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Trade Unions International of Workers of the Building, Wood and Building Materials Industries (T. D. of the WFTU)

Helsinki, Box 281

I

Rinaldo SCHEDA - Italy

On Organizational Questions

(Excerpts from Report given at the II International Conference of the UITBB at Berlin 17-23 March 1955)

The existence of a strong international movement of workers of the building and allied industries, the achievement of broad international unity of these categories is an important contribution to greater unity of all forces of workers in the world whom the World Federation of Trade unions represents.

The demands put up by our TUI, the principles for which we fight, are a concrete platform and will be of decisive help to us in winning new forces.

Our programme, on which other comrades have already spoken, is concerned with the following advantages for the workers of the building, wood and building materials industries:

- 1) A general wage increase and a guarantee that the tariff settlement be absolutely respected;
- 2) a 40 hour week with no wage deductions;
- 3) employment for workers in the building and allied industries throughout the year;
- 4) a steady development of house building for those sections of the population with small incomes and for public institutions, for which purpose the greater part of expenditure at the time being used for military purposes should be used;
- 5) realization of the principle "equal pay for equal work" and the elimination of various methods of increasing exploitation in factories as well as the full exercise of trade union and democratic rights by the working people.

It is well known, though, that it is not enough to have a good programme in order to lead the workers' struggles to success. If the tasks and aims have once been laid down it is necessary to equip and build up an organization in order to achieve them...

One of the most important problems which commonly faces the workers in the capitalist countries is that it is in itself a fight and sometimes a hard and bitter fight even to possess a class organization which is free from every form of subjection and influence of the employers and the political power defending him, free from bourgeois ideology because against our organization and against the attempt to build it up and strengthen it the rage of the enemies of labour is let loose in order to split, disrupt, corrupt and destroy the organization.

All our functionaries and all forces affiliated to our TUI must consider it their duty to work consistently in order to build up a trade union organization for all workers of the building, wood and building materials industries in capitalist and colonial countries, an organization in the hand of the workers and capable of fighting courageously against terror and injustice, that is an organization which is capable of uniting on local, national and international basis in spite of differences in political and religious views.

When the delegates at this conference relate their experiences then its main aim is achieved, that is, to collect and make general use of the experiences of individual organizations with the aim of progressing to a general strengthening of the whole movement.

The strengthening of our organizations must advance whilst at the same time absolute clarity must exist that it is the task of the trade unions continually to fight in defence of professional, economical, moral, collective and individual interests of workers in all categories. They must succeed in improving the living conditions of the workers, strive to achieve more rights and for the realization of their legitimate social programme.

The main question is that we are in a position to put forward in every field a type of organization against the employers as an effective instrument for defending the workers rights and interests.

The theory of non-political trade unions as an exclusively economic instrument with only a technical character has lost influence to the extent that not even many social-democratic and catholic trade union leaders support it any more.

The workers need an organization which does not renounce the fight for the satisfaction of their most urgent needs (wages, contracts, benefits) but simultaneously with these demands formulate clear and energetic proposals aimed at achieving the deep economic and social revival of the country...

In regard to organizational life experience has taught us that the creation of two basic preconditions are of decisive importance and indispensable for democracy and the aptitude for creating a trade union initiative as well as direct connection with the workers. The preconditions are:

1) To develop within the trade union an all embracing and highly developed form of democratic life, i.e. to guarantee in reality the participation of the workers in working out, discussing and deciding upon the line of policy of the union, which will, among other things, be of great assistance in increasing the responsibility of the workers for the application of the line they themselves have decided. Furthermore all functionaries in our organization are liable to election at every level, and all important decisions must be majority-decisions.

2) The creation of a well thought out structure of organization which eases the workers' participation in union life so as to become continuous and active. The most important thing is that the workers regardless of their places of work or district in which they live feel the presence and assistance of the organization.

In modern class society the demand increases in urgency to 'confront every capitalist, everywhere, with the organized movement which makes it possible for them to inflict upon his employees heavier exploitation and go unpunished. As often happens he turns them into human beings incapable of defending their own rights and subject to his will. It is therefore necessary that the trade union makes itself actively felt in every factory. Simultaneously there exists a necessity to create forms of trade union organization in every working class district regardless whether the number of workers living there is great or small.

It is, however, essential to give our unions, beside the right political trade union lead, also the appropriate structure of their organization and the right organisational perspective.

Naturally it is not necessary to point out that it is the basic element for the functioning of a union to take up contact of one factory after the other, from one building site after the other. It is there, where the employer is exploiting his workers, where there has to be present and able to act in order to lead the workers against the actions of the employers. The forms of organization used in the factories can vary as has been proved by different experiences in different countries...

As far as the building workers are concerned, it has to be remembered, how unstable the work just in this category in many countries is. It is obvious that the organization-contact between the union and workers employed at the building sites becomes more difficult under these circumstances. Does that mean, that one has to resign and give up endeavours to get good contact. Certainly not. It is however possible to find a way for establishing these contacts by forming an organization at the workers place of residence.

In Italy local trade unions which came into being even in the smallest inhabited centres and the parts of towns where workers lives gave positive experience. There is still much to be done to make the structure of this kind still more subtle, better worked out, but it is a type of organization which permits us to reach the workers living even in the most remote places, gives them a local organization with their own leading officials, elected by the inhabitants at the place of residence and makes it possible for them to take part in the life of the organization.

Experience has proved that no democratic activity can be developed if the organization doesn't have a well developed and finished off structure. However, the establishment of a structure of trade union organization on the basis of the place of residence of the workers is not sufficient to fulfill the original tasks of the trade unions, which is to protect the workers on the place of their work where the procedure of the enemy of the working class has reached the most beastly ways. This means that a local organization can not be an alternative to an organization at the place of work, the one, however, is the completion of the other, the one helps the other with the realization of the tasks.

The united body of permanent character uniting all workers of a factory without regard to their trade union affiliation is the factory committee, which, for instance, by the workers of Italy is called "Shop stewards' committee". It is elected by all workers of a factory belonging to different unions or not organized at all. It is the task of this body to secure the fulfillment of the labour contracts and for several other important duties in defending the workers against

the employer. The employers and the leaders of the right-wing organizations make many attempts to crush these bodies or destroy at least their unity character. These attacks, however, cannot make the workers forget their experiences in spite of the fact that the attacks grow more fierce every day. They know that these factory committees are one of their most important achievements. Also in France, in Austria and in other countries experiences of this kind have been made, of which, I hope, we will hear more at this conference.

Our relations to the unemployed workers is a very important question, especially in those countries, like my own, where unemployment has assumed a chronic character. These workers more easily fall victim to the threats or promises of the capitalists. Institutions for the unemployed often try to persuade the workers to turn away from the clear path of their class, and the governments, too, make use of all means at their disposal to corrupt the masses (employment exchanges, unemployment benefit regulations etc.) Our organizations must make every effort to achieve fraternal contact with these workers. One successful method would be to put the unemployed workers demand for work in the forefront.

It is also correct to demand benefit for the unemployed, which as far as possible is proportional to their requirements. But while fighting on this front we must continue to look for new possibilities to provide them with work.

We have made extremely interesting experiences in the struggle for greater expenditure from the agricultural revenue for construction improvements, for higher assessment of incomes from landed estates and from state revenue for work for the common weal, for soil improvements etc. These struggles were only possible because of close contact between the building workers, the agricultural workers and the peasants. For instance, in Italy unified committees, known as the rebirth committees were formed, in which building and agricultural workers were represented along with technicians, well-known local personalities, tradesmen etc. These committees arose with the aim of carrying out work that would be of great advantage to the peasants and finally would mean providing work for the building workers.

At the beginning I indicated the necessity of having all leading bodies of the organization elected by the whole of the membership. I have also mentioned the necessity of holding frequent meetings as a means of lively democratic contact between the leading bodies and the members. But the democratic activity of a union is not only expressed in the number of meetings held, in addition to this the leadership must work regularly, must meet frequently in order to consider the most important questions concerning the organization. In the trade unions of some countries there have been discussions in progress for some time around the question of developing the method of collective leadership. Collective leadership is effective only when each member of the leading body has a particular responsibility to carry and its given tasks for which he must answer.

Another aspect is that the leading committee of any national, district or local trade union organization cannot carry out its work fully and completely unless the organization which they are directing carries out activity according to a properly worked out working plan which the committee has agreed upon. Certainly the work which is carried out on the basis of a working plan is the most fruitful, because

In this way the improvisations, practicalism and spontaneous work are weeded out. I'm aware that not all the trade union work can be foreseen and accounted for in the plan, because it is possible and frequently happens that problems suddenly arise and must be dealt with immediately. And yet the trade union has a policy which it follows and in general it is necessary to keep to one line and to achieve objectives within a specified time. The working plan must be worked out in the light of this necessity. But it is not sufficient to work it out, to discuss it and agree to it, it is also necessary to control what has been achieved of the plan so that if necessary changes can be made in the light of experience.

Excerpts from speeches.

M. BORISOV - Soviet Union

In the Soviet Union large scale peaceful construction is going on. The 2nd world war brought terrible material damage to the Soviet people. 1,710 cities and towns and more than 70,000 villages were partly or totally destroyed. Up till now the building workers of the Soviet Union have from ruins rebuilt cities such as Stalingrad, Kiev, Minsk, Rostov and hundreds more. These cities are now more beautiful than ever.

Building of dwellings and other peaceful construction accelerates in speed from year to year. In 1954 alone city-dwellings were built to the extent of more than 32 million square m. and half a million dwelling-houses in the countryside. This means that hundreds of thousands of workers families move into new modern quarters every year.

In this connection it should be mentioned that rent is rather cheap in the SU. It doesn't rise above 3-5% of the workers wages and thus doesn't become a burden. Workers who wish to build their own houses receive long-term loans at low interest. Factory managers and the trade unions help the workers in acquiring building material.

The trade unions of workers of the building, wood and building materials industries direct all their activity towards improving the living conditions of the workers. For this purpose our organization has great material possibilities and ample rights.

The trade unions have the state social insurance funds at their disposal. These funds are made up out of payments from the management of the factories so that the workers don't have to pay anything. In the four trade unions alone which I represent here, the social insurance fund amounts to 2 milliard rubles a year. These means are used for the benefit of the workers and their families, for paying of assistance and pensions, for sanatorias and rest-homes, for the building and upkeep of homes for children in the countryside, for covering expenses for workers in sanatorias, rest-homes etc.

For taking care of the workers health and for their recreation the building workers' trade union has 33 sanatorias and rest-homes in beautiful nature spots. Besides our union tries to acquire accommodation at rest-homes of the Trade Union Centre and of other unions. Last year 250,000 building and wood workers spent their vacation at resort-places.

It should further be observed that these workers paid only 30 % of the cost for their stay or received it free of charge.

The main part of the funds of the trade unions formed by the payment of membership fees are also used for the material and cultural needs, for the building and upkeep of club-houses, libraries, sports stadiums, for buying of sporting goods, books for the libraries etc. Our trade unions have an extensive network of cultural institutions. In the 4 unions which I represent we have 1,500 club-houses, 1,080 cinemas, 2,200 libraries, 200 odd stadiums or sports fields and other sports establishments. All this guarantees the workers possibilities of rest and recreation after work, provides them with opportunities to read books and listen to lectures or concerts, go to movies or theatres.

The trade unions of the Soviet Union exercise great rights in watching over the application of safety regulations at the jobs as well as stipulations of the collective agreement, building of homes for the workers and providing for their social security in general. The management of each factory must give a quarterly report before meetings of its workers and employees on the application of the collective agreement. If the management has not filled its obligations it is severely criticised. The trade unions also have the right to impose disciplinary punishment, even fire, such managers that don't pay attention to the needs and rights of workers and employees.

Application of work protection measures and safety regulations is watched over by a special organ of the Central Council of Trade Unions. The factory inspector has the right whenever he wishes to inspect work protection in the factories and give orders to the management, which must carry them out to the full.

Soviet trade unions have widened their connections with trade unions of many other countries. From 1949 on our country has been visited by building and wood workers from Great Britain, France, Italy, Finland, Germany, China, Latin America and many other countries. Building and wood workers from the Soviet Union in their turn have visited Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany. Our trade unions receive hundreds of letters from building and wood workers organizations of other countries, also individual letters, and this friendly correspondence and exchange of publications furthers friendship between Soviet trade unions and those of other countries, which in its turn makes for favourable conditions for securing world peace.

The Soviet building and wood workers wish to further increase and strengthen fraternal connections with building and wood workers organizations of other countries in the future, irrespective of their political views and religious convictions. The better we learn to know each others life and strivings, the stronger becomes our united struggle in the interest of the workers. Before the building and wood workers of the Soviet union, the United States, China, Great Britain, France and Germany lie the same tasks - to secure peace and struggle to improve the working and living conditions of the workers.

TAKAJI - Japan

At present the Japanese building workers are strongly dominated by the big capitalists and their government, which are persuing a policy of relimitarization. 75% of construction expenditure, including enginee-

ring works, is absorbed by the construction of US military bases, in Japan proper numbering 773, and also military roads. This fact categorically shows how construction for peaceful ends are bitterly neglected. So for instance 50% of the total cement production - which now is at its highest, goes to military facilities, 25 % for large scale civilian construction, 10% for export and only 15% for small scale civilian construction.

In fact, while people are suffering from serious shortage of living houses, amounting to 4 million with additional 2 million old and damaged houses, industries working for peaceful construction, mostly small enterprises, are threatened with close down and bankruptcy.

The building industry, whether large-scale or small, is dominated by a strongly feudalistic structure. Workers suffer from the contract system (subcontracts), they have to wander day after day looking for work and have to work under terrible conditions with low wages, which are cut down under different pretexts. The fact that the daily wage for an ordinary worker amounts to 637 Yen (less than 2 dollars) while a building worker receives only 364 Yen, shows how pitiful is their condition at present. One can say that 75% of the building workers live on petty earnings from the home work of their wife and children. In the most miserable cases families have been compelled to sell their daughters in order to live. Women employed in the building industry get only half of the wages of male workers. In the cement industry the workers get higher wages, compared to other branches, because this industry is modernized, is rather well-off at present, and because they have active trade unions.

There is a rapid increase of unemployment among building workers and the number of those who get work only ten days a month is growing tremendously. Besides, the building workers have to face terrible intensification of labour and are forced to work overtime up to 4 hours a day without pay. The number of sick and injured and of occupational diseases have greatly increased. Fatal accidents occur more often among building workers than in any other trade and 70% of the masons are suffering from silicosis.

In carrying out struggles against unemployment and for more jobs and house building, against attempts to lower wages and for full social security systems, against higher taxes and prices and in defending their rights, the workers are more and more clearly realising who are their enemies. Last December the building workers worked out a program of demands in six points around which they try to unite all workers in the building branches and put before the government. The workers are also trying to get the support of wide sections of the population around their demands for increased peaceful construction and have been successful in this respect.

The organized building workers demand agreed upon wages, graduation of wages worked out with the participation of representatives of the workers on the jobs. The trade union of the personnel of the big building firms which have hitherto been against the workers and on the side of the employers have even they now put forth their own wage demands and joined the fight against over-time and unjust wage-graduation. Workers in the slate and cement industry are fighting at this moment against the introduction of american work methods and american investment in the industry. In this they were joined even by a part of the employers organization and the fight turns into a fight for the inde-

pendence of Japanese industry and against American monopoly.

During these struggles the Japanese workers have become aware of many weaknesses in their ranks, for instance, although there are about 1,460,000 workers in the building and allied industries only 18.2% of these are organized, and these furthermore belonging to different trade union centres. The workers have during their struggles learnt that it's possible to achieve success and develop only if the struggle isn't confined to one place of work, one trade branch or place alone. At this moment we are preparing a united organ for all organizations of building workers, and our aim is to build up one united organization for all these workers.

PRICHETT - Canada

In the province of British Columbia the industrial woodworkers are 100% organized. However, our building construction workers are organized under the various craft unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labour. Naturally, we welcome the proposed merger of the AFL and the CIO into one central body, especially if the proposed merger is carried out on a democratic basis. This merger can be the means of reducing jurisdictional warfare between the various unions as well as lay the basis for bringing an additional million or more workers into the trade union movement in Canada. Also, as emphasized in the main report submitted by your secretary, it can mean a higher degree of unity within the labour movement against reactionary employers who are intensifying their effort to lower the standard of living of Canadian workers.

The majority of Canadian trade unions are faced with the problem of autonomy, i.e. the right of Canadian labour to determine its own affairs without interference from reactionary "international" officials, whose policy coincides with the billionaire government of Wall Street.

Since 1942, when woodworkers in British Columbia were practically unorganized, working 9 hour per day with a minimum wage of 50 cents per hour, an industry-wide agreement has been established, which embodies the 40-hour work week, time and a half for all work performed in excess of 8 hours in any one day and 40 hours a week. It provides for a base rate of one dollar and 50 cents per hour, union grievance and safety committee, one and two weeks vacation with pay, equal pay regardless of race or colour, check-off of union dues and other important matters.

However, since the successful conclusion of the second world war, employers have intensified their campaign against the wood workers, which takes on various and customary forms. The main drive was levelled against all progressives, those mainly responsible for providing leadership in building the union, and with the help of their agents, have practically taken over the leadership of the organization. This was immediately followed by extensive speed-up, resulting in an increased accident and fatality rate in the industry - seeking out and discharging militant rank and file job stewards and re-establishing the black-list system. This was greatly aggravated by our Federal Government's sellout to Wall Street of our natural resources, including great stands of virgin timber.

Wood workers are quickly coming to the realization that the Canadian Government's tie-up with the Eisenhower Imperialist government can lead us into economic collapse and war.

In addition to the Yankee imperialist grab of our natural resources, is the fight to re-establish our former markets for wood products in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Africa and India. This together with the establishment of normal trade relations with our great friends the Soviet Union, the new Democracies, the New Chinese Republic and Japan. Organized labour and all friends of labour will realize that one of the best means of preventing an atomic war is trade with all countries. Trade means friendship and friendship means Peace.

CHANG CHIN - China

The Chinese people after having crushed Chiang Kai-shek's traitorous clique and liberated the mainland; rapidly healed their war wounds and fostered unceasing growth of their national economy. In the beginning of 1953, the first five-year plan was embarked upon and since peaceful construction on a gigantic scale has been going on. State investment in capital construction in various branches of the nation's economy increased year by year. The figure for 1951 being 100, it rose in 1952 to 184.7, in 1953 to 305.8 and an estimated 360 for 1954. For the first five-year plan 600 important projects of industrial construction will be built or re-built. Because of such large scale planned construction the ranks of our building workers will increase from 300,000 in 1950 to 2,160,000 in 1955. In spite of such increase, we are still far from satisfying the rapidly growing demands of the building industry. We are now applying the method of winter construction and building in the rainy season so as to shorten the length of time needed for construction. The conditions of unemployment and parttime employment in old China have long since gone to history.

On account of continual increase of state expenditure on social enterprises and peaceful construction the material and cultural standard of living together with the housing conditions of our people, have been continuously improved. In 1952 alone, new housing accommodation for the workers of Peking, Mukden, Tientsin, Shanghai and Anshan floor space of five million sq. meters was built. In 1953 the total floor space built through state investments rose to 30 million sq. m. of which housing took up 12 million sq. m.

In the field of culture and education state investment for the construction of school buildings for higher education and worker-peasant secondary education in 1953 alone amounted to 2,100 million Yuan (in terms of the new currency issued in March 1955) which equals 34% of the total school buildings erected for higher education during the last fifty years in China.

Our government pays close attention to the living conditions of our workers. For labour insurance schemes the administration of enterprises allocates a sum equivalent to three percent of the total wages of the workers and staff and hands it over to the trade union for appropriations, while the workers do not have to pay a single cent. As to medical service, every construction corporation has its own

health clinic and some of them even build their own hospitals.

The Chinese trade unions consistently advocate the establishment and growth of friendly relations with the trade unions of other countries. We are confident that through this Conference we will be able to strengthen our friendship and solidarity with various countries. Let us unite closely, regardless of colour, race, political convictions and religious beliefs for the vital interests of the workers of the world and for a happy and peaceful life of the broad masses of the people.

JOHANSSON - Sweden

The Swedish building workers don't belong to the UITBB but we hope the day will not be far away when all workers of the world meet in one single union. This would give still greater strength and unity to the workers of the world and create conditions for progress in the social and economic field.

In 1954 there were 55,000 flats built in Sweden. But this is far from sufficient. In the three biggest cities there is a great demand for homes with about 65,000 families looking for flats. The need for schools, hospitals and public buildings is rather great, too.

In order to prevent too great a seasonal unemployment the government has granted additional supplementary state loans. In spite of this about 14,000 building workers have been unemployed during January and February this year. Private capitalist employers make greater profits by totally closing the building sites during Winter months. However, this has not totally succeeded thanks to the strong actions of the trade unions.

In the last years the discussions for collective agreements have not given the building workers any greater raise of wages, which on the contrary have been frozen. But our workers have been able to get wage raises through different actions. When the discussions on the new agreement began the employers declared that the highest wage increase that they could allow was 3% and that a greater increase would mean inflation. This false argument was unmasked when the president of the national trade union centre speaking in the Parliament told about the enormous profits the private capitalist monopolies are making. There is ample room for wage increases, he said. Many trade unions have concluded agreements on the basis of a raise of only 3%. The building workers neither have been able to reach beyond this line. But the 3%-line was definitely broken by the dockers, who the same year laid down tools as a protest against unbearable working conditions and low wages in our bigger ports.

Another question that the Swedish workers have put in the fore is that of old age pensions for the workers. This question has been raised by local organizations in motions to almost every congress of the trade unions, resulting in decisions that the union leadership carry the proposals to the government. The question is not yet solved but the Swedish workers will undoubtedly continue to raise this question until a satisfactory decision is reached. So they will also do with the question of shorter work time.

In our opinion the question of unity in the ranks of the working class must be of utmost importance, irrespective of political or trade union affiliation, in order that the workers of the whole world shall be able to achieve still greater social and economic progress.

JESKE -German Democratic Republic

In my report I must start by mentioning the fact that Germany is split. This fact also signifies the situation in housing. The houses built in both parts of Germany after 1945 clearly show in which part of Germany preparations are made for a new war and where building serves peaceful ends. We do not deny that building is actively carried on in the Federal republic and that also housing accommodations are being built, but what does it look like? Land is in the hands of big estates and subject to speculation to achieve maximal profit. In the most beautiful part of the countryside and of the towns of Western Germany military barracks, snobbish commercial and banking houses as well as buildings for the monopolies are being built. The workers, however, have almost no possibility to build themselves houses. They still live in slums and shelters. The new "ideal" for working class apartments is a house with a long corridor in the middle, a sample of which already has been built in Hamburg. An official description of these houses says: "Each family up to four members receives one room of 14 sq.m. and and cooking facility. Lavatory and water tap are in a common unit for 16 rooms in the middle corridor."

In Western Germany the number of people (according to Dr Preusker) who are still living in barracks and shelters is 700,000. 2,6 million families are waiting for living accommodations and 4,3 million living accommodations are still required for creating normal living conditions. Such is the situation, in spite of the enormous shortage of dwellings numerous flats stand empty today because people can not afford to pay the high rents.

In 1950 the People's Chamber of ^{the} German Democratic Republic promulgated a bill of reconstruction, which laid down the planning of towns and villages. This planning work was followed by the start of a systematic reconstruction, expressed in the beginning reconstruction of such large cities as Berlin, Rostock, Magdeburg, Dresden, Leipzig etc. In industrial centres as Stalinstadt, Calbe and Lauchhammer the construction of new towns or new quarters was begun. After the reconstruction of industry in the German Democratic Republic has reached a certain level building of living accommodations will be the main task. In 1954 the construction of flats was by one third higher than in 1953.

In the first five year plan we aim at building 10.1 million sq. m. and in the first three years 5.7 million already has been built. Thus, through the initiative of the workers and engineers the plan for these years was overfulfilled.

In our statistics we count construction of flats in square meters and as living space only living and bedrooms are counted. Kitchen, passages and bath-rooms are not counted. The average size of a two-room flat in 1950 was 43.55 sq.m. but in 1953 the average was 52.44 sq.m.

The average for a three room flat was correspondingly 50.61 and 64.22. Flats are being built in one, two, three, four and five rooms, with two and three room flats being the most usual. Every flat, even one room flats, contain a bathroom and lavatory combined. The smallest kitchen in the various types of flats is 7.5 sq. m. Rents for new accommodations is between 0.60 DM and 0.90 DM per sq. m. per month. Houses are built by the state (totally financed out of state revenue), workers housing cooperatives (where the cooperatives provides 20% of the sum and gets 80% as credits from the state) and individual workers and employees (the individual provides 25% of the cost and gets the rest from the state in form of long term credits).

In the German Democratic Republic the aim of housing construction is to satisfy the housing requirements of the people, in conformity with the biological, hygienic and social demands of modern times and by applying the most up-to-date knowledge in science, technique and art.

KROL - Poland

It is now more than ten years since the building workers of Poland took up their work of peaceful construction. They have re-established normal life in the capital of the country, which was turned into a desert by the hitlerites. It is their highest wish to build it anew and more beautiful than ever. Thus in the years gone by 250.000 new flats have been built in Warsaw. Besides we have built 30 residential cities, each with their own cultural and educational institutions. The speed of construction in Warsaw has been 60 new flats a day the year round and this year the speed went up to 75. Between 1945 and 1954 a total of 1,200.000 new flats was built in the country. At Nowa Huta a whole new town for 120.000 people has been built.

In this building a new method of building with prefabricated parts has been employed. And whereas in 1931 the polish building industry employed only 129,600 workers (only seasonally), today there are in People's Poland 670.000 building workers employed the year round. Also the real income of the workers has increased from year to year, for instance last year by 12 per cent compared to 1953, due to price reductions which have been carried out.

Great progress in the field of safety measures has been made, which is proved by the fact that accidents in the building industry had diminished by 75% compared with the figures of the first post-war years, and even much more in comparison with pre-war years. In cooperation with the state organs the trade unions were able to improve health service by enlarging the net-work of first-aid stations and hospitals, situated in or near the works. Protection of mother and child has also taken big step forward. Furthermore we adhere to the principle that every worker should get a chance to spend his vacation in recreational centres. We have been very active in the field of culture, too, and so the building workers now depose over 468 culture houses and 914 libraries.

We have already in the field of construction carried out great projects. We have done a lot for improving the conditions of the workers but our plans are reaching still higher. We don't have to be afraid

of lacking work. We want to work and we want to work for peace, we wish to live in peace with all peoples and thus we wish that friendship grows ever stronger between the nations. And we shall not allow our achievements to be taken away from us, we are ready to do everything in our power to defend them.

RANTA - Finland

There has been many difficulties in the building production of our country. Private enterprise in the building sphere has not been able to better the situation as it is rooted in the quest for maximal profit, for which purpose it takes to speculation, the use of second rate building material and unpractical building methods.

At this moment there is a shortage of 56,300 flats or homes. To this figure must be added the yearly need for 11,370 new flats which makes it clear that up to 1965 a total of 170,000 new flats should be built or 17,000 each year. And these figures refer only to the most densely populated areas.

The employers and capitalists are still alien towards the development of the building industry and certain governmental institutions gladly join them. The development and spreading of the building industry means also that the consumption of the building materials increases and the enterprises in the building materials industry would therefore be fully occupied and the number of building workers would also increase. By the higher request for man power it would be easier for the workers to reach improvements of wages and working conditions. This of course is not in the interest of the employers, they would rather like to have an army of unemployed to fall back upon - and they consequently try to impose a policy of construction to this end. They want communal and government building to be carried out in the winter, when building is more expensive. In this way there would be no labour shortage in the summer (and no possibilities to demand higher wages) and secondly communal and governmental building would be discredited so as to help their propaganda for all building to be carried out through private enterprises.

Although there has been much talk about construction and its development in our country there has been very little positively done for its realization. There are many points which ought to be realised and which would lead to positive results, for instance, development of building technique by means of prefabrication of certain parts by using the experiences of the Soviet Union, mechanisation of building, decrease of capital rates spent on the building, drop of the purchase tax for all building materials, independently of where they are being made.

A great part of the building workers of our country has, although they have built accommodations all their life, no accommodations of their own.

The working class of Finland can not at present organize a building industry as it would like to have it, but all means and possibilities that can be used in a country with a bourgeois majority have been used

and the deputies of the workers in the municipalities as well as in the Parliament and the Government have brought many suggestions and projects in order to increase building activity to meet the requests also of the financially weaker people looking for accommodation.

In this work the building workers have their share. The question of reorganising building, and other questions connected with it have been treated and discussed within the realm of the trade unions and at trade union congresses. In this way some successes have been made because the officials are often made to realise plans for construction suggested by the trade unions.

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