long ranks of soldiers, and finally reach the mansion designated for the use of the Italian mission.

So at last we are here, in the city which gave birth to the revolution and saw it through its precarious infancy. Our sojourn of eight days in what was formerly a beautiful, modern metropolis with flourishing industries, is ample to show us why the correspondents of bourgeois papers have sent us such pessimistic and gloomy descriptions of its present condition.

Any man of the middle class, whether a journalist by profession or drafted into that service after his return from Russia, who is ignorant of Russia's history, who cannot and could not be expected to comprehend the causes underlying the revolution through which that country has passed, is perfectly logical and honest in describing things here as horrible, and in blaming the Bolsheviks for the country's moribund condition. Only

an eye of Socialist faith and training can perceive in Russia anything else than its present material ruin.

We are literally treading on the ruins of a world crushed to atoms by a war and two revolutions. A new world has not yet arisen, and cannot be brought into existence by the mere waving of a magician's wand. It was a short matter to destroy the old rotten system. But it will take a long, long time to build a new one, especially when its architects refuse to preserve a single line of the former structure.

Petrograd looks to-day like a city in mourning. Of its two and one half million people, only some six hundred thousand remain. Most of the others have removed to the country, where it is easier to procure food; part are fighting at the front, and the remainder have died by battle, by revolution, by violent epidemics, and in some instances by starvation and cold. It is a horrible thing, a spectacle that wrings your heart, and brings an oath to your lips—a malediction not against those who started the revolution, nor yet against the Bolsheviks, who themselves are the helpless children of circumstance.

Business houses are closed. Private trading is prohibited. Show windows are broken. The shutters still lying in fragments along the street add their peculiar note to the picture of desolation. Here and there remnants of old advertisements have been left, as if in bitter mockery. Street cars only run at long intervals, during a few hours of the day, and on the principal lines. There are certainly not over fifty in the whole city. Along the Neva, great barges have been sunk and lie abandoned. The former wooden block pavements have practically disappeared. They have been torn up by the citizens for fuel during the intense cold of the arctic winters. Last win-

ter, 36,000 wooden sheds and small houses were torn down for the same purpose. Stop and consider, for a moment, that this great city has no public water supply, because the frost has burst all the piping. That was the reason for the last explosive epidemic of typhoid, which carried off thousands of victims and still leaves visible traces in the population. A mere glance at the clothing and footwear of the inhabitants shocks you into a realization of the utter misery which bows down this heroic, stoical nation. Food conditions are anything but promising. They are quite in harmony with other conditions in Russia. For rationing purposes, the people are divided into four categories. The staff of life is a kind of bread — made of a mixture of rye, straw, and 45 per cent of water — a very thin gruel of millet and bean flour, and on rare occasions a trifle of putrid meat or spoiled fish. Workers enlisted for special industrial service have a slightly more liberal ration. Here is the official quota for the four categories.

First category — All persons over 16 years of age, whether they work or not: 160 grammes of bread a day; 420 grammes of sugar a month; 420 grammes of salt a month. Permission to buy at high official prices 100 cigarettes a month. A daily plate of soup or gruel.

Second category — Heavy workers, specialists, and so forth, 315 grammes of bread a day; 420 grammes of sugar a month; 420 grammes of salt a month. Permission to buy at high official prices 100 to 200 cigarettes a month; gruel and a free meal daily, consisting of soup and meat or fish if they are to be had.

Third category — Employees working six hours: 210 grammes of bread a day; 315 grammes of sugar a month; 315 grammes of salt a month. Permission to buy at high official prices 75 cigarettes a month. One meal gratis as described above.

Fourth category — Employees who work less than six hours: 105 grammes of bread a day; 220 grammes of sugar a month; 220 grammes of salt a month. Permission to buy at high official prices 75 cigarettes a month. One free meal as above.

Women employed in household duties and bringing up at least two children under fourteen years of age, also are entitled to the supplement of provisions in the Fourth Category. This food is furnished by the government, but not in quantities sufficient to support life. People buy what additional provisions they must have from secret traders, with such money as they can raise from any little possessions they may have retained — often their last furniture or clothing. The prices demanded by speculators and illegal dealers are exorbitant. I have obtained a few figures: fire wood 15,000 rubles a pood; butter 3500 rubles a pound; milk 300 rubles for a small bottle; meat 1000 rubles a pound; cloth 10,000 rubles a yard; black bread 300 rubles a pound; old potatoes 200 rubles a pound.

Private traders are prohibited but tolerated. Every now and then the police raid them, but they start again the next day. Long lines of these peddlers, most of whom are women, are found at certain points in the city. One will have three little pieces of sugar, another a piece of meat or fish or butter. They carry these things around all day in their dirty, chapped hands. Others have household utensils, garments, women's dilapidated and ill-repaired shoes. It is an interesting but depressing spectacle. These people are the remnants of the old system, still struggling to survive and trying to hide themselves from the new era, like an ostrich which buries its head in the sand.

Many women are moving about the broad and formerly beautiful boulevards to make purchases. Any old thing will sell. Some of these women are shod and others are barefoot. One wears a man's coat, another what, in its day, was a fashionable wrap. I have even seen women abroad in

bathing suits which in happier days had been worn, no doubt, at well-known seaside resorts. Now and then you meet a person still dressed with some elegance, but these are rare exceptions. They are the last remnants of the old Bourgeoisie, or else government employees who hold good jobs in the new administration.

Great quantities of money are in circulation, but its value fluctuates enormously. The bills issued by the government of the Tsar, by the first Duma, and by Kerensky are all still current, and are worth more than the bills printed by the Bolsheviki.

In striking contrast with all this misery are the great public monuments, churches, museums, and similar institutions, which have not been injured in the least. I visited some of the important churches, filled with priceless treasures of gold, precious stones, and objects of art. Not a thing has been molested. The churches are unguarded, constantly open to the public, and protected by the Revolutionary government. The profound religious sentiment of the common people has not been offended.

The few public services which are still in operation are managed by the old bureaucracy, for there is nothing to take its place. Report has it that these people practise systematic sabotage. On the other hand, the government has appointed thousands of new officials, partly to provide work for the unemployed. The municipal government of Petrograd alone has 40,000 on its pay rolls.

I was very anxious to see how the public business was being run, in order to form an opinion of the country's economic future; so I arranged a programme of visits, including the most important public enterprises in every branch of industry, so far as I was able to get to them within the

limited time at my disposal. I began with the historical Putiloff Works, not because they are the best, or the most important, but because our people in Italy have heard most about them.

These works cover a vast area in the suburbs of the city. Indeed, they form a good sized town of themselves. Before we reached them, I was aware that they did not pulsate with the activity of former days. Many of the lofty furnace stacks were not smoking. The silence of the tomb reigned in most of the great buildings. We were received by the factory committee, which gave us a brief preliminary account of the works. Before the war, they employed 40,000 hands. During the conflict itself, the number rose to 50,000. At the present time, there are 7000 on the pay rolls. According to the data we received, some 20,000 workers had gone to the front. The management of the establishment is in the hands of an engineer, who is responsible for all its operations. He lays out the work and sees that it is done. He receives commissions and raw materials from the Superior Economic Council, to which he ships the products and renders an account of operations. He is appointed by the Committee of National Economy upon recommendation of the Factory Committee and the Trade Union (professional syndicate), of which he must be a member.

I learned at this first interview that the Shop Committees, after the disastrous experience of the early days of the revolution, are now deprived of administrative authority. They are composed of seven workingmen, and while nominally corresponding to our Shop Committees in Italy, really exercise different functions. The manager is responsible directly to the government, which sees that he carries out its orders. The Committee's

duties are limited to maintaining discipline among the workers. The seven members of the Shop Committee are elected from the rank and file by departments, where the employees vote in public meetings, usually by show of hands. The term of office is six months; a delegate cannot take office until his name has been approved by the Trade Union. The Shop Committee receives complaints of employees, and if they are sufficiently important passes them on to the Union officials. Minor complaints are settled directly with the superintendent. The Committee likewise receives the superintendent's recommendations for penalties to be imposed upon offending employees, investigates the merits of each case, and forwards its recommendation to the proper Disciplinary Committee. In case of disagreement, an Arbitration Board composed of one member of the Trade Union, one member of the Government Economic Council, and one disinterested workman settles the dispute. The Shop Committee cannot make recommendations regarding the management of the business, either to the superintendent or to the Trade Union. In conjunction with both of the latter, it drafts wage schedules and superintends their enforcement. It has charge of the circulation of books, and the distribution of journals, ration cards, living quarters, and clothing. It also distributes tickets to theatres and concerts, and provides for the care in hospitals and homes of children, invalids, and old people.

At the time of our visit, the workmen had just held a mass meeting, where on the motion of the Shop Committee they had adopted a resolution severely condemning slackers. While serving on Shop Committees, members do not do ordinary work but devote all their time to official duties.

After giving us this little sketch of the organization of the works and the personnel, the president of the committee and some engineer foremen accompanied us through the different shops. We noted at once that the administrative offices and the offices of the technical personnel were almost deserted. We did not conceal our surprise at this, whereupon our guide explained to us that the administrative end of the business was practically null, since there was no accounting of costs and the only books were the pay rolls. All the old bookkeeping apparatus is shoved to one side in disorderly confusion. The technical staff has practically disappeared, because nothing new is being designed, no new machinery is being made, and the repair work which now is the principal business of the establishment requires only the common sense of the workers. At the time of our visit, the shops were engaged in repairing artillery, locomotives, and railway cars.

We first went into the boiler shop. It contained seven big electric cranes of thirteen ton capacity. There was an abundance of machinery in fairly good condition, including electric drills and punches. In the centre of the shops were three locomotive boilers under repair. Several hundred mechanics and laborers were employed upon them; but were working without plan or direction. One got the impression that each man was going about his task in his own way, according to his personal ideas, and above all without regard for economy of time, or materials. We next come to the machine shop. It was a magnificent building. Thousands of machines of every kind were in it. The network of belts from the floor to the ceiling looked like an immense cobweb. A few machines were in motion; the rare mechanics who were working were

almost lost in the immense establishment. They were engaged in repairing cannon. Things were a little livelier in the wood working department, but even there much of the machinery was stopped. Our most disappointing surprise, however, was to visit the foundry, steel works, and rolling mills. Everything was shut down, and falling a victim to rust. Nearly all of the furnace linings have caved in, and the mill rolls are rusted and going to ruin. A beautiful mill for rolling fine sheet iron, of 9000 horse power, has been in process of erection for two years. It sent a pang through my heart to see such ruin and neglect, such stagnation and idleness in a country, where it is so urgent to increase production. We continued our walk amidst fragments of abandoned machines and past disorderly heaps of materials. Bombarding the members of the committee and the superintendent with our questions, little by little we got a verbal picture also of the full extent of the ruin. Twenty thousand workers have been forced to leave their labor for the front. When Denikin captured the mining regions of South Russia, the works were deprived of raw materials. Inadequate transportation facilities and the difficulty of feeding the employees make it almost impossible to keep the works going at all. That is why the services of the establishment are confined to repairing three locomotives, 100 railway cars, and a score or so of heavy guns. That seems mighty little for 7000 workingmen to be doing. What surprised us perhaps as much as anything, was to find in each shop an altar kept in splendid condition, while the machinery around it was utterly neglected. We shall try to explain that, after we know this peculiar nation better and have visited the rest of Russia. We finished our first survey of a Bolshevik establish-

ment by asking how the workers were handled, what they were paid, and how they were disciplined. For a period, all the employees received the same pay on a salary basis. Now only the superintendent and engineers are salaried, and all other work is paid for on a piece work basis, which figures out as a premium over and above a standard minimum wage. This is the so-called Rowan system. Rates are fixed by a special committee composed of workingmen and engineers. This tariff includes thirty-five categories which applies throughout Russia and to every branch of manufacture, being based upon the cost of living at different points. At Petrograd, for example, where it costs most to live, in addition to the regular rate, each workingman receives a special supplementary ration of bread and sometimes fish. In addition, he gets with his piece work premium on an average about 8000 rubles a month. Compare this sum with the market prices I quote above, and you will get some idea of its real value.

A uniform code of labor regulations is in effect in all the factories and workshops of Russia. Its enforcement is entrusted to special courts. In case of serious offences, a worker may be sentenced to forced labor or to prison. The normal working day is eight hours, and overtime is remunerated at special rates fixed in the general wage scale. Workingmen are employed and transferred from one point to another by a special employment office of their union. Every workingman belongs to the organization appropriate to his trade, and a union fee amounting to 2 per cent is deducted from his wages. Men are paid twice a month. After learning these facts, we ended our visit, hoping to find better and more promising conditions in other works.

The 'Northern Electric Cable

Works' were one of the largest, most important establishments of the kind in Europe. Before the war, they employed 1600 workers and during the war 2000. Now they are reduced to 380. Only military work is being done, particularly the manufacture of telephone circuits for the front. The immense factory is equipped with the most modern machinery and the latest scientific inventions. It has been kept in good condition. At present, work has almost ceased for want of lead and copper. The last consignment of copper arrived on November 15, 1919. Some reserves still left in the warehouse are being worked. Only 300 miles away, more than a million pounds of copper are in storage; but there is no way to transport it. The authorities have not brought it here for another reason—the Finland frontier is only forty kilometers distant. The few men employed work at a standard wage with a bonus for extra production. Their minimum pay is 1800 rubles a month, the bonus bringing this up to 10,000 rubles.

A chemical factory which we visited need not fear comparison with any works of the kind I ever saw elsewhere. Under normal conditions, its products enter almost every field of industry; as analine, benzol, toluol, chloroform, acids, and industrial alkalis. Before and during the war, 1500 operatives were employed. Now 550 are working part time. They are employed by squads at regular intervals. For instance, two hours a day are used for making benzol. Production has fallen off on account of lack of coal and heavy oils. Wood is being used for firing, so the difficulty in reaching a normal output can easily be understood. Here also the operatives receive a standard wage, with a bonus for extra efficiency. If they do not reach a certain standard, no

premium is paid. The base wage varies from 2175 rubles a month to 3450. When production reaches a standard level, these wages are doubled. Three engineers are in charge of the works, one of whom is general manager. In visiting the different branches of the establishment, I had an opportunity to converse a little with the latter gentleman, who speaks German fluently. He told me that for the first few months after the revolution, the employees did no work but spent all their time talking and debating. Today they are kept much better in hand, partly on account of the reformation made in the Shop Committees. He still thinks the latter require further improvement, the term of office of the members being too brief. The latter hardly learn their business before others are chosen to take their place, and the whole task of educating the new men as to the requirements of their position has to be started anew.

I asked him some questions regarding the political situation, and his replies, made with surprising frankness, greatly interested me. Engineers are reappointed each year, but ordinarily such reappointments invariably occur. They are not expected to be Communists, but are closely watched. They have complete freedom of thought, but it is dangerous to advertise opinions at variance with those held by the leaders of the workers under them. Engineers and scientific experts receive more consideration now than they did. They are treated as producers and not as bourgeoisie. He added, sarcastically: 'A man can take a walk now wearing a collar and tan shoes without being mobbed.' He added that the new government had improved moral standards decidedly. He had no trouble with male and female operatives working together,

although under the old government very bad moral conditions prevailed in the factories.

In reply to my insistent questioning, he said that the present government might survive and perfect itself, though it would undoubtedly undergo great transformation and would require help from outside the country.

At the Heisler Works, telephones, surveying instruments, signal systems, and electric meters are made. Before the war some 1200 operatives were employed, of whom 250 are now working. There is a shortage of both raw materials and labor, because so many have left the city for places where food is more abundant. The works are managed by a professional engineer, an assistant, and a working-man helper. About 85 per cent of the employees receive piece work pay. The remainder are remunerated at a fixed rate equal to the average piece work earnings. The latter employees are paid a base rate varying from 9.70 to 15.75 rubles an hour, plus approximately 186 per cent to bring their pay up to the average received for piece work. Bonuses are calculated by the American system. There are also rewards for punctuality. The workers are divided into four classes.

The Baltic Shipyards, formerly an imperial establishment, are imposing on account of both their extent and their equipment, which make them equal, if not superior, to the Putiloff Works. Under the old government, they were engaged entirely in building war vessels; but to-day they are used for repairing rolling stock. The shipyard proper has two large and four small ways, all provided with powerful gantry cranes. To-day these are idle.

During the war, 8000 men were employed in these works. The number is now reduced to about 4000, mostly common laborers. The engine shops and foundry, which are immense institutions of themselves and splendidly equipped, are not running at all. The only work I saw was in a little shop where they were repairing locomotives.

In one of the upper rooms, we found a technical training school for young apprentices. Some 20 young fellows were there being taught by an intelligent workman. They were eager to become more useful members of the new society. These young fellows are the chief hope for the future. All employees are paid by piece work, a minimum of 150 rubles a day and 200 per cent bonus according to output. The Shops Committee is composed of thirteen members and is entrusted with arranging for food for the employees, regulating piece work prices and bonuses, maintaining discipline, and managing the apprentice school. So these great works are almost idle, and we had difficulty in understanding how 4000 men could be employed with so little positive results—repairing two or three locomotives and a few dozen railway cars. When we asked the director about this, he told us that every man was obliged to have an occupation, and that consequently he was overloaded with a crowd of useless and inefficient fellows who simply got in the way. The percentage of absentees was very large. Many of these were more useful at home than at their place of employment. Here, too, we saw altars in the shops and icons of every kind, while a wealth of raw materials was lying about in disorder and going to ruin around the works.

LIFE, LETTERS, AND THE ARTS

AN ENGLISHMAN DISCUSSES AMERICAN FOLK SONGS

AN interesting letter on distinctively American folk songs was lately printed in the London *Spectator*. The writer evidently knows his America unusually well. After saying that the fine old negro melodies are only a part of the American field, he continues:

'Among the "poor white" mountaineers of Kentucky there has been found a store of songs, many of them Elizabethan in origin, which have not yet been driven from favor by the ubiquitous gramophone. One of these, preserved in all probability since the days of Raleigh, has haunted my memory ever since I heard it a year ago in New York. It is a singularly beautiful version of "The Lowland Sea" which has survived among a people who knew of the sea only so much as might be gleaned from travelers' tales! In this field Cecil Sharp has done valuable work in the publication of two volumes of words and melodies from the Appalachians.

'To the same stock belong the English, Scottish, and Irish songs which have been preserved in New England.

'In the West I heard snatches, remembered from a boyhood in Vermont, which were strangely familiar to my ears, while in Vermont itself Mrs. Warren Sturgis has collected some fifty songs, twelve of which, tastefully arranged and carefully annotated, have been published under the title *Songs from the Hills of Vermont*. But all these are of alien origin, and to me the most interesting songs are those which were wrought and sung in log cabins by pioneers and frontiersmen.

'One meets with these in strange places, as often in New York as in Wyoming, but wherever they have been carried by the movement of population never do they lose the peculiar frontier quality. The war indeed introduced many Britons to the sad tale of Casey Jones of the Santa Fé; even the splendid "Cowboys' Lament" has been heard in our messes. This latter is highly characteristic of the cowboy songs (it hails from Texas); but "Frankie," especially in its original form, is more dramatic. There are several versions of this song, all restrained in substance but horribly profane in expression. All, that is, except that for which my thanks are due to the Y. W. C. A., as the girl who sang it had learned it at one of their Conferences in the Middle West. The air is simple and no less effective than the words:

Now Fránkie was a good wóman as éverybody
knóws.

She saved up all her éarnings just to bý her
Albert clóthes.

Chorus:

He was her man, that's right he was, an' he done
her wrong.

And Frankie went to the corner saloon to get
her a glass of beer.

And Frankie says to the bar-tender: "S my
Albert bin in here?"

An' the bar-tender says: 'Miss Frankie, I
bain't goin' ter tell no lie,

Yer Albert was in here 'bout 'n hour ago with
woman as looked like a spy.'

Then Frankie she went home, but she did n'
go for fun.

She reached down in her stocking and pulle
out a '44 gun.