

THE SOVIET WAY OF LIFE

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AN INSIDE VIEW

By
RALPH GIBSON

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OF LIFE

-- AN INSIDE VIEW

By RALPH GIBSON



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CONTENTS

	Page
A New World Is Born	5
The Old Russia	6
Fifteen Lost Years	7
Crowded, Busy Shops	7
Standards Rise	7
The Battle For Consumer Goods	8
Rebuilding Moscow	9
Cheap Transport	11
City of Cranes	12
Housing Miracle	13
New Moscow University	13
Two Million Students	15
Palace of Science	15
The Great Construction Works of Communism	16
Atomic Energy For Peace	18
Less On Arms, More For Peace	19
Stalin Auto Plant	19
What Is The Soviet Workers' Living Standard?	20
Women Workers	21
Trade Unions An Immense Force	22
Working Hours	22
The Prince's Hunting Mansion	23
The Doctors	24
"Eat, Eat"	24
Farmers' Historic Decision	25
The New Village	26
A United People	27
Real Freedom	28
A Labor Leader Saw It	29
Freedom Of Worship	30
"Slave Labor" Stories	32
New People	32
Interest In Other Countries	33
Love Of Sport	34
Criticism Welcomed	35
These People Want Peace	36
Who Threatens War?	37
Operation X	38
Training New Citizens	39
Stress On Family Relations	40
Principles Of Training	41
Art "Wedded To Life"	42
Love For Their Leaders	43
For Peace and Socialism	44
	46
	47

The Soviet Way of Life

An Inside View

A GREAT Australian Labor pioneer, William Lane, wrote in 1890:—"There is no hope but in socialism. If the workers are to be really free and really happy, if poverty is to be ended, then the workers, the people, must own and control the means of production."

Today socialism is seen in action in the Soviet Union.

In many lands of Asia and Eastern Europe the working people—900 million of them—have taken power and set socialism as their goal. But in the Soviet Union socialism is already built.

The rich men who own the daily newspapers will not tell us the truth about any country where the banks and industries of the rich have been taken over by the people.

We must judge for ourselves whether William Lane's estimate has proved true.

Are the people of the Soviet Union "really free and really happy"? Have they "ended poverty"?

And can we live at peace with them and benefit from their example?

A New World Is Born

THE new social system was born in 1917. In that year, first the Czar's government, then the governments of the Russian capitalists collapsed through the military defeat of the Russian armies and the sheer hunger of the people.

Workers took over the factories, peasants everywhere divided up the vast estates of the landlords, soldiers streamed home from the front in their millions. Led by the Communist Party, they had set up "Soviets" (the Russian word for "councils"),—their own elected councils of workers, soldiers and peasants.

Through these Soviets in November 1917, they formed a new type of government which took over the land and

natural resources of the country, its banks, mines and large factories, its transport and foreign trade.

The new Soviet Government appointed a Planning Commission of scientists, engineers and others to plan the nation's economy so that it would yield, not big profits for a few, but the greatest benefit for the masses of the people.

This body planned how much production could be increased each year with the aid of modern science, and how much wages should be raised and prices cut so that people could buy all the products. No depression could occur under such a system.

The profits of industry, belonging to the people, could be devoted to raising living and cultural standards, building up social services and carrying out great works of development throughout the country.

The Old Russia.

TO judge what socialism has achieved, one must know what the old Russia was like.

An English writer, Stephen Graham, who knew the old Russia, said about Moscow in his book "Vagabond in the Caucasus" (1911),—"At the Khitry market one may often see men and women with only one cotton garment between their bodies and the cruel cold. How they live is incomprehensible . . . and the beggars! the city belongs to them."

In 1913, in the Czar's empire of 150 million people, only 8 million pairs of leather shoes and boots were produced.

Only 8 million children attended school compared with 38 million in the Soviet Union today.

Most of the people were peasants only just out of the Middle Ages. (They had been serfs till just half a century before the revolution.)

Their tiny patches of land made the use of modern implements impossible. Half the ploughs were hooked ploughs, scratching the surface instead of turning the clod.

Famines, as one writer said, were "periodical like the snows".

Fifteen Lost Years.

AFTER the Revolution, capitalist armies fell on the new Soviet country from all sides. These included British armies at Archangel and Baku, American and Japanese armies operating from Vladivostok, German armies in the Ukraine, and other armies equipped and financed and by foreign imperialists led by the Czar's commanders Korniloff, Denekin, Kolchak and others.

The struggle lasted three years. Cities, farms, bridges, railways were terribly devastated. It took the Soviet Union until 1925 to recover the level of production of 1913.

In 1941 came the still more terrible invasion of Hitler's armies, which killed 7 million Soviet people, wounded and disabled millions more, destroyed factories, farms, mines over a great part of the Soviet Union and left 20 million people homeless.

By a tremendous effort production was restored to its pre-war level by the end of 1947. But the two wars of invasion and the tasks of recovery had robbed the Soviet people of more than 15 of their 37 years since the revolution.

There have been just over twenty years, just one generation of the actual building of socialism.

What has happened to this once backward country as a result of one generation of socialist building?

Crowded, Busy Shops.

LET us plunge straight into some of the crowded, busy shops of the new Moscow,—not into the new giant department store in the Red Square where you can buy almost anything, or into any other specially large shop, but into a typical network of shops along the ground floor of two apartment houses.

Here are a branch of a department store; a large general food store, one of about seventy of its type in Moscow; smaller shops selling bread, fish, furniture, shoes, fruit and vegetables; a barber's shop, laundry and dry cleaning services, and two tailor's workshops.

These shops are State-owned but of medium, not large size. They are good, clean, modern shops.

The shops are open in two shifts from 11 a.m. until late evening. But they are nearly always crowded. You may enter to carry out a quiet inspection of goods and prices, but you will find yourself trying to elbow your way in and out of the crowds.

The reason is simple. In the last six years alone the nation-wide price cuts which come every March or April and cover a very wide range of articles have reduced the prices of necessities to between a half and a third of their 1948 level. The last reduction, in March 1954, brought most prices down between five and twenty per cent.

Retail trade rose in volume by 10 per cent in 1952, by another 20 per cent in 1953.

Standards Rise.

SOVIET customers, with money to buy, are not only wanting greater quantity of goods but better quality and a wider range.

In the shoe shop, for example, there are shoes of many styles and colors but half the crowd is waiting for a new finer quality shoe just coming from the factory. The 1913 production of only 8 million pairs a year was raised to 200 million by 1950 and has since been raised much further. Sales increased nearly 30 per cent last year alone. Customers can now afford to be particular.

In the Department Store you will find cotton shirts easy to buy, but silk ones quickly disappear. A good, stylish woollen sweater will be quickly snapped up, and people will dart from shop to shop to buy one, while quite good sweaters of rougher style may lie on the shelves.

In the Food Store you can buy plenty of the customary fish, poultry and pork, but by tea time you are liable to find the mutton and beef cleaned out.

The sale of silk fabrics shot up nearly 50 per cent last year with the new habit of wearing gay silk summer dresses. At this Department Store thousands buy silk material, take it inside, and for three roubles choose a

pattern and get it cut to fit themselves. (The average monthly wage is something over 1000 roubles, to which the extensive social services add a further 40 per cent. This can be used as a measuring-rod to compare Soviet and Australian prices.)

In this same Department Store people are lining up for television sets faster than they come from the factory. There is a special rush on that type of article which you buy **after** meeting your basic needs—for example, bicycles, low priced cars, radio and television sets, refrigerators and vacuum cleaners.

The multiplied demand for such articles, and the demand for quality and style, are proof of rapidly rising living standards.

The Battle for Consumer Goods.

THESE busy, growing shops, and the factories and farms which supply them, are the scene today of a mighty battle, the battle to increase the supply of consumer goods to meet the demand created by the successive price reductions.

Earlier the main battle was for coal, steel and oil, for electrical power, for the creation of great modern plant and machinery.

That battle is still on. But it was basically won in the period of the First and Second Five Year Plans from 1928 to 1937.

In those years the Capitalist countries went through crisis and prolonged depression. First their production fell by one-third, then they painfully climbed back to their previous level. In these years, under Socialism, the system which knows no depression, the Soviet Union multiplied its industrial production five times over and revolutionised its farming methods.

Above all, a tremendous **machinery** of production was created. The Soviet Union, from a backward peasant country, became the second industrial country of the world.

With the war came untold devastation. But 1946 brought a new Five Year Plan, the fourth. Basic industry was rebuilt and extended on an immense scale. And now

has come the great drive to ensure that the mighty machinery of production shall pour forth a huge stream of consumer goods for the people.

Premier Malenkov pointed out in August, 1953, that the output of the means of production had increased more than three times since 1940, the output of consumer goods by just 72 per cent.

He sounded the call for a great drive forward in the production of consumer goods, for the transition from adequacy to abundance. He called for a decisive lift in farming to create "an abundance of food for the population and raw materials for the light industries." He set the aim of "carefully studying demand" and ensuring that in two or three years "any item required can be obtained in every town and every rural district."

He called for special attention to the **quality** of manufactured goods, not only their durability but their finish. "Industry must turn out fine and elegant goods for our people", he said.

To speed this plan capital investment in the consumer goods industries was increased over 50 per cent in one year alone.

Engineering plants have been turned over to producing consumer goods; war plants are being diverted to peace production, and by 1955 will be turning out half a million bicycles a year, 200,000 refrigerators and nearly 5 million metal bedsteads.

In January 2,000 delegates from the Machine and Tractor Stations, which supply tractors and other machines to the collective farms, met with Government leaders in the Kremlin Palace to plan a further big leap forward in farm production similar to the leap forward when collective farming began twenty-five years ago.

The agricultural tax on farmers was halved last year, prices to the farmer were increased while those to the consumers were reduced. Everything is being done to encourage farm production, especially in cattle and other livestock and in potatoes and vegetables.

The battle for consumer goods will be won, as the battle for the machinery of production was won, because the Soviet people have taken their industry into their own hands.

We Australians who still leave this machinery in the hands of our capitalists must learn the lesson—that our country, which had in the past more plentiful, more varied and usually cheaper goods than Russia, must fall completely behind unless we ourselves very soon adopt the socialist way of life.

Rebuilding Moscow.

LET us now stand where we can view Moscow's new programme of home building,—say, on the river bridge that leads into the South Western highway.

Here we can see in action the most ambitious housing programme in history designed to solve one of the worst housing crises in history.

Three-quarters of Moscow homes before the revolution were old wooden houses, many of them dilapidated. Since then the City's population has risen from less than 2 million to nearly 8 million.

How to provide good housing conditions in a few years for the whole 8 million—that was the problem.

Even this problem is **being** solved through Moscow's ten year plan of reconstruction (1951-1960).

As you stand on the bridge you see facing the river a big apartment house with 500 windows on one side. You see many such apartment houses completed or in construction up and down the river banks. Looking south-west you see the highway, from a short way down, lined continuously with large apartment houses built either in the 1930's or since the war.

These apartment houses are mainly from 5 to 10 storeys high. They are laid out and spaced so that every flat gets its sun, air and light. Commonly they take the form of three sides of a square enclosing a garden and playground behind. All the new flats have electricity, gas and central heating. All are provided with lifts. Each flat is quite private. Usually each has its balcony.

Rent averages less than 5 per cent of the tenant's wage, varying from 1½ per cent to 10 per cent according to income, family responsibilities and the size and amenities of the place rented. It often includes gas, electricity, heating and other services such as radio and television.

From this bridge also you see three of the ten great buildings which are to dominate the landscape of the new City: the tall building which houses the Ministry for External Affairs; a new 27 storey apartment house with gilt spire; and standing 32 storeys high, just completed, the largest hotel in Europe.

In among the new apartment houses are blocks of old houses not yet cleared away owing to the population crisis and the war, but under the plan of reconstruction the last of these will be cleared away by 1960.

My wife and I walked one morning from the Zoo down to this bridge, along some winding side streets where the houses were mainly old ones. Generally they fell very far short of present day needs. But later at the Moscow Housing Museum we were able to see the plan under which this precise area was to be cleared very soon for a new main thoroughfare with modern flats on each side. Under socialism every year brings a big advance.

Cheap Transport.

A FEW hundred yards from this same bridge is the newest station of the Metro underground railway, Kievskaya, which completes the first circular line linking the other lines of the Metro.

The Metro is the pride of Moscow and the delight of all visitors. Each station is a treasure-house of art, a veritable underground palace of marble and bronze. Each has its own theme; the architects of Kievskaya have portrayed the union of the Russian and Ukrainian people.

The Metro has a uniform fare for all distances—one rouble return (the equivalent in buying power of about 9d Australian), half a rouble single. Trams, Moscow's old form of transport, are even cheaper—60 kopeks (three-fifths of a rouble) for any distance. Bus charges vary with distance, and can be dearer, but are kept **down** for any area which is not served by tram or Metro.

With the continual laying of new lines the Metro fare becomes more and more the standard transport charge for Moscow people.

City Of Cranes

UNFINISHED buildings are marked by cranes, high against the skyline—you can see many of them from this one bridge alone, they are quite a symbol of the new Moscow—daily lifting into place the prefabricated walls, floors, ceilings and amenities of hundreds of new homes. Huge prefabrication plants have been erected, and it is aimed to prefabricate all parts of the home and merely assemble them on the construction site.

In other towns and in the countryside you see new one, two and three storey houses, houses built by individual home builders (with land supplied free of charge and interest-free State loan up to 6000 roubles) and "dachas" (small holiday summer cottages) which have become quite a craze with Soviet people. But in Moscow the only way to solve the housing crisis was to build into the air—hence the five to ten storey apartment houses everywhere.

Housing Miracle.

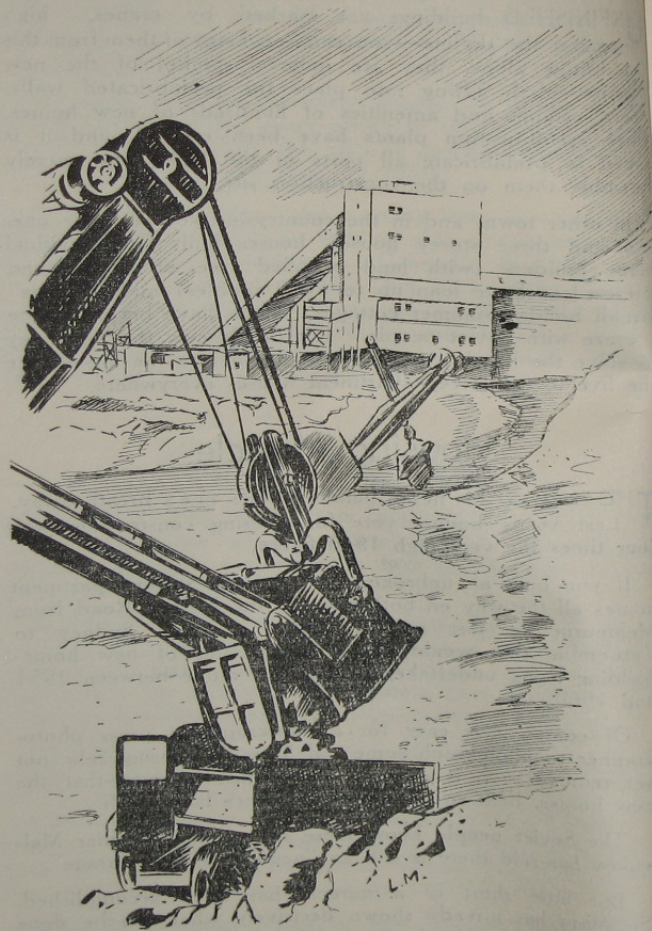
THE scale of this home building takes one's breath away. Last year's budget vote for housing construction was **four times the very high 1940 figure.**

If you built an unbroken chain of ten storey apartment houses all the way on both sides of the Sydney Road from Melbourne to just past Seymour or from Sydney to Katoomba, that would equal the amount of new home-building being undertaken in Moscow alone between 1951 and 1960.

Of course it is easy for an unscrupulous press photographer to photograph some old Moscow housing relic not yet removed. It is easy to say—which is true—that the new homes, built so speedily, sometimes lack finish.

The Soviet people know these things, and Premier Malenkov has said there is still an "acute housing shortage".

But little short of a miracle has been accomplished. Socialism has already shown decisively what can be done where housing policy is dictated by the people's needs, not by the financial interests of banks, landlords and master builders.



New Moscow University.

LET us now visit the new Moscow University, opened on September 1, 1953.

This vast building is 800 feet high, 32 storeys, 2 miles walk around the base.

With its perfect proportions, its 100 acre botanical gardens in front, its lavish use of marble in many hues, its tall massive marble pillars at the entrance, (like the ancient Greek in style), its white light and daylight lamps in courts, theatres and corridors, it is perhaps the most beautiful building in the world.

It has over 150 lecture halls and over 1000 laboratories, a library of 1,200,000 volumes, and very fine club rooms and sports facilities. It has also nearly 6,000 well-fitted living rooms for resident students and post-graduates, (with shower and lavatory to each two rooms and kitchen facilities to every 10 or 12) and 114 flats for Professors.

The students are paid to study. Stipends vary from roughly 250 to 800 roubles per month, averaging about 400 roubles. This is less than half the average wage in industry; but half the students live at home, residents pay only 15 roubles per month rent, fees are only 25 to 35 roubles a month.

The stipend system makes University study open to all, in fact as well as in theory.

Two Million Students.

THIS great building is only a small part of the University system as a whole. It houses the six departments of chemistry, physics, mathematics, geography, geology, biology and soil.

Other departments are housed in the old Moscow University or in the "Institutes",—more than 20 in number, many of them very large and important, which cover, for example, engineering, law, teaching, modern languages, medicine. There is a vast network of evening and correspondence courses. And all this is only **Moscow** University, which is but one of 33 Universities in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union is now a land of nearly 2 million higher education students.

Did not the Melbourne Herald report early in 1953, from an American source, that by 1955 the Soviet Union would be turning out 50,000 new qualified engineers each year compared with 15,000 in the U.S.A.?

Such a higher education system could only have been reared on the basis of a gigantic system of primary and secondary education. The Soviet education vote is the highest per head in the world (about 14 per cent of the total budget in 1950).

Hitler destroyed 82,000 schools, half the school facilities of the Soviet Union, yet by 1949 the universal seven year school (up to 14 years) had been restored in the farthest village of the country.

The universal ten year school (till 17 years) began in Moscow and a few other cities in 1952 and will be extended to all large towns by the end of 1955 and to the whole country by the end of 1960. Universities are open to all who pass their examination at the end of the secondary school.

This in a land famed only 40 years ago for the ignorance of its people!

Palace Of Science.

THE new University is a Palace of Science, training the army of new experts needed for the great construction works of Communism and the vast projects for "the remaking of nature".

While 14 per cent of the State budget is spent on education, nearly 40 per cent is spent on the development of the national economy. Great developmental works are changing the whole face of the country.

From this University go many of the trained young men and women needed for the building of the world's two largest power stations (with capacity of 2 million kilowatts each) now nearing completion on the Volga and for the construction of the 700 mile Turkmenian Main Canal (the world's longest) which is to transform the Soviet Union's biggest desert, the Kara Kum desert in Central Asia into

a fertile, populated territory, yielding each year 2 million tons of first grade cotton and a wealth of other products.

Other young graduates will assist in the completion of the Kakhovka Canal and power station which will use the waters of the Dnieper to abolish drought in the southern Ukraine. Others again will take part in the 15 year plan (1948-1963) to plant huge forest shelter belts 3,300 miles long and up to a mile wide which will break the hot winds from the south-east and change the climate of a whole great region of the earth.

To all parts of the Soviet Union these young folk go, inspired by the slogan blazoned forth in one of the University Courts over the statue of the Russian scientist Mendeleev, his own slogan—"Science will yield its harvest to the people."



The Great Construction Works Of Communism.

"THE great construction works of Communism", these mighty projects are called. That is because they will be decisive in helping to produce the vast abundance of goods needed for the advance to Communism, the society in which each will produce "according to his ability" and receive "according to his needs".

The magnitude of these projects is hard to grasp. For example, each of the two giant Volga power stations, near Kuibyshev and Stalingrad, will have a capacity equal to that of America's Boulder Dam and Grand Coulee Dam **taken together**. They are to be completed within five years of their commencement.

Between them these two stations will irrigate 35 million acres of previously arid land for agriculture and grazing—more than half the total area of Victoria. Their power will be carried, not only to near industrial centres, but hundreds of miles to Moscow.

One of the great new construction works, the 63 mile long Volga-Don canal, was opened for use in July, 1952. It completed the link between the five seas surrounding the European part of the Soviet Union. It involved the building of 13 navigation locks, several power stations and the world's largest dam, the Tsimlyanskaya, which is 8 miles long and dams back a new inland "sea" 125 miles long, which is to water millions of acres of surrounding country. It was completed in four years.

The latest great project to be announced is for reclaiming within two years 32 million acres of virgin and waste land (one and a half times the total land under cultivation in Australia). By 1955 the reclaimed area will be producing 18 to 20 million tons of grain (twice our total annual grain tonnage).

More than 120,000 tractors and 10,000 combines are being sent to bring the new areas into cultivation. 400,000 young people have responded to the appeal for volunteers to assist in the great drive.

Projects of this size are only possible in a planned economy. The current 5-year plan, which has prepared this great agricultural advance, also takes into account the technical requirements, machines, housing and the day to day needs of the human beings who give life to the plan.

Atomic Energy For Peace.

FINALLY, on July 1, 1954, came the announcement of the first atomic power station in the world to generate electricity for industry. This marks a historic step forward for all mankind.

A British Atomic Energy Commission spokesman said that "the Russian station appeared to have been developed in a very short time compared with what is usually needed for this sort of project", and that "Britain's first station was not expected to be operating for two and a half years." (Melbourne Herald, July 1.)

Capitalism has pioneered only atomic war weapons. It is socialism that has pioneered the peaceful use of atomic energy—at a faster rate than British experts believed possible.

Less On Arms, More For Peace.

ALL these great works of national development have been undertaken during the "Cold War", when record arms expenditure has slowed down peace-time development in capitalist countries.

Under socialism, with its peace policy, old houses are replaced while we preserve old slums and create new ones. The grand new socialist University has arisen while our own Universities are constantly begging for money.

Soviet defence expenditure in 1940, on the eve of Hitler's attack, was 32.6 per cent of the total State budget (compared with 22.5 per cent in the U.S.A.). In 1948 it was 17 per cent. With the renewed threat of world war it rose year by year to 23.6 per cent in 1952 (U.S.A. war expenditure had meanwhile risen to about 60 per cent of all Government expenditure).

But with the lessening of world tension the Soviet Union reduced its defence spending to 20.8 per cent of its budget in 1953 and 17.8 per cent in 1954.

This is the first basic reason for its developmental triumphs.

The other basic reason is that the people of the Soviet Union own the wealth resources of their country. There is no investment of surplus millions by millionaires. The profits of industry belong to the people themselves who can invest them in their own developmental works for their own use.

Stalin Auto Plant.

LET us now take a brief glance at one of the chief centres of production in Moscow, the Stalin Auto Plant.

This plant has an area of two square miles and employs over 30,000 workers.

It was set up in a country which had only 16,000 motor cars in the time of the Czars. By 1936 this plant was turning out nearly 100,000 cars annually.

Today its fine 7 passenger limousine is only produced to order because the great demand is for low priced cars that individual workers can save up to buy. They want the Victory car (Pobeda), which costs about 16,000 roubles first hand, 10,000 second hand, or the small family car (Moskvich) at less than 10,000 roubles.

This mighty plant is therefore devoted very largely now to producing bicycles (1,000 per day), transport trucks, which move off the assembly line every few minutes, and endless lines of refrigerators. Similar plants in Capitalist countries are being turned over more and more to war production.

The work is very highly mechanised. Single departments have many miles of conveyors. Machinery is mainly driven by electric power and automatic. So many operations are automatic that the workers are no longer confined to super-specialised manual operations but are more and more becoming expert machine minders. They work with concentration but not feverishly. You see here in embryo a new type of society in which everyone will work both by hand and brain.

"All Stakhanovite" is marked over the entrance to some departments. The Stakhanovites are named after the miner Stakhanov who in 1935 multiplied his production by better organisation of technique and team work. Their aim is not speed-up but on the contrary to make new machines produce more with less drudgery and to teach their new methods to all their fellow workers so that all may produce more and earn more.

The man who actually does a job is nearly always the man who can work out a better way of doing it, once he has an interest in doing so. Under Socialism he has that interest, for several reasons.

First he cannot work himself out of a job because under socialist planning there are always more jobs opening up than there are workers to do them.

Secondly, wage levels advance along with production. Thirdly, inventors are individually honored and rewarded. You can see the scale of invention bonuses posted on the factory wall, — 15 per cent of the annual value saved if this is 10,000 roubles, 10 per cent if it is 50,000 roubles, and so on. The factory walls are hung with photographs of worker inventors.

A large proportion of all the workers are engaged in study. Some attend 5 year evening courses in engineering at the Institute, others attend 6 to 12 month courses in special skills and so on. Every manager in this factory, up to the highest, has risen from the ranks as the result of study.

What Is The Soviet Workers' Living Standard?

THE typical wage in this factory is 1,100 roubles monthly, or 1,300 for those working in special heat. Such wages might not buy more than £40 or £50 Australian, but they are supplemented greatly by the social services which are much more extensive than ours and add about 40 per cent to the wage.

These include, to take only a few examples:

● A completely free medical and hospital service (there is a free surgery in every main department of this factory).

- The tremendous educational service.
- Kindergartens at reduced rates (20 in this factory alone for children from 3 to 7, very well equipped and providing all their meals each working day, for one to three roubles per day).
- The rest homes and sanatoria in which 40 per cent of the Stalin auto workers had their holidays during 1953, and which provide good holidays on full wages at 30 per cent of cost for most workers and completely free of charge for some categories.
- Sick pay from the first day of sickness till the doctor permits return to work, from 50 to 60 per cent of wages for a newly employed worker to a full hundred per cent for workers in basic industries after one year's service and in other industries after 8 years' service.
- Annual paid holidays ranging from two weeks to two months according to the nature of the industry.
- Old age pensions at 60 for men, 55 for women, 50 for miners, iron and steel workers and certain other classes of workers, at the rate of 50 to 60 per cent of previous earnings with no means test.

The whole social service scheme is completely non-contributory. The Government provides the funds, the Unions run the scheme.

With an average 10/- rent, no local rates, prices cut on the average about 10 per cent yearly, and taxes on the people cut by 25 per cent last year alone, we can see how the worker under socialism is forging ahead of his brothers in capitalist lands.

Women Workers.

IN comparing wages one must also allow for the fact that on the average each Soviet worker has fewer dependants than the Australian worker. A higher proportion of women are working in industry, and this means a higher family income.

Women may go out to work or stay at home as they wish. They usually wish to work because every provision is made for their needs. They have two rights of special importance, — 8 weeks off work on full wages before childbirth and 8 weeks afterwards, with job guaranteed, and a

great network of creches and kindergartens at the factories or near their homes, where they can leave their children in the morning and fetch them before going home.

Women workers are found in more spheres of work than in Australia and only a few spheres are forbidden to them for health reasons. Two out of five workers in this plant are women; only in the "hot shops" one does not find them. In a silk factory some 80 per cent of the workers may be women. They predominate in the tram and bus services and in the medical and teaching professions.

Trade Unions An Immense Force.

THE trade union is an immense force in Soviet industry. Union membership is not compulsory but there are 30 million Soviet trade unionists.

Unions are on an industrial basis, one union embracing all production workers in a given industry. The elected factory committee is the basis of the whole union structure. It is on the job, in the factory committees and mass meetings, that union policy is hammered out and union decisions applied. The factory is the centre of trade union life.

The union's functions are large and varied. It safeguards the workers' conditions against any wrong practices by the management (though these are fewer where the manager is himself of the working class and represents a workers' State). It polices the safety regulations. It administers the social insurance funds. It runs the cultural facilities (this factory has a vast 3 storey Palace of Culture with hundreds of rooms, a full-time staff of 250 and every possible facility for artists of all kinds, for inventors, for children, etc). And finally, it plays a great part, alongside the management, in the actual organisation of production and in actual decisions on production questions.

General wage levels are fixed under a national plan, which cannot be made final without the union's consent. Details are fixed between the management and local trade union committee.

Workers under socialism generally favor piece rates where practicable. Under socialist conditions, with the danger of unemployment removed and piece rates drawn up in agreement with the unions, piecework could never be used, as under capitalism, to speed up the work with a view to cutting of rates and dismissal of workers. Piece rates under socialism help to raise wages for all workers.

Working Hours.

THERE is one respect in which the Soviet worker still pays the price of the terrible devastation of the war. He has not returned to the working week of just less than 40 hours which he enjoyed in 1940. Hours are 48 per week spread over six days. (There is practically no overtime.)

Abundance of consumer goods has been the first aim rather than shorter working hours. But Stalin, before his death, had already set the goal of a five-hour working day.

In outlining the path of progress to Communism, he said that a society based on the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", must give sufficient free time for people to receive an all-round education which will develop all their physical and mental abilities.

This, he said, meant shortening the working day at least to six hours and later to five.

Already miners work a 6-hour day. For various trades involving harder working conditions the working day is already seven, six or even four hours.

The Prince's Hunting Mansion.

AWAY from the busy atmosphere of Moscow, in the pine forest at more than 50 miles distance, is a fine building which used to be one of the half dozen country mansions of a Russian prince. Today it is a sanatorium.

A sanatorium in the Soviet Union is something quite different from a hospital. It is a combined holiday place and preventive medical institution, part of the entirely free health and medical services of the country.

As the Soviet people see it, the main function of a medical system is not to cure people but to keep them well. Everyone is therefore given a thorough medical examination each year, and if in danger of sickness will receive a doctor's pass to one of the great network of Sanatoria which represent the new **preventive** arm of socialist medicine.

On the one hand this sanatorium has fine holiday facilities — excellent food, fine forest grounds, a river and pond for fishing, volley ball court, skating rink, billiard rooms, library, television set, and organised entertainment every evening. This usually takes the form of a film show, — a different film show each night.

On the other hand the sanatorium has a medical staff and equipment which reflect the State's deep attention to all those services that maintain the people's health and life. There are fifty patients, none of them actual hospital cases, attended by seven full time doctors, who have all done their six years' medical course (five years general, 1 year specialised) and ten trained nursing sisters. (Another sanatorium I attended had about 100 patients, 6 full time doctors and 2 others visiting periodically.)

The Doctors.

THE doctors are all State servants, well paid and highly respected. They have a 6½ hour day, and can spare you hours if necessary whereas a doctor under capitalism can spare you so many minutes. Dr. Horace Joules, one of 3 doctors who visited the Soviet Union in 1951 on behalf of the very conservative British Medical Association, commented that doctors were waiting for patients rather than the other way round. (Journal of British Medical Association, October 20, 1951.)

Nurses work a six hour day. If one is on duty a whole night you will not see her for the next two days. They are never worried or harassed and consequently give the best possible service.

Normal stay in a Sanatorium is about a month. A few may stay two, three or four months as the doctors require. I was kept four months at this Sanatorium for treatment of

asthma, which had been growing steadily more serious for many years and from which I have since suffered hardly at all.

The charge to most patients is 30 per cent of total cost, including travel to and from home. The cost does not include the medical treatment which is entirely free as elsewhere. Medicines are also free when administered in hospitals and sanatoria. Thirty per cent of cost works out at about half the average wage. Full wages are paid to all workers over the holiday period. About one-fifth of the patients pay nothing, including all who were injured during the war.

"Eat, Eat"

THE amount of food eaten in the sanatorium has to be seen to be believed. "Eat Eat" is the constant slogan not only of the doctors and kitchen staff, but of your fellow patients. A girl has it as a special job to go around and watch how the patients are marking their menus. You can easily find yourself in trouble for ordering too little and have to defend yourself in the best Russian you can muster against criticism of your poor appetite. The hero of the sanatorium is the man who can put on most "kilograms". A young Indian put on 2 stone in three months and in the middle had to pay a special visit to Moscow to buy a new suit that would fit him. A Kazakh farmer put on the same in six weeks.

Sanatoria line the river for miles each way, capturing the health-giving pine forest atmosphere. In the same way 110 sanatoria line the warm coast of the Crimea. There are clusters of sanatoria in all the most suitable places throughout the country. The much more numerous holiday rest homes, on the other hand, are scattered over all areas.

Other parts of the Soviet health system are equally impressive. The hospitals, with their 15 beds per thousand people, (we have 2 per thousand in Victoria) and their immense network of clinics in cities, villages and large factories which have all facilities for diagnosis and treatment of practically any complaint at any time.

All this, like other State expenditure, is mainly financed from the profits of socialist industry. In 1950 only 15

per cent of revenue came from the people in taxes and loans, and this amount tends to lessen all the time.

We shall soon accomplish similar wonders when the profits of industry come into the hands of our own people in a Socialist Australia.

Farmers' Historic Decision.

IN 1917 the Soviet peasants first streamed onto the landlord's estates and divided them up for their own use.

In 10 years, by 1927, the first examples of collective farming had appeared. The first peasant meetings had made their historic decision—to pool all the land of the village, with the machines and farm animals, and each take a share in the proceeds of their collective effort, partly in kind and partly in cash, according to the quantity and quality of work done. This opened the way for modern cultivation.

Within the next ten years, first the poor peasants, then the middle peasants, came around in their millions to the support of collective farming. Those who wished could still farm individually and were allotted land to do so, but by 1937 individual farmers tilled less than one-hundredth part of the cultivated land of the country.

About one-eighth of the cultivated land—the newly claimed virgin land—was laid out in State farms, usually larger than the collectives, employing altogether between 3 and 4 million workers, who worked for wages in the same way as workers in a factory.

The Kulaks (rich peasants) about 4 per cent of all the peasantry, fought bitterly against the change to collective farming. In their frenzy they burnt grain fields and destroyed millions of livestock. This, together with Hitler's wholesale slaughter and plunder of farm animals created the present shortage of cattle (the 63 million cattle of the Soviet Union are inadequate to the fast rising meat and dairy needs of today).

But the collective farms triumphed. By 1940 the Soviet Union produced 37 million tons of grain a year more than before the revolution, and by 1950, despite the war, this was raised by a further 5½ million tons.

And now a further big lift of farm production is taking place.

The New Village.

In front of us is not a large or important collective farm of the Ukraine or Kazakhstan but just a minor farm of the Moscow region. But how different from years gone by!

Instead of the old hovels, 70 well spaced houses along the river bank in front of the farm, of solid log wood structure, all new, all with electric light, all of quite reasonable size.

Instead of the old soil-scratching by hand labour, when harvest time came last summer and bad weather set in, a harvester combine straight from the machine and tractor station all but finished the harvesting before the rain came.

Instead of the dirt, disease, illiteracy, vodka swilling and uncouth habits of the old Russian peasant, you see on rest day crowds of happy men, women, boys and girls boating, swimming, fishing, biking or using the football-volley-ball ground at the end of the village. In winter you see crowds of kids tobogganing in the snow on the hill opposite, standing, sitting in pairs and trios on the toboggans or even plunging head first on them down the hill; with dozens more skating on the iced parts of the river, like champions, having the time of their lives.

One old peasant type emerges, an old cow-herd who could have jumped straight out of an old Russian novel, but he only serves to remind you how **unlike** this type are the present day collective farmers. They are in fact little different from Soviet townspeople.

Around each house is an acre or two of privately owned land, largely laid out in vegetables, with some individually owned farm animals and many poultry. This is a universal feature of collective farm life.

On the other bank is the village centre with a large club and buffet, a house with clinic and creche equal to a larger size Australian country bungalow, a one-storey wooden school, quite good in its day but doubtless to be replaced soon, and an attractive open air theatre.

While every farmhouse is new since the war, some of the houses are old and so is the village shop.

However, there is a whole new quarter of single and multiple houses for the doctors and sanatorium workers, built to encourage them to stay rather than move frequently, as Soviet people, now that they have economic security, are always inclined to do.

And finally, a building erected just outside the sanatorium fence in the two months before I left—on the day I left the smoke was already rising from it—a fine two-storey brick kindergarten, about 100 by 40 feet, to serve just the 150 or so households in the village. It is impressive to think of 25,000 Soviet kindergartens with 3½ million children but it was even more impressive to see this one example in one little village.

Round the village is the beautiful forest of pines, firs and birch, part of the land of great forests which contain over a quarter of the useful timber of the world.

The new forest shelter belts being planted under the fifteen year plan involve planting trees which will protect from destructive winds an area greater than Western Europe.

But—even more important as an example to Australia—the old forests are protected, money is not spared on air patrol, fire fighting and similar services, and forest fires have been cut down to a mere fraction (about 4 per cent) of what they were in the Czar's empire.

A United People.

AT the sanatorium one is struck first by the remarkable solidarity of the people. Young and old, with widely varying tastes, from factory, farm, administration office, University and Institute, army and navy, they enter quickly into **easy** relationship and handle everyday arrangements smoothly.

These people have been brought up from birth to learn to co-operate. They are all working people. They have no clashes of interests but a great common interest in higher production and a finer culture in which they all share.

Moreover they have a common understanding of social questions. They view social questions as a science. They believe, with Marx, that the laws by which social systems

change, classes rise and fall, new ideas and new institutions spring from new economic conditions, are laws as valid as those of physics or chemistry.

The wealthy class which owns our press, radio stations and cinemas looks upon social theory as dangerous. For theory is the summing up of facts; and the facts of today are those of capitalist decline, the rise of the working people to power and the progress of socialism. To the capitalist it is essential that such facts shall not be summed up into a consistent theory but shall be falsified or glossed over.

But in the Soviet Union social theory is taught and studied scientifically and people are therefore able to reach certain common basic conclusions which help them to unite in common action in the interests of humanity.

It gets nowhere to call this the "regimenting of people's minds". It would be as sensible to say that we regiment people's minds when we teach them the earth is round and not flat.

Like all sciences, social theory must be constantly questioned, tested and re-tested in changed conditions. But its foundations are as sure as the foundations of other sciences.

Knowledge of this social theory, together with recognition of the actual immense achievements of socialism, produces what Malenkov has called "the moral and political unity" of the Soviet people.

Real Freedom.

THERE is no bigger error about the Soviet Union than to think that such unity can only be forced from above.

Nowhere do people feel freer than in this socialist country. Nowhere do they display greater enthusiasm and willing self-sacrifice.

It would be quite wrong to suppose they do not argue and criticise. You argue much more and much better when you have a scientific basis of judgment on which to argue.

Those two famous social research students, the non-Communist "Fabians" Beatrice and Sidney Webb, after a prolonged and detailed study of the Soviet system, said this system was "rooted in an almost inconceivable amount of

public discussion, in literally a million or two of small local meetings in the course of each year", in which "the people themselves participate".

They discuss freely and extensively but with each discussion they can usually reach greater harmony.

"But in elections to the Soviet parliament only one candidate stands in each electorate", you may say. Yes, but candidates are nominated by many organisations—political, industrial, cultural, sporting and others—and are discussed and tested by the members of these organisations in many weeks of separate and combined meetings, before the candidate is finally chosen. The people have a real freedom of choice no longer allowed to us in these days of the great Party machines.

Soviet electors not only choose their candidates—Communist Party members or not as they wish—but spend even more time in drawing up "mandates" for the candidate to follow.

As a check that public opinion is being fulfilled, the candidate must be approved by a 75 per cent vote in a secret ballot in which voting is not compulsory.

As a further check the Government is obliged to hold new elections if the electors demand it. Stalin in an election speech of 1937 praised this law of recall and urged electors to "remember it and take advantage of it should the need arise".

There is no party system. Parties in our society arise from different class interests which under socialism exist no more.

In the first stages of socialist society there is still one party needed—a party of all the most politically conscious and active citizens—to lead the whole people to the common end agreed upon. As the whole people become politically advanced, even this one party will disappear and the classless society will become also a party-less society.

In 1918 and 1919 the other parties in Russia, rapidly losing mass support, went over to support of the invading capitalist armies and were therefore outlawed. Had they accepted the new Constitution, they could have carried on freely (as many parties have done in the countries of Eastern Europe) but the final result would have been the same. With the achievement of socialism they would either have merged with the Communist Party or continued to lose support till they withered away.

A Labor Leader Saw It.

A FORMER Australian labor leader, Frank Anstey, after a visit to Europe in the early days of the Russian revolution, in his book "Red Europe", asked how it was possible that the workers' and peasants' armies of Russia, ragged and half-starved as they then were, fighting often with home-made spikes, knives and grenades, could have smashed the ring of invaders who surrounded them in 1919.

He answered:—"The most powerful force in national defence is the power of the proletariat exalted with the knowledge that it fights no longer for the landlord and the slaver, but for the soil which belongs to the tiller and the product that belongs to the producer".

He asked why the Soviet power was not destroyed from within. "Russia", he wrote, "without outside assistance, destroyed the power of the Czar, Rasputin, Sturmer, the Black Hundred, Miliukoff, Korniloff, Kerensky. Why was there no power in Russia to destroy the Soviet? . . . Is not the answer plain? . . . Is it not that the Soviet system was rooted in the hearts and brains of the Russian masses?"

Frank Anstey saw emerging even then the "moral and political unity of the Soviet people".

The Soviet political system is the product of the will of a united people and faithfully expresses that will.

Freedom Of Worship.

CAN religious worship be free in such a society? Certainly it can be—and is.

Canon Stockwood, of Bristol, visited the Soviet Union last October to convey the greetings of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the head of the Russian Orthodox Church. He said he preached to 8,000 in the Moscow Cathedral and 3,000 in the Moscow Baptist Church, and saw "vast crowds" in 20 Orthodox parish churches.

The Church is no longer endowed by the State, and congregations must maintain their own church activity, but any 20 people may obtain on application a church or

other suitable premises for religious worship free of rent. There are no religious schools, but parents are free to give religious teaching to their children at home, and there are colleges for training priests.

Communists for their part preach Marx's view that "Man is the supreme being for mankind", that man's will and effort alone can and will build a better life here on earth. Others are free to preach their belief in supernatural forces. The issue will be decided by argument and experience.

"Slave Labor" Stories.

BUT what of the stories of "slave labor camps", supposed to contain about 14 million people hidden away somewhere in the middle of Siberia?

If these stories were true, surely in my six months in the Soviet Union I could not have found such a united people and such a free atmosphere. It would be the equivalent of nearly 700,000 Australians torn from homes to slave somewhere in the interior of our continent! Such a thing would cause dissension and bitterness in every home.

Any story of "forced labor" in the Soviet Union, so far as it is not purely invented, can only have one of two sources. First, there was compulsory labor during the war years, as in Australia, and in the Soviet Union, with its life-and-death struggle, labor was often very hard and rations limited. It is utterly misleading to speak of these war conditions as if they applied in the Soviet Union today.

Secondly, the Soviet corrective labor code of August, 1933, prescribes useful work at genuine wages for prisoners in place of the senseless stone-breaking and other forced labor of our capitalist jails performed for a few pence per day. Journalists of capitalist papers who see some of these prisoners at their work pretend, without the slightest evidence, that their number runs into endless millions. Before the war, when there were still hostile classes, a large group of prisoners—kulaks who tried to destroy the farmlands in the days of collectivisation—were employed in building the Baltic-White Sea Canal at the prevailing rate of wages. On the day when the canal was finished,

thousands of these, with tens of thousands of years of sentences, were set free. This was something far more humane than is known in capitalist jails.

The great miracles of construction of to-day are being carried through, and could only be carried through, by free, well-paid and enthusiastic workers.

On February 28, 1949, the Soviet delegation to the United Nations Social and Economic Council, to scotch the "slave labor" story, moved that a committee be set up representing all trade union bodies of the right and left in all countries, on the basis of one representative to every million members, to investigate labor conditions in all countries whether capitalist or socialist. That challenge was later repeated but no capitalist government has yet taken it up.

New People.

THE most important thing of all that a socialist society produces is new **people**—people in whom, speaking generally, the selfish, petty qualities of human nature are more and more submerged and the best qualities blossom forth.

We have spoken of their unity, their capacity to co-operate. They have also other fine qualities.

They are extremely honest. There are no profiteers to set the moral tone of their society. For four months I left all my Russian money in an unlocked case at the sanatorium, and did not lose a single rouble. In a French or Italian hotel it would have gone overnight and in the old Russia it would doubtless have disappeared just as quickly.

They are simple people without pretensions. I sat for a month at the next dining table to a man who reminded me of the best type of Australian factory worker. He mixed easily with everybody. Then on the morning of his departure he turned up in a splendid military uniform with rows of medals. On inquiry I found he was a general. And I had been wondering which factory he came from!

It is the same with the highest leaders of the Soviet people with really great records behind them, men like Malenkov, Molotov, Voroshilov and others. When they

mount platforms on State occasions, one is struck at once by their simple demeanor and conduct. They have quite a fine natural dignity but no airs whatever.

They are a very friendly people—not gushing, in fact very possessed—but friendly. On my second day in the sanatorium a young student, seeing the language difficulties of myself and an Indian fellow-patient offered to teach us Russian. And he stuck to it every morning for two or three hours for several weeks, though he knew English only up to secondary school standard and sometimes found the lesson tough going. He would also interpret films for us at night—and he was on holiday before his final exams and needing to recuperate!

Interest In Other Countries.

THEY are very interested in other countries and their people. Very seldom do you see the least sign of any feeling against foreigners or their language—feelings of which we Australians are too often guilty.

Their internationalism is seen in their cultural life.

At the film shows held nearly every night in every sanatorium half the films are Soviet films, half are films from other countries—French, Austrian, Hungarian, American, for example. The Soviet patients flock to these films as eagerly as to their own, though their own are on the average far better. The library has a shelf of books in the English language (with Thackeray, Galsworthy, Thomas Hardy, Mark Twain, Howard Fast and others) and a shelf each in French, German and Chinese. This is apart from the numerous Russian translations of books from these and other languages.

You can turn the radio on to any country you wish. It was humorous one day to hear the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, on the occasion of the Jewish New Year, lament in solemn tones that his words would not be heard in the countries behind the "Iron Curtain"! He was heard in the Moscow pine forest as clearly as if he had been in the next room.

I talked to a young worker who had just read (in Russian) Katharine Prichard's three novels of the goldfields and Aldridge's "Sea Eagle". When I produced a Russian

translation of Professor Elkin's book on the Australian Aborigines (which I had obtained in Moscow) it was eagerly read by a group of young women students. More than one patient talked to me about the coming Olympic Games in Melbourne.

In the schools all children learn one foreign language, beginning in the fifth grade (12 years). English is the most favored language. At least one-third of the children study it.



Love Of Sport.

SOVIET people have an exceedingly keen interest in sport. You can see it in the sanatoria, with the constant volley-ball, skating, billiards and other games, and with the keen watching of major football and other sporting events over television.

You can see it at its peak in the big national and international contests in Moscow's Dynamo Stadium. When the Czech team played the champion Dynamo team last year and beat them, one could have imagined oneself among a crowd of barrackers at a football match in Australia. The crowd went wild with enthusiasm for the visitors, rushing on to the field after the match, catching a Czech player and hoisting and throwing him on high for several minutes.

The Soviet Olympic team in 1956 will be a very strong one because it will represent a sporting **people**.

Criticism Welcomed.

THESE people are not afraid to criticise, nor do they resent it. They are very proud of their country and may feel somewhat hurt over some visitors' comments. But they are very used to the free giving and taking of criticism.

I have seen a highly comic Satire Theatre performance over television on builders who build houses in a hurry with thin walls; and at the circus some very trenchant treatment of textile-directors who turn out shrinking garments and trade union committee secretaries who are slow in paying out sick pay. I have read a punishing article in Pravda on "bad and expensive" building in Zaporozhe, a war-devastated town in which any outsider would think a wonderful job had been done; and read slashing attacks by a weekly paper correspondent on weaknesses in a certain Department store—uniform styles in raincoats, trousers creased after bad packing, etc.

Such criticism is part of the daily life of the Soviet Union and helps to account for its rapid progress. It is taken up gleefully by capitalist papers which wrongly think—or hope—that the weaknesses criticised are typical and are evidence of "Soviet failure".

A woman student once became quite impatient when she thought I was holding back in my criticism of certain singers. "We want criticism", she said almost passionately. "How are we to improve without criticism?"

These People Want Peace.

FINALLY, these people have a tremendous interest in peace.

It is based on their whole background—on the vast peace-time construction which is transforming city, town and countryside, on the crowded shops with their ever-increasing flow of consumer goods at reduced prices.

Here is a country where peace means a higher standard of living every year and only war can check the rapid advance. A socialist country in which the market will rise along with production up to the limit of human needs. A country of 5, 10 and 15 year plans for rebuilding whole cities and regions and achieving colossal production targets.

This is a country, too, where the memories of war are very near and very bitter, where you constantly see the graves of pilots and Red Army men, relics of trenches or metal fragments in the forest, and badly wounded and injured people.

Russian people talk to you readily about all kinds of subjects but hardly ever about the war. For most people the war is past talking about. If the film at a sanatorium is a war film, you will see most people go straight to their rooms afterwards instead of enjoying the usual talk or game before retiring.

Soviet leaders view the prospects of peace with great confidence though very clearly seeing the war danger. Pospelov, of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, at the Lenin Anniversary meeting in the Bolshoi Theatre on January 21, 1954, confidently forecast an increase of trade with capitalist countries and urged peaceful competition between the two systems in the production of consumer goods.

The Soviet Union itself is a great training ground for internationalism, itself uniting many nationalities on an equal basis. The Czar's "prison of nations"—the formerly oppressed Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians, Uzbeks, Tartars and others—are now united on a basis of complete political equality, each freely speaking and teaching its own language and developing its own culture, each having equality with the Russians, and even preference over them, in the carrying out of economic development and raising

of living standards. You find Soviet people of different nations very proud of this international brotherhood.

Of all the lies told by the wealthy class of other countries against the Soviet Union, the most wicked lie is that it wants war. No people ever wanted peace so keenly and so unanimously as the Soviet people.

Who Threatens War?

WHILE the Soviet people want peace, they find themselves constantly facing war conspiracies, espionage and subversive activity.

Since the collapse of their first invasions of 1918-20 the capitalists of the world have never given up hope of destroying the Soviet Union. The story of their ceaseless plotting in the nineteen twenties and thirties is told by the American authors Sayers and Kahn in their finely documented book "The Great Conspiracy".

In the thirties Hitler, aided by British arms and money, led the plotting. Now it is organised above all by the millionaires of the U.S.A.

In an article published in the Melbourne Sun on December 12, 1952, the U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, declares:—"Today, with atomic energy and air and sea power—we can create a community punishing force —with weapons of its own choosing **against targets of its own choosing at times of its own choosing . . .** to stop open aggression **before it starts.**" Could any aggressor announce his intention to break world peace in clearer terms?

He has admitted the Soviet does not plan "open military conquest" (Age, June 21, 1952), and made clear that what he means by "aggression" is action by any people against imperialist rule **inside their own country.** He has also declared that America's foreign policy includes "liberation" of the Baltic States (which are part of the Soviet Union) and even of independent countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia.

The authoritative Wall Street business journal "U.S. News and World Report" had already said on August 26, 1949:—"U.S. war plan for fighting Russia is blue-printed —Phase 1. Surprise atom bomb raids over Russia. Phase 2. Holding operations with European troops. Phase 3.

Combined offensive across Europe, spearheaded by U.S. commanders."

The "blue-prints" have been backed up by the establishment of a huge ring of American war bases encircling the Soviet Union from Norway through England and Western Europe to Greece, Turkey, Arabia, Pakistan, and over to Japan, Formosa, Korea and the islands of the Pacific.

Operation X.

IN 1948 the U.S. Government announced "Operation X" to carry out sabotage in other countries,

U.S. News and World Report explained:—"Under the plan strong arm squads would be formed under American guidance. Assassination of key Communists would be encouraged."

In 1952 the U.S. "Mutual Security Act" openly appropriated the huge sum of 100 million dollars for sabotage in the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies of East Europe.

The headmaster of a London school told me last year that in Vienna he had met one of his "old boys" who told him he was engaged full time in an agency "briefing displaced persons" for what he called "underground work in Iron Curtain countries". The Western zones of Berlin and Vienna are alive with such agencies.

A big American agency is run (near Munich) by former German General Gehlen. The Melbourne Herald of September 18, 1954, publishes an American Associated Press report as saying that Gehlen "spends six million dollars a year from the U.S. Treasury", that "thousands of agents of diverse nationality are on his payroll, together with the elite of the old German Army's Counter-Intelligence Corps", that his espionage system extends to Siberia, White Russia and the Ukraine", and that "it can only be guessed what deadly adventures in sabotage and subversion are periodically undertaken in the East by his agents."

Early in 1952 a scandal arose when details were published of the lost diary of Major-General Grow, who was

U.S. Army Attache in Moscow till the end of 1951. In this diary Grow described his day-to-day search for military information, noted specific bridges and power plants as "good targets", urged "hitting below the belt" and advocated "anything, truth or falsehood, to poison the thoughts" of the Soviet People.

Along with all this has flowed an endless stream of war propaganda such as the American magazine Collier's 130-page illustrated account, October 27, 1951, of "Russia's Defeat and Occupation, 1952-60", ex-Ambassador Bullitt's "We should drop atom bombs on the Kremlin", and the American "Newsweek's" article (1948), which brought an official Soviet protest, on how U.S. planes could be used to destroy Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa and other cities. (Imagine what would have been said if a Soviet paper had detailed how to destroy Washington, New York and San Francisco!)

Capitalism sees in war its road to markets and maximum profits and to its dream of destroying socialism. Therefore, we must all work tirelessly to defeat its plans of war and violence.

All who want peace should insist on real co-operation with the Soviet Union which also wants peace.

Training New Citizens.

A COUNTRY may be judged by how it brings up its children, its citizens of the future.

Mr. Albert Monk, President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, after returning from the Soviet Union, told the Rotary Club in Melbourne that "he did not think there was any other country which gave such care to its children".

I will not take up space in describing the very wonderful network of creches and kindergartens in factory, town and village. Rather let us examine what **kind** of training is given, what human qualities are developed or encouraged. Let us visit Moscow's House of Children's Books.

This is a large room, beautifully lighted, exhibiting books and models widely used in Soviet schools. These books and models aim to give the child a wide general knowledge about nature and how it can be turned to the uses of man.

Among the titles of books as one passes from shelf to shelf are "Machines—Man's Helpers", "What is around you?" (a first book on physics), "Story of the Earth's Surface" (with two display cases of rocks and metals), "Plants and their History" (starting from the plants in a Moscow garden, then journeying round the world), and an animal book "Friends of my Childhood".

All are beautifully printed and illustrated—special children's artists as well as special children's writers are on the job, and their standard is very high.

No less than 100 million children's books were published last year, the usual run of one book being between 100,000 and 300,000 copies. They are widely bought by children as well as placed in school libraries.

Along with these books, also reflecting what is spread through all schools, are models and guides teaching how to make radio sets, telescopes for astronomy, new machines, a school garden, and so on.

There are display cases showing the four seasons and what to do each month, all the stages in honey-making, the varieties of cotton, different wools and their uses.

The children have a hall in which they can discuss books with the writers, criticise and suggest improvements. Many hundreds of children's letters to the writers come weekly from all parts of the Soviet Union to the House of Books.

One leaves thinking:—"What a great life such books and models open up for Soviet children! How it must stimulate their imagination and talents! And how it must inspire them to want peace!"

Stress On Family Relations.

VERY strong emphasis is laid on good, sound family relations. To illustrate this let us consider three Soviet productions.

The play "Wonderful Boy" was performed last year at one of Moscow's fine Children's Theatres. This is the story of a boy who has a good record at school but is rude and inconsiderate in all ways to his mother. The mother, a widow, has spoilt him, and thinks he is "wonderful" but "nervous". Some of his schoolmates see him in one of his home tantrums and are disgusted. A friend

of the mother tries to cure the boy with the aid of these schoolmates, but without success. The boy finally seeks the mother's sympathy by announcing he is leaving home, but is astounded when his mother, who has learnt her mistake, refuses to be upset and bids him good-bye. The curtain falls with the boy leaving and the friend saying to him:—"Where are you going? Unless you change you will have no friends anywhere in the country".

The kids who filled the theatre were obviously disappointed—he was an attractive boy and they had been clapping breathlessly each time a happy ending seemed likely. But the author evidently wanted to make his warning a stern one.

There is a popular film "My Love" in which a young woman student is wooed by two lovers. Then her sister dies, and she takes over the sister's child and acts as its mother. The lover previously in favor loses her because he cannot adapt himself to the situation. The other lover wins her because he cheerfully acts as father to the child.

The mother of the girl guerilla Zoya, who has become a national heroine since her heroic death at the hands of the Nazi invaders, was asked to write a book on how she brought up her children. The title of the book is "Zoya and Shura". These two, girl and boy, were not fussed over but were always encouraged to take responsibility and initiative. The parents do things **with** them rather than **for** them. Real mutual love and friendship grow between parents and children. The parents are busy in their own work, sometimes away for periods, but the children know their love and have confidence in it. They respond by helping their parents—getting meals for the mother who is a teacher and taking over more responsibility when the father dies. Soviet people would regard this as an ideal relationship.

Principles Of Training.

THE child develops through the experience of work and play with other children, through experience in the "collective". In turn the collective has the duty to help every child forward. These are strongly held principles.

Great importance attaches to the Young Pioneers, the organisation of nearly all young people between the ages

of 9 and 14 which provides summer camps and every kind of creative activity.

The plays at the Children's Theatres constantly stress the value of co-operation of teacher with parents and of both with the young Pioneers. Upbringing in home and school is viewed as a single problem.

Personal friendship is greatly valued as bringing out the highest human qualities. The teacher in the very popular play "Red Tie" says to the former friend of a boy who has been for the time being disgraced:—"If you are not his friend now, you were not his friend before, you were only his acquaintance". Strong personal friendships that last through life are encouraged alongside devotion to the work of the Young Pioneers or other collective body.

One should refer finally to the Children's Exhibition of Paintings. This is an exhibition organised each year for the best paintings of children in general (not special art pupils) from all over the country; and it is itself taken to all parts of the country.

The children had chosen their own themes. Some of them had painted Young Pioneer activities, landscapes or farm scenes. There were all themes **except** war. Soviet children, unlike those trained on American capitalist films and comics, are brought up with their minds centred on useful, peaceful, creative activity.

Art "Wedded To Life".

ONE'S stay in the Soviet Union tends to become a continuous cultural festival. Here the world's finest level of culture is found.

There is no space to describe the superb ballet; the opera equal to Italian Grand Opera; the astounding network of drama theatres; the endless performances of Shakespeare running into many hundreds for a single single Shakespeare play in a single theatre; the honor paid to Tolstoy, Gorki and other great Russian novelists and the continual representation of their works on stage, cinema and television as well as in ever-flowing hundreds of thousands of new volumes; the great nation-wide celebrations of cultural anniversaries like those of Tolstoy, Schubert and Thackeray last year, for example.

More and more under socialism there develop not merely front-rank artists but a cultured people.

Culture spreads among the people in a hundred ways; in Moscow's 150 spacious, well-filled, splendidly cheap bookshops; in its galleries and 84 museums always packed with people; in the magnificent Metro railway stations; in the Palaces of Culture attached to big factories and in local Houses of Culture; in the touring of Moscow drama, opera, ballet and circus companies round the country each summer while Moscow receives artists from the towns and villages; and in television programs which are seen already by many millions.

Here, as Paul Robeson said, "art is closely wedded to life".

The front-rank artists are not left long unchallenged. At the great Anniversary concert at the Bolshoi Theatre on November 6, where the finest artists of the country performed, the two loudest bursts of applause were for an 18-year-old ballerina just out of a trade school in Leningrad and for the new young choir of the new Moscow University.

Under socialism, with its economic security and the new value it sets on human life, the Soviet people have already become the world's most cultured people.

The Soviet people are marching forward now from Socialism to Communism.

They will reach this higher stage of human life when —

(1) They have greatly expanded production—not only by multiplying consumer goods but by completing the great construction works of Communism and attaining the basic industry targets set by Stalin—500 million tons of coal annually, 60 million tons of steel and 60 million tons of oil. (In 1952 the figures were already up to 300 million, 35 and 47 million tons.)

(2) The present relation between State industry and collective farms, with their mutual buying and selling, gives place to the control of the whole social product by one authority, which will regulate production to meet all the many-sided and growing needs of human beings without buying and selling or the use of money.

(3) Working hours are reduced to six or five per day, real wages doubled from the 1952 level, and an all-round education given of the type that will enable all members of society to choose their occupations freely and change them freely as they wish.

With these developments will come complete respect for social property and the transforming of labor from a burden to a pleasure. It will therefore be possible to apply the Communist formula "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

The march forward to Communism was brilliantly outlined for Soviet citizens by their great leader, Stalin, in his last work "Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R." published a year before his death—his last testament to his people.

The grand new prospect thus opened up before them has fired the Soviet people more than ever with a great common purpose in life.

Love For Their Leaders.

IN the midst of their triumphs the Soviet people feel the most genuine, deep love and admiration for those who led them to the winning of their new life.

At 11.30 a.m. on rest-day, at a temperature of 15 below freezing point, with the snow falling and an icy wind blowing, a queue of at least half a mile was already formed, packed closely two or three abreast, waiting their time to pass for a few moments the embalmed bodies of Lenin and Stalin in the Mausoleum in the Red Square. The Mausoleum is open 25 hours a week and the crowd is never less.

Powerful lights below show with life-like clearness the features of the two leaders—Lenin's the thinner and sharper, Stalin's the heavier and older; features of really great men who were at the same time simple men of the people.

One is reminded of the grim days of 1917 when all seemed ruin and chaos but Lenin, with his unshakable faith in the working people, led them to victory over all obstacles and pioneered the way to socialism for all mankind.

One is reminded, too, of those other grim days in 1941 when Stalin remained at his post with the Germans only a few miles from Moscow, waiting with iron patience till the German lines were strained and bled to the utmost and the bitter winter snows began to fall, then launching the mighty counter-offensive which smashed the invading forces, saved the Soviet Union and saved the world.

One remembers the glass case in the Museum of the Red Army displaying the special Iron Cross and black, white and red ribbons produced by Hitler to decorate the conquerors of Moscow!

One remembers in that same museum all the records of the heroism and suffering of the war years: that picture of the tank in Stalingrad in which is seen, scrawled in his own blood by a tank commander, the last of his crew to die:—"I am dying, but my country and my Party will win"; and the model of the "Pavlov House" in Stalingrad, a single house in a strategic spot which a small group led by Sergeant Pavlov held against the German army for 58 days in the midst of the greatest inferno of the war.

One remembers Churchill's tribute to "the stubborn and unyielding resistance with which the Russian soldiers have defended every street and every house and every yard".

And one remembers the 20-year Anglo-Soviet Treaty signed in May, 1942, pledging close co-operation of Britain and the Soviet during the war and "close and friendly collaboration" afterwards.

For Peace And Socialism.

TO-DAY, under pressure of the will of the British people and the needs of British trade, British policy to the Soviet Union is becoming again somewhat more friendly.

The Australian people should now demand a change from the Menzies Government's present policy of hatred and active hostility towards the Soviet Union to a policy of friendship and peace in accordance with the Australian people's real interests.

Then, within a few years, we would have the chance to judge, on even fuller evidence, the superiority of socialism over capitalism, the need to end capitalism and build socialism in our own country.

Once we build socialism here, starting from a far higher technical and educational level than the Russian people in 1917, we shall be able to surprise the world with our achievements.

We shall be able to make our country the finest country on earth.

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