

Among many interesting types were a keen Japanese, sporting a large single eye glass; a fierce Barbarossa with beetling red eyebrows and a terrifying mustache; and an elderly professional person, pad and pencil in hand, who followed each speaker from the platform, lest he should have missed a single drop of the precious wisdom dispensed. He suggested that Tolstoi type of Russian, but he was in reality a Czech professor. The presence of eleven Soviet Russians was obviously the cause of considerable apprehension in various quarters, though welcomed by others as a token of good faith and fair play on the part of the conference. The one unsmiling woman, who spoke nothing but Russian, seemed to be the real leader of the group. . . . There were Frenchmen who came from Paris, and Frenchmen straight from their work on the League of Nations at Geneva. . . . There were exceedingly zealous delegates from Poland, almost amusingly eager to lose no advantage that their patriotic devotion might secure for their recently enfranchised country.<sup>2</sup>

One could not help but marvel that here was striking evidence of the world influence of Frederick W. Taylor; that representatives of so many nations and so many cultures should have gathered together, in what proved to be a spirit of comradeship, to learn about that scientific management in the ideal of which they saw hope of universal economic betterment and harmony among nations.

The manner in which the sessions of the Congress were conducted is worthy of especial note. There was a forenoon and an afternoon session each day for four days. The principal purpose of the Congress being to give Eastern Europe a picture of American management, the leading papers were the American papers. Each of these was followed by from three to five carefully prepared discussions by delegates from various countries of Eastern Europe, the discussions being primarily in Czech, secondarily in French, and in one or two instances in English. It is a temperamental characteristic of the Eastern European to take plenty of time for discussion. There were presented, therefore, to the Czech management two major problems: how to meet the language difficulty and how to carry the program of each session through according to schedule.

The language difficulty (and in part the scheduling difficulty) was solved by printing each paper and discussion in advance in three languages—Czech, French and English. These printed papers were distributed in advance of the sessions. The papers and discussions actually presented were either abstracts

or supplementary explanations of the printed papers. At the conclusion of the presentation of each American paper, a translator, who had in most instances been provided in advance with a copy, stepped to the front of the platform and gave a translation in Czech. Papers and discussions presented in French or Czech were not translated into English.

The scheduling difficulty was further solved by planning each session in advance, giving each speaker a specified amount of time and holding him to the allowed time. A bell was rung by the presiding officer one minute before the expiration of the allowed time and again at its expiration. The chairmen combined firmness with courtesy and the speakers responded adequately. This method of conduct of a meeting being unusual in European public meetings, the American presiding officer of the first session was requested to set an example of what the Europeans designated "the American method." The following is the actual schedule prepared for the first half of the opening session of the Congress:

## LE PROCÉDÉ

## PREMIERE PART

Monday, July 21, 9—12 A.M.

H. S. Person, Presiding

1a. Opening remarks and reading of rules by chairman . . . . .	3 minutes
1b. Translation of 1a. . . . .	3 minutes
2a. Introduction of Mr. Calvin Rice, presenting Mr. Miller's paper. . . . .	1 minute
2b. Translation of 2a. . . . .	1 minute
3a. Presentation of Mr. Miller's paper by Mr. Calvin Rice. . . . .	15 minutes
3b. Translation of 3a. . . . .	15 minutes
4a. Introduction of Mr. Robert T. Kent. . . . .	1 minute
4b. Translation of 4a. . . . .	1 minute
5a. Presentation of paper by Mr. Robert T. Kent . . . . .	8 minutes
5b. Translation of 5a. . . . .	8 minutes
6a. Introduction of Mr. Joseph W. Roe. . . . .	1 minute
6b. Translation of 6a. . . . .	1 minute
7a. Presentation of paper by Mr. Joseph W. Roe . . . . .	8 minutes
7b. Translation of 7a. . . . .	8 minutes
8a. Introduction of Mr. Morris L. Cooke. . . . .	1 minute
8b. Translation of 8a. . . . .	1 minute
9a. Presentation of paper by Mr. Morris L. Cooke . . . . .	8 minutes
9b. Translation of 9a. . . . .	8 minutes
Total	92 minutes.

It is interesting to note that, because some of the speakers did not take the time allowed and the others adhered to the time allowed, the portion of the program printed above was actually carried through in 75 minutes. The second half of the session, presided over by the Czech Ing. Dr. Klir, was carried through in a similar manner, as were subsequent sessions. Comment of a Prague newspaper the following day may be of interest to our readers:

The Americans are accustomed to present speakers very ceremonially, but after the speaker has taken the platform the chairman is pretty rigid towards him. The last minute approaching, the chairman rings a bell; it does not matter whether the famous speaker has just begun to say something of great importance—the speaker makes a bow, accepts it as all right and leaves the platform. It is necessary to learn such regular and gentleman-like subordination.

The following additional comment in the same editorial will be of no less interest:

The Americans are very matter-of-fact with respect to their theories. This was evident in the papers and discussions of the American guests. Their physiognomies are hard and manly—far from the smiling simplicity habitually reigning in the American face.

Some of the American physiognomies appear European-like; concentrated, fatigued. Their discussions are related directly to the subject-matter, never exhibit oratorical brilliancy, and are characterized by an inward logic of thought.

The Europeans must become accustomed to the American method of treating great ideas. They speak without resort to oratorical devices. On such occasions the European thinks of humanity, of the nation, of some doctrine, or even of himself. The Americans keep in mind only the matter laid before them for discussion. They talk about scientific management of work; that only is of interest to them. Their method is to analyze, set up against that an ideal, and then seek the way to reach it. They formulate the ideal in technical terms, but nevertheless they express many ideas of general interest. The Bohemian speaker on the other hand proceeds directly to idealistic utterances in order to gain an "orator's aureole." The effect of his speech is therefore a warm one.

This is unquestionably a penetrating and accurate characterization of contrasting temperaments and methods of speaking as exhibited at the Prague Congress. But it is probably too strong a contrast between American convention discussions in general and Eastern European convention discussions in general. On this particular occasion the Americans approached their task with unusual concern, especially when they found their small group face to face with over 500 serious-minded delegates keenly desirous of

hearing about American management. The Americans worked into the small hours of the night perfecting their contributions and became more than usually matter-of-fact, concentrated and fatigued. They were as different from Americans at American conventions as could be. The Europeans manifested more concentration and seriousness at this Prague Congress than Americans do at American conventions. American delegates who have been used to conventions of all kinds testify that they had never seen such patient audiences as those of the Prague Congress; they sat motionless and concentrated through three-hour sessions, even when at times they could not understand the language being used. All delegates attended all sessions and there was practically no coming and going, as is usual in American conventions. The Europeans were most matter-of-fact and business-like in their desire to derive every benefit from the Congress.

However much intensified by the particular circumstances of the Prague Congress, there appears to be a fundamental and paradoxical difference between Eastern Europeans and Americans in reaction to conventions; the former eager and attentive, the latter nonchalant and negligent (exaggerated perhaps into a pose) towards the convention as an institution; on the other hand, the former idealistic and doctrinaire, and the latter most concrete and matter-of-fact, in discussion. Without going into details it is probable that the difference is to be traced back to different cultural, especially economic, backgrounds. Political isolation, abundant resources and relatively equitable distribution of wealth have made the American the prosperous, easy-living, hail-fellow-well-met, casual individual without serious problems of economic betterment, and without social theories or doctrines. A convention is to him chiefly a place to meet the other fellows on the side and not a place at which he may possibly find a key to the solution of pressing problems. When the time comes for him to play his part in the game by paper or discussion, he draws on his principal asset, experience in solving practical problems, and is most business-like and matter-of-fact towards that task; he has no social theories or doctrines to influence his treatment of the subject. On the other hand, political complications, meager resources, and relatively inequitable distribution of wealth have given the Eastern European a different outlook. He has serious problems of economic betterment, has pondered over them and has

<sup>2</sup>Eleanor Bushnell Cooke in *The Survey*, October 15, 1924.