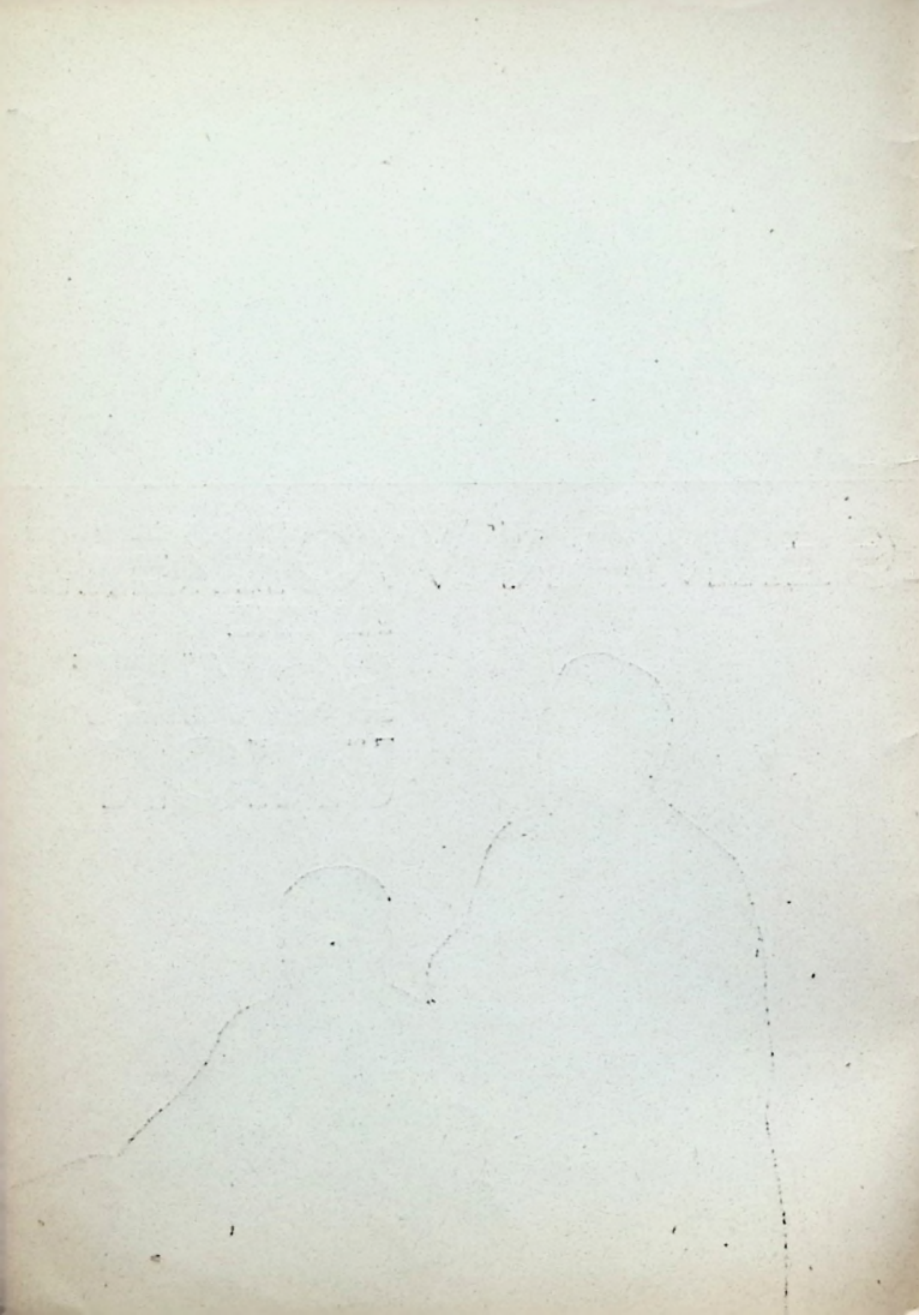




GERMAN WORKERS IN THE SOVIET UNION





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GERMAN FOUNDRY WORKERS
TELL THEIR OWN STORY

With a Preface by A. TIVEL

CO-OPERATIVE PUBLISHING SOCIETY OF FOREIGN
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GERMAN WORKERS
IN THE
SOVIET UNION

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This pamphlet was written by German metal-workers, working in the Soviet Union, for their fellow workers in their own country. But workers in English speaking countries will find it interesting as a plain and unvarnished tale of the life and struggles of the workers in the Soviet Union in the great task of building up socialism, and the part played in it by their fellow workers from abroad.



Smelting Works at Nadezhdinsk in the Urals

PREFACE

Nadezhdinsk is situated further north than any other metallurgical plant in the world. This, however, could not frighten the foundry workers of Berlin, who had made up their minds to come and work for us. And now they know that, even in this cold climate, Bolshevik fire is strong enough to effect reconstruction in winter time, mine coal from open workings, fight for high grade metal and against sabotage.

The Experiment of Bolshevism—a book written by Feiler, editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*—contains the following sentence: "Russia is ablaze. Europe is growing numb. An extinguishable flame is burning in the cold air of Russia, whereas in the warmer air of Europe there is no flame at all." German workers have learned that, in spite of the climate, industry in Berlin is capable of freezing to a much greater extent than in the Arctic climate of the Asiatic part of the U.S.S.R.

For Nadezhdinsk is situated in Asia, on the other side of the Ural mountains. Nadezhdinsk was a wild place, even for the Urals, although it is one of the newest plants of the old Ural industry. Some of the workers who built it are still to be found on the spot. It was started at the end of the nineteenth

century, for the special purpose of manufacturing rails for the great Siberian railway. The plant, which produced many hundred thousand tons of rail, was not connected by railway with the centre and despatched its products by water. Nadezhdinsk was indeed an out-of-the-way place before the revolution. Only a few years before the world war, the noise of blast furnaces would be mingled with the howling of wolves, who prowled around the working camp on winter nights. The very fact of its being named after its owner (to whom this area had been given by the Tsar) was typical of Russian feudalism, and of all the wildness, backwardness and barbarism which went along with it.

A gigantic plant where 10,000 workers were employed; a dirty camp, whose only two storied building was used as an exclusive club for the executive staff of engineers and technicians; numerous public houses; a few miserable schools; an isolated block—a sort of class settlement—where the engineers lived and which was surrounded by a fence with Circassian soldiers posted at the gate to guard these privileged beings from the common riff-raff of hired slaves, who inhabited the wooden camp huts and spent sombre and gloomy hours in church or sombre and noisy hours in the public houses, after a twelve-hour working day for very low wages—that is the picture of Nadezhdinsk in its pre-revolutionary days.

But the older men of the place, those who in 1905 organised an armed detachment of workers (the building still stands in which that detachment resisted the attacks of the "black hundred", who had been doped by the insidious propaganda of the police and the priests); those who carried out the February and October revolutions in Nadezhdinsk, who provided 2,000 Red Guards, partisans and volunteers for the Red Army, of whom twenty-six were shot and lie buried in the neighborhood of the works; who endured the years of chaos when the plant almost stopped working and produced cigarette lighters instead of rails; who have now built tall stone houses, the best hospital in the Urals, two cinemas, a place of culture, costing one million rubles, a theatre with

revolving stage that might astonish the most exacting spectator, a mechanised factory kitchen, numerous creches, several new technical schools, two worker's faculties, a workers' university, a park of rest and culture, and who are building this year new stone houses, public baths, schools, etc., costing in all five million rubles—these older inhabitants of the place can appreciate the difference between the Nadezhdinsk plant as it was in former days under the management of a certain Baron Taube and the Nadezhdinsk plant of today, which belongs to the proletarians of the U.S.S.R.

The twenty German foundry workers could of course know nothing of the history of Nadezhdinsk and were therefore not struck by the changes which had been wrought by the efforts of the local workers and which have revolutionised the aspect of the town. Coming from Berlin, they must have been struck by the dirt of the camp, the lack of order, the absence of cultural conveniences, and the large difference in the conditions of plant work. But it did not take them long to grasp (many of them knew it already) that they had not come to the U.S.S.R. to find everything ready for them, but to help us build things anew. Most of them went to work with a will. I say most—because eight out of the twenty shirked it. This was not because living conditions in Nadezhdinsk proved too hard for them. The things which the German comrades and their wives write about living conditions are sufficient to prove that the material conditions they lived under, are by no means so bad. Stone houses with comfortable apartments of three to four rooms for two families, central heating, running water, electric light, and an adequate, though perhaps not too varied supply of food products guaranteed—those are conditions which might excite the envy of many workers in Germany. It is true that the Germans feel the lack of public activity, since they were, especially at first, isolated from our public life because they did not know the language. But those were not the reasons which made these eight workers flee so ignominiously from Nadezhdinsk. They used various arguments to justify their flight. At first they complained of the

food; but when, after the first few days of unavoidable discomfort, while the Germans were being installed in their apartments, and attached to a co-operative store and while kitchens were being fixed up, the question of nutrition was regulated in a perfectly satisfactory way, they chose the climate as an argument. In reality, some of those deserters had caught the disease which has infected some Russian proletarians as a result of the present shortage of labour, namely—the habit of drifting from one enterprise to another; this habit has given rise to the word "drifter", which is applied to that kind of person. The drifter gets his wages at each enterprise and occasionally some sum in advance and, in most cases, he obtains an outfit of clothes. Having thus got all the profits, the drifter departs, certain of finding work in some other place. And we must say that three or four out of the eight Germans have found jobs at other plants. The rest returned to Germany, where they contributed to the pages of *Vorwaerts* (attentive readers of the *Rote Fahne* will remember the answering statement made by the twelve workers who remained in Nadezhdinsk), and will probably join the ranks of the national-socialists or drag on a miserable existence among the unemployed. Some of them, it appears, hoped to get rich quick in Soviet Russia and to hoard up a goodly sum in foreign currency. Their hopes having been disappointed, they decided to leave, under a more or less suitable pretext. But enough about those deserters.

The pig iron foundry section at Nadezhdinsk plant is an extremely important one. It employs about 800 men and is not so badly equipped. But badly organised labour, shortage of skilled workers and an irregular supply of raw material—defects which it is in our power to remove—explain why the foundry section and the plant as a whole are failing to fulfil their programme for the third year of the Five-Year Plan. Sabotage also plays a big part.

All German proletarians know that the class war is by no means over in Russia. The field of operations has narrowed down and the class enemy is losing one position after another;

but to make up for that his resistance is the more virulent. The systematic chain of sabotage, organised by the "Prom-party" had several links in the Nadezhdinsk plant.

Not long before the Germans arrived, an organisation of "wreckers" was removed from this plant and from other enterprises in the same region. The last traces of this nest of vipers were not discovered until quite recently. The plant is still suffering from the results of sabotage, as can be seen in the disproportion between the various branches of industry in the region, and the disproportion between the output of different sections; particularly noticeable is the discrepancy between the means of transportation at the disposal of the plant and the total capacity of its machinery, as also between this machinery and auxiliary equipment. The German workers had a taste of this when their products were held up at the section for want of cars.

They gradually began to understand and even to carry out one of the finest slogans of the Bolsheviks who are constructing socialism; the slogan which says that we acknowledge difficulties not with a view of finding an excuse for bad work, but with a view to overcoming them. The German workers are by degrees acquiring that militant spirit in production which impels us to surmount all our limitations. It is true that this spirit is not acquired in a day.

Despite their devotion to the U.S.S.R. and despite the fact that half of them were members of the Party, before they left Germany and three more have filed applications for joining it here, it is still very difficult for them immediately to acquire our understanding of working conditions and to let themselves be truly guided by the conviction that they are masters of the enterprise and that every defect or deficiency in the work must rouse in them something else besides irritation when the regular progress of production is interrupted.

These unfortunate interruptions must not only cause dissatisfaction, but should stimulate all those who are building socialism to find means for surmounting the obstacles in question. Stoppages in the work, the absence of skilled workers,

the shortage or bad qualities of raw materials—these things must evoke not only indignation, which is not enough; but also an increase of labour efficiency, which will serve to eliminate the defects. In order to acquire this spirit, a person must be re-educated; he must really come to feel that he is working for himself and for his class and that he is personally involved in all problems of whatever kind. A re-education of that kind is not a simple matter.

It is difficult for our German comrades to eradicate, in the course of a few months, the traditions acquired during years of work in capitalist countries. Here is one characteristic episode, which may serve to show the difficulties of this process in the case of some comrades.

During one of the political talks I had with the comrades, we started talking about the coming celebration of May First. We discussed the question as to whether our plant would observe both days of rest, namely May 1 and 2, in accordance with the decree.

Most people in Germany probably know that during the period of reconstruction, the period of the Five-Year Plan, the rest day of May 2 is replaced by shock-work, this being the wish of the workers themselves. We talked about the possibility of having shock-work on May 1 also. I said that quite possibly the workers of some enterprises would demand that the First of May should be celebrated not by a parade or demonstration, but by some special act of labour enthusiasm, by completing, for example, some important construction job or other. One of the German workers, an elderly man, said: "On the day when the First of May was first celebrated in Germany, my father, an old proletarian, said that he would rather see me on the gallows than working on May First. I shall never go against my father's wish."

I started with the others to explain to him that his point of view was dogmatic, that it was conditional on the fact of working in a capitalist country and tenable only in the period before the proletariat had seized power. We asked him whether he would still refuse to work if a proletarian revolu-

tion occurred in Germany, if factories and plants were in the hands of the proletariat, if industry were destroyed by civil war and by the subversive action of the vanquished capitalist class, and the victorious proletariat, ready to stand to arms at a moment's notice, started working in feverish haste to restore its socialist industry, and decreed the First of May to be a day of socialised labour. "Yes," he answered, "I shall be alone against everybody."

Obviously he did not understand the significance of the First of May in a country like the Soviet Union where the workers had already overthrown capitalism and had established their own power.

That little episode shows that even Communists have still many petty-bourgeois prejudices to get rid of before they can be accounted real reliable builders of socialism in the land of the victorious proletariat. They must also—and that is a still harder task—be able to turn merely passive anger at cases of bureaucracy and inefficiency into a real creative energy, which will show them a way out of the difficulty.

All this is not meant in the least to give the impression that the German workers actually adopted a passive attitude in relation to everything they found here, and considered the conscientious fulfilment of their tasks to be their sole duty.

This is not the case. In spite of difficulties, they have accomplished a vast amount of solid work, the total results of which cannot be gauged as yet. For instance, they have shown a splendid example of a civilised attitude with regard to labour and a great deal of grit in maintaining their high tempo of work. The preceding paragraphs show that it would be useless to expect any high traditions of cultural working habits to exist in this out-of-the-way spot. The Ural enterprises in general and Nadezhdinsk in particular stand on a much lower level in that respect than those of Middle and Southern Russia. As a result of primitive hygienic conditions and a low standard in sanitary matters generally, the workers there rarely change their clothes after work, whereas in other enterprises in other parts of the U.S.S.R. the habit is almost universal.

The German workers established, from the first, the system of taking off their clothes and putting on working clothes on coming to the plant, and taking the latter off when they had finished work.

It must be said, however, that we have baths attached to most sections.

During the first few days when the Germans were working here, the opinion expressed by the foremen was that in respect of quality they perhaps worked better than Russian workers, but that they were slower. That opinion showed narrowmindedness and sometimes covert enmity. There is no need to hide the fact that many of our foremen are conservative and the Germans, who were introducing new labour methods and were much more exacting towards themselves and towards others in respect of discipline and precision, certainly aroused a feeling of hostility in some backward people. This feeling, however, invariably met with a sharp resistance on the part of the great mass of workers, led by the Party nuclei. The Germans soon disproved the accusation of slowness and not only worked in shock tempo, but showed also that they possessed the valuable quality of staying power and could keep up that shock-tempo, once they had adopted it.

The work they did to meet the order which had come from Magnitogorsk, was a stiff test. At their own initiative and indeed somewhat in violation of labour legislation, the foundry workers, on receiving a large order for blast furnace parts for the Magnitogorsk plant, worked ten-eleven hours per day for about two months, abandoning rest days and keeping it up to the very end. During all that time not one of the German workers missed a single day.

This high standard of discipline undoubtedly pulled up the work of the whole section. The Germans, together with the best Russian workers, set the example in shock-work.

The Germans have also shown their inventiveness to no small degree and made many practical suggestions. One of them, for example, submitted a design for a moulding machine. This machine was constructed, after a great deal of delay it

is true, and is now working. Numerous minor suggestions were also made by them for the simplification and improvement of the production process. The quality of their work met with immediate appreciation and two of them have been promoted to be foremen.

There is no need to conceal the fact that everything has not gone off without friction, but it must be emphasised that such friction occurred mainly in relations with the minor and middle members of the technical staff, whose unsatisfactory and unscrupulous actions in connection with the work of the Germans were exposed time and again. As regards the main body of workers in the section, no really serious misunderstandings occurred. Unfortunately, owing to the language difficulty no really close relations exist as yet.

This does not mean that the Germans hold themselves aloof. They already have numerous friends among the Russian workers, who come to visit them and with whom they go to the cinema and the Palace of Culture. The wives of the German workers have had a great deal to do with that, since they have got in touch with our women's organisations and taken part in the meetings, etc. The German comrades are overcoming the difficulties of the language and gradually being absorbed into our system of public life. One of them has been elected to the town Soviet, while another is a member of the Ural Council of the Metallurgical Workers' Trade Union and has taken part in the general congress of that Trade Union in Moscow. One of the comrades, who is fond of music, is an active member of the musical circle attached to the Palace of Culture.

Outside the plant their life is as follows: having worked, as most of them do, on the first shift, that is from 7 a. m. to 3 p. m. (the seven hour working day not having been as yet introduced), they return home—they all live in the same house—or perhaps remain for a Party or trade union conference, in which they take part with the aid of an interpreter or a comrade from the Communist nucleus, who knows German and guides their political education.

They spend the evenings either at home or in one of our cultural establishments. From time to time, about once in a decade, political discussions are arranged for them where events in Germany and local questions are talked over. The head of the section, the secretary of the Communist nucleus and the trade union workers sometimes take part in these discussions. Special talks dealing with various existing deficiencies and with the organisation of their life and work are arranged jointly with the administrative staff of the plant and with representatives of the Communist nucleus, trade union and co-operative society.

Our German colony gets newspapers from Germany, though not at regular intervals, and the German papers published in Moscow.

The Russian language study circle progressed well at first, but lately had to cease operations because the workers were too busy with work at the plant and came home late and tired. However, most of the Germans talk Russian well enough by now.

There is another rather delicate matter connected with the Germans' life here. Besides the German workers, we have about ten German specialists at the plant. It is not our business to describe their work, and life, but we must make mention of the fact that some of them attempted to patronise the German workers and have arbitrarily undertaken to represent the interests of the German colony in Nadezhdinsk. We need hardly say that these attempts were energetically repulsed by the German proletarians, who have not forgotten the conditions of class struggle in Germany and did not need their interests to be "protected" by those specialists.

They themselves never raised the question of their interests being protected and for settling various questions regarding joint work, they found more suitable ways of intercourse with the appropriate Communist, trade union and Soviet organisations.

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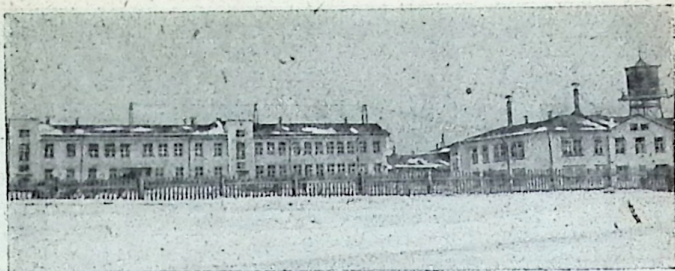
Group of German Workers at Nadezhdinsk

It is almost a year since the German workers have come to work in Nadezhdinsk. That experience and their impressions confirmed by the statements they have made in the German press and the numerous letters they get in answer to them from various parts of Germany, show that the experiment has proved entirely satisfactory, not only as a whole, but also in its details. We are awaiting the arrival of more workers from abroad.* We have over 1,500 of them now in the Urals and that number will increase.

We believe that such a union of proletarians of all countries for completing the common task of building socialism in the U.S.S.R. represents the international solidarity of the proletariat in its highest form.

A. Tivel.

* At the time this book went to press, a second group of workers arrived, twice as numerous as the first. Previous experience will make it possible to carry on their re-education on Soviet principles on a much larger scale. But this needs to be told in a separate pamphlet.



Nadezhdinsk—Workers' Housing Blocks.

WHO ARE WE?

We are foundry workers from Berlin, a group of fellow-workers who came to the U.S.S.R. in July, 1930, to take part in the building of socialism. It was just six weeks before our departure that the office of the Red Trade Union Opposition branch of the Foundry Workers' Union had got the news that foundry workers were wanted for a large metallurgical plant in the Urals. The comrade who had the job of organising the transit, had his hands full, since over double the necessary number of comrades had applied and every one of them wanted to be taken to Russia. The comrades began to lose patience. It seemed at first as if nothing would come of it after all; but at the last moment things began to move fast. Meetings were held to let comrades know about their rights and duties and fill in questionnaires. Only twenty men were wanted, so about twenty-five comrades had to stay behind and console themselves with the thought that they might have another chance later on. Nine comrades worked up to the day of departure (eleven comrades were jobless, partly owing to capitalist rationalisation and partly to their oppositionist trade union work at the plant). Since the economic crisis was even then making itself felt on the labour exchange, only a

few comrades were lucky enough to be working full time and at the moment of writing, three-quarters of a year later, it is certain that several more of those nine who then still had employment, would now be walking the streets in search of work. Five of the comrades who are here worked for the Behr Company, in Weissensee. That foundry, after a strike lasting several weeks, has now closed its doors on our fellow workers and all its employees are on the street.

We left the Friedrichstrasse station on July 1, 1930. The train moved off to a great shout of "Rot Front", three times repeated, and our wives and relations together with the representatives of the revolutionary branch of our trade union wished us a good journey. We had just taken our seats when we found out to our joy that in our carriage was a German comrade from Moscow who had been spending his holiday in Germany. The coincidence was especially pleasant for us since this comrade, who had been working for a year and a half in a Moscow cloth factory was able to tell us all about the Russian workers' way of life and about cultural work in the U.S.S.R. As we came to Benschen, the German frontier station, we realised with astonishment how fast the time had flown. While our luggage was being examined, we each of us drank a last draught of German beer, and had a couple of sausages with it. After a halt of about half an hour, the train started off again. We left behind us what the German Socialist Party calls the "freest republic in the world", and entered "Pilsudsky's Paradise". The Polish officials who examined our train did not find in our possession any instruments calculated to endanger their state. We saw poor hovels and magnificent churches flying past us. The stop in Warsaw was longer, and some of us went to the buffet to get some refreshments, but, as the choice was very limited, we all had tea with lemon for 20 zlots. We saw an extraordinary number of soldiers with their chests decorated with medals. The cab drivers came as far as the waiting room to look for passengers, whom they might take on a drive round the city. But the proletarians of Warsaw did not seem to have much money,

and none availed themselves of the opportunity as far as I could see. On the way back to the train we met some men who wanted to speculate in German, Polish and Russian money.

We reached the Russian frontier after a journey of about twelve hours. At about one kilometre from the frontier, on neutral ground, the Polish officials left the train and were replaced by ones wearing the sign of the hammer and sickle. The hearts of all twenty men beat faster as we passed through the gateway on which the words "Workers of the World, Unite!" were inscribed. Then suddenly we heard the strains of the International. It was Russian workers, who had come to meet us at Negoreloye station, singing in chorus, and we sang it to the end with them. An interpreter who had arrived from Moscow, led us into the waiting room, where we had our first Russian meal. Our whole surroundings showed that we were in the land of proletarian dictatorship. No pictures of gorgeously decorated potentates hung on the walls here, but those of the leaders of the Russian proletariat (Lenin, Stalin, Voroshilov, etc.). We found out later that those pictures are to be seen in every theatre, cinema or cultural establishment of any kind. After our luggage had been carried to the Moscow-bound train, we said good-bye to the comrades of Negoreloye, and took our seats. There was not so much talk now. We crowded about the windows for each of us wanted to see what the fatherland of the international proletariat looked like. Here too we saw little huts and huge churches that looked like giants beside them. But red flags waved from the steeples of those churches and that showed that they are now used for other purposes than planning how to get into heaven. Some are fitted out as workers' clubs, others are being dismantled to be used as cultural establishments for the workers. Our train passed a number of new factories in process of construction, which told of the efforts made to build up industry, despite all the hatred of the Soviet Union's enemies. One is involuntarily reminded of the words of *Vorwaerts*. In 1918 that paper stated that the Soviet system

would not last for even a couple of months; later it changed this to not even a couple of years and now after thirteen years of Soviet Russia, it speaks, though with diminished confidence of the small chances of success enjoyed by the Five-Year Plan. We were not, however, shown any "Potemkin villages" as *Vorwaerts* asserts. After a journey of about twelve hours, we arrived in Moscow, where we were met by representatives of the Soviet Steel Corporation. We drove in motor buses to the Hotel Europa, where we were entertained to a meal. Our stay in Moscow was, unfortunately all too short, as our train left for Perm six hours later; so we could only see the Museum of the Revolution. A woman interpreter explained all its details to us. There is one room showing the work of the Bolsheviks at the time when the Party was illegal, and the persecutions they endured under the tsarist regime. But the time for our departure from Moscow came all too quickly.

The journey from Moscow to Perm lasted about forty-eight hours. The train was late, so that we did not arrive in time to make the connection to Nadezhdinsk and we had to wait twenty-four hours in Perm, which gave us an opportunity of getting a good look at that town. A Red Army soldier kindly offered us his services as a guide. After we had seen a large machine plant and an iron foundry which produced mainly articles for dairy use, he took us to a public dining room where we had a good feed. After that we went by steamer down the river Kama to a workers' rest home situated at a distance of about three kilometres from Perm. Workers can spend their rest day—every fifth day—in this home entirely free of cost and the management even sees to it that they get their after dinner nap. There are about fifty beds at the workers' disposal, and a doctor who is in permanent residence and can be approached at any time, determines the guests' diet. On the day we were there, the dinner consisted of soup, meat with potatoes and fruit jelly and bread, which last is never wanting on a Russian dinner table. The soup was something new for us; none of us had ever eaten the like before. It was made of slices of fresh cucumber, boiled meat and

hard boiled eggs and was served cold. After we had washed and had a good three hours' sleep, we went to a workers' meeting, where the whole twenty of us were elected to the presidium. The chairman of the production committee made a report on the progress of the working programme for the current month. During the ensuing discussion, the workers expressed their joy at our having come to help carry out the Five-Year Plan. After one of us had made a short speech, expressing our readiness to help build up our common fatherland, the meeting closed with the singing of the International, and it was time for us to go back.

During the twenty hours' journey to our destination, Nadezhdinsk, we could see the mighty range of the Ural mountains passing before our eyes; and there were woods, woods on both sides of the line, as far as the eye could reach. The last couple of hours dragged somewhat, as we were all eager to see what our future home looked like. At last, on July 6, at 11:30 p. m. the engine whistled and we knew we were near the end of our journey. On the right hand side of the line we could see three great fires belched forth by the blast furnaces of Nadezhdinsk. On the left were the charcoal kilns, which provide charcoal for the plant. We were met at the station and driven to our future lodgings.

That is the story of our journey; the following chapters will be devoted to our work and life here.

TAKING PART IN POLITICAL LIFE

Since some of us were members of the Communist Party of Germany and became members of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. on our arrival here, we took part in Party work, although we were at first hampered by the difficulties of the language. The whole policy of the Party is reflected in the way socialist construction is being carried out. Alike by the spoken and the written word, in the shop and on the street one is constantly reminded of the necessity of carrying out the Five-Year Plan in four years.

Those who oppose that task and present obstacles in its way are openly pilloried. All Communists who occupy leading posts, even to the Red manager himself, are subject to sharp criticism. They are dismissed from their posts if they do not carry out their duties as they should in the interests of the production programme.

I had occasion to take part in a regional Party conference in the capacity of delegate. Coming, as I did, from a capitalist country, I was able to observe a pleasing difference here for, besides the difficulty of finding a place for a conference to meet in in Germany, we also have those guardians of "law and order", the police. Here both these difficulties were absent. The members of this conference were workers, peasants and Red Army soldiers, who criticised the Party work done in the past period and approved the current programme. The Red manager of Nadezhdinsk works made the principal report. He gave a numerical report on the work done by the various sections, how far the programme had been fulfilled and the reasons why it had not been fulfilled 100 per cent in some cases. The ensuing discussion gave me an example of the interest which the whole Russian proletariat takes in socialist construction. Those who criticised and discussed were not only workers from the various enterprises, but also proletarians in soldiers' uniform who demanded that all forces should be mobilised for the task of fulfilling the Five-Year Plan in four years.

I was able to observe at this conference the close union that exists between the rural and industrial proletariat. Some peasants came from a neighbouring village and brought grain for the plant workers, as a sign of the interest they were taking in socialist construction. At a conference of socialist industry leaders, Comrade Stalin coined the slogan: "Bolsheviks must master technique." That sentence now plays a prominent part in all Party and trade union conferences. The conference of the ferrous metals' industry, which took place in Moscow on April 1 to 5 and at which I was present as delegate, resolved to use every means in their power to improve quality

and quantity, so as to attain an output of 17 million tons of iron in 1933. The Five-Year Plan does not consist of economic construction only; it also provides for tremendous activity in cultural fields. Many schools and palaces of culture are being built and some of them are already in use. Our little town with its 50,000 inhabitants possesses a cultural home with 80 rooms. There are evening courses for teaching the illiterate and universal compulsory education has been introduced this year. I must also mention the work of the Young Communists. In addition to the Party political work, which they carry on among the masses after working hours, they play an important part in the production process. They do exemplary work in the shock-brigades, thereby showing how the problems presented by the Five-Year Plan can be tackled and overcome in quick time. Here is an example: One of our blast furnaces had for some time been unable to fulfill its programme. The Young Communists resolved to man some of the shifts themselves. The result was an instant change. On the first day the furnace fulfilled its programme 90 per cent and on the third day 110 per cent, *i.e.*, ten per cent above the programme. Young Communists are trained as worker-students in training institutes that they may become leaders in the work of production. We are determined that no false reports emanating from the mercenary bourgeois and social-fascist writers, shall impede the work of socialist construction. The words of Karl Liebknecht with regard to the youth movement: "Youth is the torch of the revolution," here find their echo.

A few words in conclusion. It is my earnest wish that many proletarians of capitalist countries may have the opportunity of spending the universal holiday of the world proletariat in Soviet Russia. They will see no policemen armed with guns and rubber truncheons—the myrmidons of a social-democrat police-chief riding through the streets in motor trucks and breaking up demonstrations. (Berlin 1929—33 persons killed). Out of the factories, which are decked with Soviet stars and red flags, battalions of workers come marching and

mingle their ranks with the detachments of the Red Army and the columns of motor trucks.

For Socialist Construction!

Against the enemies of the U.S.S.R.!

For peace!

Against the imperialist war-lords!

Erich Kruegerke.

AT THE PLANT

Since these lines are bound to be of some interest to fellow-workers abroad, it is necessary to give some details about the structure of our plant. About 15,000 people are employed at the works. It is situated in the Northern Urals. There are rich deposits of coal and ore in the neighbourhood. It is a typical smelting plant possessing seven blast furnaces, nine open hearth furnaces, a rolling mill turning out metal plates, rails and shaped iron, a steel and iron foundry, and a large electric power station of its own which also provides power for the whole region. The annual output is about 300,000 tons of cast iron. The foundry where we work, employs 750 men, who work in three shifts. The whole number of workers are organised in thirty-eight brigades. Moreover, some of them, including us Germans, work in shock-brigades, of which more will be said later. We, Germans came here in July, 1930. After five weeks eight men left us, although but a few days before they seemed ready to shed the last drop of their blood for the Soviet Union. They were the victims of a "mistake", for they had confused the fight for socialism with the fight for their own personal comfort.

The twelve of us who remained soon saw that there was a great deal of work to be done here. Our experience in Berlin had given us corresponding ideas of the production process and we found here a plant which was comparatively backward in technical respects. As soon as we got our working clothes, we started work, which was not so easy. The first few days were not so easy. We had to adapt ourselves in a short time,

and this process cannot of course be accomplished by some as quickly as by others. This produced the phenomenon of Russian workers producing more than we Germans did, which was due to the above mentioned circumstance. But, as soon as we felt more at home in our new surroundings and got away from ourselves a little, things changed more and more in our favour and we are today thoroughly acclimatised.

What does our foundry produce? A great percentage of the output consists in spare parts for the other sections of the works, especially for the rolling plant and open-hearth furnaces. Some brigades work exclusively on rolling equipment. Lately we have been working on big orders from our socialist giants, Magnitostroi, Kuznetskstroj and others and, since orders now come in regular sequence, our foundry is working in a more rational way than before. The steel foundry too is working on big orders. The plant, however, suffers from a shortage of skilled workers and from fluctuation of labour power. Until quite lately the Urals were very sparsely inhabited. Many people are brought here, but not all of them come to stay.

In training the younger generation of skilled workers, the apprentices, the methods used here are different from, and far superior to those employed in Germany. Contracts and teaching agreements are unknown. Apprentices grow up in their particular branch of work. All the processes of work involved therein are divided into eight groups according to the difficulty of the work. About every six months the apprentice himself, or an older foundry worker on his behalf, asks for a sample task from a higher working group to be given to him as a test. If he passes this test his wages are increased accordingly. Soviet Russia is also in advance of all countries as regards working hours for apprentices. The working day for adolescents of 14 to 16 years is 4 hours, for those of 16 to 18 years is 6 hours and only on reaching the age of 18 does the youth work full time. The young people also enjoy privileges with regard to holidays. Theoretical schooling also receives the maximum of attention.

I want to give an example of the way equality of the sexes is understood and valued here. We have girls in the foundry and fitters' section, who are training to be casters and fitters, who operate large cranes capable of lifting 600 cwt., do militia duty in the town, and work as bricklayers on the construction of high buildings. They do it with the conscious desire to perform the same duties and enjoy the same rights. Thus one of the oldest demands of the working class in capitalist countries is realised here in principle; in Soviet Russia there is equal pay for equal work.

Workers abroad will also be interested to know how a plant such as ours is run in the U.S.S.R. Private banking capital, syndicates or shareholders, whose only interest in the plant consists in receiving high dividends, are here no longer to be found. The working class runs its plants itself. A manager, appointed by the organs of the working class, is at the head of the plant. He directs the plant work in close contact with the trade-union and party organisations of the plant and the management, the workers committee and communist nucleus form the so-called triangle, each having their own sphere of work. The work is carried on under the direction of engineers and foremen. But these are not looked on as some higher species of beings, as is the case in Germany. They are comrades, the same as we are. The German engineers who work here, also grasped pretty soon that the power here belongs to the working class and we hope that, when they go back to Germany, they will assiduously adopt the same attitude as they do in Soviet Russia.

There are also special committees in every section, *e.g.*, production committee, rationalisation committee, health committee, etc.; these discuss and test all suggestions for the simplification and improvement of production, etc., and either accept or reject them. We Germans are already represented on most of the commissions and have also made numerous proposals suggested by our practical experience. For example, at our suggestion a new sort of moulding machine was constructed; the first model was made of wood, and was followed



German Workers—Shock-Brigaders of the Iron and Steel Smelting Works at Nadezhdinsk in the Urals

by two more made of iron, according to plans submitted by us. Many other alterations suggested by us, *e. g.*, a new distribution of models, were also put into effect, and our suggestions were carried out in regard to the preparation of sand and lighting. But there are some badly needed technical improvements which for the present cannot be carried out at our own plant.

Just a few words before closing, for the benefit of foreign workers who also intend to come to the Soviet Union, for many more will be wanted in the next few years. Each must be a first class worker at his own special job—for attention is paid to execution here also—and have, apart from his practical work at the plant, enough grit to put himself in every respect above the average standard. For you cannot measure everything according to German or Berlin standards here. Every worker

who wants to come here, must ask himself whether he is fit to be a pioneer in every sense of the word and adapt himself to conditions in the Soviet Union, an easy task for every honest worker. For, the better the human material which goes to reinforce socialist construction, the sooner will we win our certain victory over the capitalist system, which is still exploiting you today and, when you can slave for it no longer, will leave you to starve or commit suicide. Here in Soviet Russia unemployment has been done away with for good. There is a system of social insurance which is a model of what such things should be. We have the five-day week and we get a month's holiday, with full pay. All these are things in the worker's life, which only the socialist state is able to give.

P. Henke,

Berlin S. O. 36, Skalitzerstrasse 124.

ON THE JOB WITH OUR RUSSIAN COMRADES

By the time these lines go to press, we German casters will have a year of work in the Soviet Union behind us. What were things like a year ago? We came to a plant where we had some difficulty at first in getting our bearings, added to which we had the language difficulty. Everything was arranged differently from the way we have in Germany. But nothing daunted we started work and soon found out that where there is a will there is a way. We had to learn over again in order to handle the primitive tools and materials. The Russian workers and comrades soon understood that we had come as friends and helpers and we got in touch immediately, in political and trade union work, as well as in our private lives and on the job. An iron foundry has naturally nothing in common with an academy for young ladies and when a stoppage in the work or an accident occurred, the Russian comrades could swear even more fluently than we Germans, but they also have stronger nerves, as they have shown in many cases. Despite the sacrifices they are making at the moment in the interests of socialist construction, they have an easy-going disposition and light-hearted-

ness which often astounded us. Nothing is taken too tragically and the word "nichevo" helps over many difficulties of the working day. Many of the Russian comrades were war prisoners in Germany and are proud to be able to talk a little German with us. They often come to visit us and we visit them too. There seldom comes an evening which we spend alone. In this way we have already discovered many sterling fellows among them. The work is not always easy, it is true. Many workers come from the country, and have never seen a factory, let alone a foundry, in their lives before. Such newcomers often do not pull their weight. But we are in contact with the old workers of the place, since in the Soviet Union the plant is the basis of all life, economic, political or cultural, and all work at the plant are united by countless invisible ties.

At first we worked alone, but as soon as we had learned enough Russian to make ourselves understood in essential matters, we took Russian comrades into our shock-brigade: the younger ones especially fitted in very well. But the management did not always know how to guide the workers' enthusiasm into the right channels and much effort was expended in vain. Although our brigade works hard, the Russian workers like to stay with us and have already acquired much in the way of thoroughness and love of order. We want to lay special stress on the fact that the Russian comrades always take pains to understand us; I mean, our attitude towards various things at the plant and in private life as well. If we made a tactical or political mistake—for here, in Soviet Russia, great attention is paid to everything touching on politics—the Russian comrades excused us on the ground that "we had only just come from the capitalist world." In fact, the process of adapting ourselves is by no means over. In the course of meetings and conferences with the Russian workers, there is always an opportunity of studying the political physiognomy of any given person.

We must acknowledge above all things the proverbial hospitality of Russian workers, who will offer you anything and everything; they are proud to have Germans as guests and put

the best they have upon the table. The same thing happens in all public gatherings; we are most politely offered the best places, mostly against our wills. That is a sure sign that we are held in some esteem here. The fact that we are wholeheartedly helping here to complete the great work of socialist construction, has made us many friends. When our knowledge of the language is good enough to enable us not only to tackle the daily exigencies of our job, but also to exchange ideas directly with our Russian comrades, our joint work will improve still further in all respects.

It must not be imagined, however, all the people here are communists. Anti-social behaviour such as drunkenness, rowdiness, etc., still occurs in individual cases and the workers themselves combat these tendencies most energetically. A portrait or, what is much worse, a caricature of the offender appears in the wall-newspaper or local press. Criticism is also freely exercised, quite regardless of whether its object be a worker, a foreman, or the manager himself. It is a very good remedy that hardly ever fails and has served to reform sinners since they know that public opinion is against them.

P. Henke.

REPORT ON CULTURAL MATTERS

Being a German worker who has come to Soviet Russia in order to help in the work of construction and the fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan in four years, I am also specially interested in cultural matters and so feel it my duty to let my class comrades abroad know about what is being done in this sphere in the Soviet Union. Unlike capitalist Germany, where clergymen and other ill-disposed persons can freely declaim against the people, where retired officers get fat pensions which ought to go to the unemployed, where the construction of armoured cruisers seems more important than the feeding of children, and where paragraph 218 must be strictly observed so as not to offend christian morality, we are witnessing here, in the Soviet

Union, huge advances made by the cultural movement. The Russian working class, led by the Communist Party, employs every means in its power to raise the cultural level of the Russian people, which was kept at a very low level under the tsarist regime, and to sweep away all remnants that survive from tsarist days. I am going to give my German comrades some practical examples of the means which the Soviets are using in order to raise the level of culture in the U.S.S.R. Courses have been organised in the various enterprises to teach all illiterate workers to read and write. Anybody can join; attendance is free of charge. There is no compulsion to attend these courses; the workers are left to do so of their own free will. But a great deal of propaganda is carried on in favour of the courses. The great demand for and supply of good literature is also a marked feature of the progress of cultural life among Russian workers. Good books can be obtained from lending libraries or purchased quite cheaply. In Nadezhdinsk in the Urals, where we twelve German men are employed, there is a palace of culture such as the German working class does not as yet possess. This giant building comprises no less than eight halls and rooms. They include a large theatre with a revolving stage, a great concert hall, also used as a cinema and a large gymnasium; on the ground floor is the big reading room, with a rich and varied collection of books: here one can read books or papers undisturbed. I must also mention that neither beer nor alcohol of any kind are served in that palace of culture; only non-alcoholic drinks are to be had. The place also boasts a big circus, which always has a good programme, and two cinemas where good cultural films are shown.

Now about the school system in the U.S.S.R. The tsarist regime was interested in having a stupid, ignorant and totally illiterate working class; consequently it had no interest in teaching the children of workers to read and write in schools. That privilege was the monopoly of the wealthy classes who were able to educate their children after their fashion by engaging private teachers or paying for their schooling. Things are different now that power is in the hands of the class-

conscious Russian proletariat. The school system has undergone a radical alteration. Universal compulsory education was introduced immediately and every child on reaching the age of eight is obliged to go to school, there to learn what is most vitally necessary for its future life. In the school itself the greatest cleanliness is maintained. Before the lessons begin, the teachers, both men and women, see to it that the children are clean. Should their hands or neck be dirty, they must wash again at school. This among other things shows that the Soviet Government is training its children to be clean and orderly. After two hours' lessons, the children get a hot meal, for which a very small payment is made. Children whose fathers get low wages are fed free of charge. There is a special municipal fund to provide for them.

The children also get their school books, writing materials, etc., free of cost. They are placed under medical control and thoroughly examined twice a year. Extra circus performances are frequently given for their benefit; they attend with their teachers, the tickets being very cheap (25 kopeks).

The next point of which I am going to speak in connection with cultural life in the U.S.S.R. is religion. When the class-conscious proletariat took power into its hands, it was a natural thing for its leader—the Communist Party—to break the power of the church which for centuries had been used by the bourgeoisie to dope the proletariat. The entire property of churches and monasteries including their land property worth millions of money was declared to belong to the people. Red flags now wave from many a church steeple, as a sign of the proletariat's power. Many churches have been rebuilt to serve useful purposes. One of these sumptuous churches stands here in Nadezhdinsk, and gives us German workers an idea of how rich the church used to be and what power it had over the Russian people. The workers here have resolved to convert it now to other uses. All the necessary preparations have been made and the work will begin in the near future. One other point. What has been said about the persecution of religion in the U.S.S.R., is an infamous lie. Nobody is persecuted or

punished if they want to keep to a faith which they believe will reward them with eternal bliss in the next world. Only those are punished, who organise "in the name of God", religious societies for the overthrow of the Soviet government. And I think all class-conscious workers and friends of Soviet Russia will agree with me, that those who try to wreck the Proletarian State ought to be made to feel the power of the Soviet government. It is surely right that the Soviet government should use every literary and other means to open people's eyes against religion of every kind; for as Marxists this policy needs no justification. The "League of Godless", as it is called here in Soviet Russia, does good work by giving mass enlightenment in connection with the atheist movement.

Before closing, I want to say a few words about the position of women and particularly about regulations in regard to childbirth. Under the tsarist regime, woman was a being of secondary importance, but the dictatorship of the proletariat immediately changed all that. She was placed on an equal footing with men and now has just the same rights and duties. I shall not go at length into the whole question of woman's position here. I only want to say that Russian women in the Soviet Union have no article 218 to fear,* and are free to decide whether they shall bear children or not. They go to a women's committee, presided over by a woman doctor, make an application and get a permit with which they go to a hospital, where an abortion is made by the surgeon. This is another example of great cultural progress as compared with capitalist countries.

I shall close with the wish that the lines I have written may help to spread the truth about the Soviet Union. I hope and desire that the Soviet flag will soon wave over Germany also.

With a hearty Rot Front!

Otto Lindenbaum.

Moulder, formerly of Berlin N. W. 21, Emdenstrasse 32

* A German law which prohibits abortions.—*Ed.*

MY ELECTION TO THE SOVIET

The electoral campaign for elections to the Soviets starts at the beginning of January each year. During this campaign, the electors, the workers in the various enterprises, demand from the delegates an account of their activity and do not spare their criticism of them. If the old delegate has shown no initiative, or not been regular in his attendance at the sessions of the Soviet, he cannot hope to be re-elected. At the time of the electoral campaign when programmes are being formulated and discussed and the future lines of policy for the town Soviet laid down, the whole town and all public buildings present an unusual picture. Every inch of space is used for propaganda. Such slogans as the following are to be met with again and again: "No kulaks, no speculators, no gendarmes, no loafers wanted in the Soviet." This year's slogan was: "Every member of the Soviet must be a shock-worker, for only those who prove themselves in action to be consciously working for socialist construction, have the right to co-operate in the Soviets." German readers must not think that the members of Soviets in the land of proletarian dictatorship are all members of the Communist Party, who force their will on the general bulk of the people. On the contrary, the population of Nadezhdinsk is proud to have nearly fifty per cent non-party workers in the local Soviet. Electoral rights and the electoral procedure will also interest German workers, as will also the way in which we were instructed in these matters by our Russian comrades. They differ a great deal from those of capitalist Germany.

This is the way elections were carried out in Nadezhdinsk. At a meeting where the German workers and engineers were present, the chairman first read the articles of the constitution of the U.S.S.R. regarding electoral rights. He made approximately the following statement: Every worker of the Soviet Union from the age of 18, has the right to vote and every foreign worker enjoys that right too, no matter from what part of the world he may come; so does every foreign engineer

who is living here to practice his profession, regardless of how long he stays in the Soviet Union; it may be only for a week. Besides this anyone can be elected to the Soviet no matter whether he be a foreigner or not. But he must allow his character to be discussed. If he survives this ordeal, which takes place in the shop where he is employed, there is no bar to his election. The election itself is public and they vote by a show of hands. 1,000 votes are needed to make a delegate for the Soviet. A small category of people who are "would-be Soviet citizens", are quite justly deprived of the right to vote. They are so-called traders, speculators, kulaks and all those who employ others to work for them and thus reap the benefit of labour not their own.

My section, the iron foundry, decided to propose myself and four Russian comrades as candidates for the Soviet, after holding a discussion over every one of us. I was elected unanimously. As German, I chose the municipal section, thinking that I might apply here the experience acquired in German towns, for example in the planning of streets, public squares and gardens, sewage, lighting system, etc. The sums assigned for these purposes are such as no big German city could have at its disposal. All graft such as we know in Berlin, is absolutely eliminated, since everything belongs to the town or community. Nothing can be stolen here by private parties, since such parties do not exist. Members of the Soviet do not receive "presents" by back-stairs means. There are not even any banquets or opportunities for overeating and heavy drinking. All the delegate receives is compensation for the wages he would ordinarily have earned. There is nothing above this except work, and that in the real sense of the word, not in the interests of some clique or private undertaking, but in the interests of the community.

Paul Henke.

HOW OUR WIVES CAME TO THE U.S.S.R.

On November 20, 1930, everything was at last ready—visas and passports in order, luggage all packed—so that we could start on our journey at last. Even at the Friedrichstrasse station we were bothered by social-fascist agents; we had previously received anonymous letters, urging us not to go to Russia, for we would rue the day we left. We answered the agents as might be expected and they soon saw that all their efforts were in vain. So, having met some very good companions for the journey, Soviet doctors returning from a congress in Dresden, we steamed off into the autumn night.

Next morning we were already in Warsaw and we reached the frontier of our new fatherland, the Soviet Union at five P. M., after a 23-hours' journey from Berlin. How different it all was here. At the German-Polish frontier our passports had been taken by dandified military officials who tried, with more vanity than smartness, to show that they were masters of the country and we only foreigners. Here all was changed. My husband had come from the distant Urals to meet us at Negoreloye, the frontier station. We had been told, in Berlin, that all our husbands were running about in rags and as thin as skeletons. But the sight of my husband refuted these current lies regarding conditions in the Soviet Union, and as he assured us that he had been waiting for some days in Moscow for our departure from Berlin and was delegated from his plant to fetch us, that his wages amounted to 300 rubles, and were paid in full for those three weeks, we knew that we were in another world, the workers' and peasants' state.

We were very considerably treated at the customs, in spite of the amount of luggage we had. Tables, already laid and decked with flowers, stood in the waiting room. We were very well served. Almost all the local inhabitants had turned out and we sang the International with them and were somehow astonished when we suddenly caught sight of the picture of Karl Marx, Lenin and Stalin on the walls and saw a great

Soviet star outside high above the station. It was all too new for us to take it in at a glance. After an hour's stop we had to start off again. The Manchurian express which was going to be our home for three days, was waiting for us.

Next morning found us in Moscow. It was pouring with rain; still we went to look at the Kremlin and Lenin's mausoleum. Both were, unfortunately, not yet open to visitors. The whole of Moscow seems to be one vast building site. Streets are being repaired and houses going up on all sides.

In Moscow we were given an interpreter for the journey, his name was Nikitin and he was the best of fellows. All of us made friends with him immediately. He was an ex-battalion commander in the Red Army. He still keeps on sending us a word now and then from his journeys, which he makes in his capacity as interpreter. We had now been travelling for over two days through endless fields and vast forests, over countless rivers and bridges. At all the stations, where the train made a fairly long stop to take in coal and water, we got boiling water which is provided free of charge at every station, and made tea or coffee.

We reached Sverdlovsk in the Urals next afternoon. There we spent some very pleasant hours among soldiers of the Red Army. We saw the comradely relation which exists between soldiers and commanders. The men played the concertina and danced to the music. There were many recruits who were going to join the Red Army. One of the commanders made a speech which ended with cheers for Stalin and the Red Army. We were shown just how the red corner was arranged and could not stop marvelling at the amount of educational and enlightenment work done here: the walls were covered with drawings showing the anatomy of the human body, protection against poison gas, tactical problems, the handling of arms and many other things. There was a large library and a wall-newspaper—something we had never seen before. We were told that Sverdlovsk was formerly called Ekaterinburg. . . .

We had to change trains here, in Sverdlovsk, and before we knew what was happening, our friends, the Red Army men,

had each seized a piece of luggage and put everything in the train. They all lent a hand, both soldiers and commanders. Can you imagine anything like it in Germany? They helped us because they knew we were workers' wives. It was a new example of proletarian solidarity to us. As the train started, they cheered for the German working class and we answered with a "Rot Front."

After another twenty-four hours, we reached the end of our journey, Nadezhdinsk, where our husbands were waiting for us. There was no work the next day. We unpacked our things and settled ourselves in our new homes. We had little furniture as yet, but we tried to make our rooms as cosy as possible. After a short time we got all the things we needed. Here there is no competition between rival shops, no glaring advertisements. All the shops are co-operatives and have the same prices. The daily life is much like that of a rural industrial centre, which in fact Nadezhdinsk is. We all live in an up-to-date house, with electric light, running water and central heating.

We get fuel for the kitchen stove delivered at the house and pay twenty-five rubles a month for an apartment of two rooms, with light, water, heating and fuel for the kitchen stove included. Our house, like most others, belongs to the plant, which makes all arrangements connected with it. Some things still give rather an unfinished impression, but this is all due to lack of time and shortage of labour.

We, women, are especially glad of the absence of a public house. There is a co-operative store where beer and spirits are sold.

We had been here only a few days, when Russian women came to visit us. They came on behalf of the Party and other social organisations and were interested to know if there was anything we wanted. They took us to their meetings and other functions. We had just been here a week when we were able, for the first time in our lives to celebrate the anniversary of the October Revolution among the Russian proletariat, free from molestation by the police. The Red Army, militia, and

G.P.U. all took part in the demonstration. It gave an indescribably uplifting sensation to us German women.

We have Russian lessons two to three times a week. There is a palace of culture here, in which various performances take place in the evenings. There are also cinemas and a circus which have daily performances, but there are no low haunts like there are in Berlin.

We have now been here over six months and have grown accustomed to our surroundings. More German workers and their families are coming within a few weeks. We do not feel like foreigners at all, since questions of nationality and race do not exist in the Soviet Union. Here there is only the one class—the working class.

We feel quite at home, but are glad more Germans are coming, who will find a home here and help to build up our socialist fatherland.

Dora Henke.

DIFFICULTIES AT THE PLANT

Soviet Russia is, as everybody knows, the only country where unemployment has been done away with. It suffers on the contrary from a shortage of labour power. This shortage can be felt in the work at our plant. Despite the fact that new workers have been brought from the country a number of times (about 200 men in all), they form but a drop in the ocean, for those men, after they have got a little experience, are moved to other and bigger plants. The result is that cars loaded with cast-iron parts, which are being sent on to a machine-building plant, remain for days in a siding for want of hands to unload them. Crane service is also a weak spot; since an inexperienced staff means having frequent repairs, and here again all our good workers are moved on to other plants: the foundry gave up ten men for Magnitostroi alone.

We have a monthly programme for all sections of the plant, and this programme is divided into three decades of ten days each. Each section is of course bent fulfilling its programme

one hundred per cent. Every worker who has achieved special progress in respect of quality and quantity gets premiums. That system exists throughout the whole of Russia now and we need it for the more thorough and speedy fulfilment of socialist construction. But, even so, those premiums need to be distributed with care, so as not to fail of their object. We had one case of what you might call swindling for a premium. A German comrade had made a rationalisation suggestion and submitted a drawing. A short time later the Party nucleus gave instructions that all the German comrades should get their suggestions registered and specify how far they had been carried out. We then found out that the original drawing had disappeared and another made by a Russian foreman and with minor alterations (which changed it for the worse) had been handed in. We reported this matter to the rationalisation committee and our suggestion was carried out.

The reader will probably be aware that international groups of wreckers were at work (of the Shachty and Promparty trials), their aim being to wreck the economy of the proletarian state. But we had also to deal with minor cases of sabotage at our plant. Here is an example: No mechanical casting was being done here when we started work, but it was necessary to introduce it, since we had larger orders in view; so we constructed a model out of wood. When the Russian comrades saw the advantages of this machine, they wanted to construct proper machines on the same model. A commission from the steel trust came and I suggested the purchase of a few machines from Moscow. The chairman agreed with me, but the head of the machine-building section came and offered to make the machines in his section if I provided the drawings. He promised the commission to deliver the first machine inside of a month. After much pressure, the machine was delivered after six months. We are now working with two casting machines but not all things can be cast by their means, since it is difficult to attain precision with them. The price of a machine made here is about 2,000 rubles, certain parts having been repeatedly spoiled. The machine sent from Moscow cost just 450 rubles.

It is our duty in as much as we feel ourselves masters of the plant, to fight against all such obstructions and fulfil the task we have undertaken, namely to help carry out the Five-Year Plan in four years. Many more German workers who belong to the great army of five million unemployed and who are obliged by the capitalist system to defend themselves or perish, will come to the Soviet Union in the near future, to help us build the fortress of the international proletariat; so I want to add a few words in the interests of our plant and the cause we stand for. Let every worker who is thinking of coming to give us practical aid in the work of construction, first ask himself, whether he is really skilled enough for what will be demanded of him. After the last report on the work of shock-brigades in respect of quality and quantity the German steel-casters brigade could feel justly proud of its work and pocket its premiums with satisfaction, while the German iron-casters had to hang their heads when they heard that the Russian shock-brigade working under the brigadier, Vornov, had carried off the big prize.

Erich Kruegerka.

CLOSING REMARKS

I want to end this book with a few words about the comrades who left us so hurriedly after four weeks. This book will set them thinking once more whether they would not have done better to remain here, for they will not be having an easy time of it in Germany. But no comrade should come to Soviet Russia from mere bravado or love of change.

We twelve comrades have worked up to now and will go on working to the end on the construction of our proletarian fatherland.

Rot Front!

Josef Fritz

Berlin—Pankow, Thornstr. 7.

