The Russian analogy

BY WILLIAM STEVEN

In The Tulsa Tribune

THE United States is moving a consistent course toward many of the same socialistic ideas that today are the dynamic of the Russian experiment. This is the conclusion which R. C. Beckstrom, '21 arts-sc., M.A. '22, former dean of the college of engineering of the University of Tulsa, offers after fourteen months in Russia as chief production engineer for the Soviet government in the Caucasian oil fields.

Mr Beckstrom does not make the statement to startle anyone. He arrives at it as a conclusion after comparing the political development of the United States and finding similarities in Russia, and he weaves it into his conversation concerning his work abroad without the slightest emphasis or change of voice. He speaks of it with a scientist's respect for any fact: it need not be shouted to be truth.

But one cannot understand conclusions without working toward them.

Russia, Mr Beckstrom observes, is an economic society with all its life and resources geared into the five-year plan. And while America is not planless, the structure of our economic society, Mr Beckstrom finds, is not widely understood by most Americans.

All this can be said, you understand, without the appraisal of the success of the Russian experiment. "Like all new things, it is unsettled and full of abnormal excesses," the Tulsa observer continues, "the establishment of the five-day working unit constitutes an indirect but effective elimination of Sunday and church going."

The Tulsa found it in practice an inefficient scheme by keeping all industrial projects in continual operation. Offices, factories, construction projects never stop. It is sound psychology to impress the people with the urgency of accomplishing the five-year plan. And, incidentally, the Tulsa observer continues, "The development is designed to furnish efficiency by keeping all industrial projects in continual operation. Offices, factories, construction projects never stop."

Mr Beckstrom's activity was in the petroleum development in the Caucasus, where the geology books of a decade ago said that oil supplies would be exhausted within a score of years, are proving as fallacious as they have in the United States. The Soviet may expect more oil fields, and the government in anticipation is doing considerable geophysical survey work, in many new localities.

"The development is exceptionally rapid considering the type of labor which the Russians have. It would not be rapid in the United States. And it is true that the government lacks technical leadership in these new industries. There are many men in Russia who are still comparatively new in the oil industry."

The commune, which dominates the entire Russian structure, is easiest to grasp in the collective farms where the people of the village all work the same farm.

"How does it work?" Mr Beckstrom was asked.

"Well, Russians of today are of two types: there are those with parasitic ideas and those with individualistic ideas. The farming scheme works about the way you think it does," he parried.

"Does it work at all?"

"Yes, it is true that the government has large areas being farmed. It is true that there are greater yields. And theoretically, the larger unit for farming simplifies the problem of securing efficiency between the units."

"It is also true that, if it works at all now, it will possibly work better in future."

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ture generations. I say that although I do not believe that man is naturally com-
munal.”

Mr Beckstrom has no complaint to make on his treatment by the Russians.
“They gave me the best they had,” he said, and then qualified, “but they some-
times had very little to give.”

“So we understand in America,” his inquisitor returned, “But doesn’t this make for unrest among the people? And will not the educational plans eventually develop individual thinking, and will not that individual thinking ultimately be the downfall of a communistic form of government?”

But the people are not patient, Mr Beckstrom reports. The radio, the press, posters, lecturers, secretaries, nurses, teachers, operas, circuses, motion pictures and the theatre are all utilized by the government for education. Propa-
ganda it may be, but it gives to each serf a sense of ownership in that vast national enterprise—his enterprise.

“There is an unceasing exhortation to work. Downtown walls that are adorned with cigarette advertisements in America are plastered with posters of men working, of women working, of children working.”

This technique is nationalistic and not communistic, Mr Beckstrom points out. The accuracy and the ethics of their propaganda may be questioned, he admits, but the idea of stimulating general interest in economic advancement he recommends for America. This advan-
cement of Russia through the five-year plan has been virtually transformed into a religion. And it was Lenin who said “Religion is the opiate of the people.”

“Americans need to understand the economic development of their own country as the Russians are now teaching theirs. American school children should learn in school what the American economic plan is—and that almost requires a re-writing of school histories.”

“Americans are moving in the direction of socialism with increasing rapidity. Companies now allow employees to share profits. Industrial insurance is required in almost all the states. The eight-hour day has come, and now the five-day week.”

“Americans need to think without sentimentalism. They need to think without the dominance of self-interest for the welfare of the greatest number. Too frequently,” Mr Beckstrom observes, “we take our position for ‘what is good for me’ and not ‘what is good for all of us.’ “The Russian theory is to do this dispassionate thinking. They cannot make the change in a day, and consequently what they are trying to do, and what they are doing are different stories in some cases.”

Above par

BY RAYMOND PARR, ’32

In The Oklahoma Daily

“Gosh, I’d hate to be in the street sprinkling department.”

“Why?”

“Because they have to be on the water wagon all the time.”

TEE HEE

Of all the bears that roam the wilds
And climb up little trees.
The bear I’d like to pet is one
Whose final name is knees.

Then there was the unsophisticated producer of a sheltered life who ran down to the pet shop to buy a stork the first day he got married.

Sunday I found a whale of a good way to keep all this open house food from making one sick.

The first thing to do is go to sleep about 1 o’clock. The second thing to do is to stay there until the houses have closed.

Then there was the girl who always went in and wrote a bunch of letters when her date stood her up. Just making her own mail, you see.

She called him a paleontologist because he was always trying to uncover hidden bones.

Professor Richards says he needs more altos for his choral club. That suits me just dandy. The lower the voices the less the disturbance over around that building.

What this country really needs is a halfback as elusive as that corner prosperity is just around.

“Are you the same guy that entered the boxing tournament?”

“I should say not, I haven’t been the same since.”

I’ve found out why President Bizzell wants to stop first-year pledging.

He’s an Acacia and as this chapter can’t pledge anyone under twenty-one years old, competition’s been pretty tough since the depression.

THEY KNEED ‘EM

Of all machines of politics
The one I’d like to boss
Is one the freshman coeds use
To throw ’em for a loss.

Then there was the woman who divorced her poet husband because she had married him for better instead of verse.

Al Capone can now be called a big jeer baron.

Like a lot of others he has discovered that popularity often disappears with one’s beer.

Then there was the coed who thought a steak fry was just another bull session.

She thought he was some hot baseball player because he fanned all the time.

Then there was the Scotch boy who just loved final examinations because they were always given.

A can of pretzels and a beautiful moon are somewhat alike. Neither one is much good by itself.

The university claims to have an active organized alumni association at Dallas.

More organized than active, if I remember right.