

CAPITAL OF SIBERIA NOW HAS A BUILDING BOOM; STRANGE NEW STRUCTURES IN CUBIST STYLE

(Junius B. Wood in Chicago News.)

Novosibirsk, Siberia, U. S. S. R.—“If our ideal is good, we can make our practice come up to it,” said the young official with whom I was dining, this afternoon, expressing an oft-repeated soviet principle. He had brought up the question of the government monopoly of trade and I had admitted it was good in theory. We were in a little restaurant, just off the muddy main street, called the Casino from the fact that the government gambling house was in an adjoining log building.

Every few minutes one of the ragged, homeless children, so common in Soviet Russia, would slip furtively through the doorway, beg a chunk of bread from one of the diners and dash out again, pursued by a waiter with a waving towel. Around the corner, on the main street, an asphalt caldron smoked through the day. Its remnants of heat and warm wood ashes was the sleeping place for the ragamuffins through the chilly nights. But the gambling house in the rear where a motley group of men and women sat around the shabby chemin de fer table, was operated by the government for the charitable purpose of earning for the homeless children. Such is the difference between ideals and practice.

The Siberian Boom Town.

The young man's theory was correct, provided human nature and machinery which put the ideals into practice can be found 100 per cent perfect. Novosibirsk has grown from 60,000 to 120,000 in population in the two years since its name was changed from Novonikolievsk and its growth is characteristic of the new era in Russia. In the old days—“peace time” as the Russians called it—churches were built. The most imposing structure in every log village was the many-steeped church. Now they put up public buildings and Novosibirsk, capital of the vast district of Siberia, larger than all Europe, exemplifies the new practice. It differs from the American theory where homes come first in a growing city. Russian psychology is different—a city is appreciated by its imposing public structure, though its inhabitants live without comforts, conveniences or cleanliness.

“We now pay the Gosbank (state bank of U. S. S. R.) 12 per cent on building loans, while before the war the state bank only charged 6 per cent,” an official explained.

“Novosibirsk would welcome an American construction firm which would form a joint stock company with the state, and bring in modern machinery and experience. It would be profitable. The reinforced concrete building which we are erecting on the new square, the first of its kind in Siberia, for offices, theatre and residences, will cost \$700,000. All the space in it has already been rented for \$125,000 a year. Construction costs are high now because everything must be done by hand.”

The Russian firmly believes that once diplomatic relations are resumed unlimited credits from the United

States will follow. He has absorbed certain fixed theories, taught officially, in regard to the old Russian debts. Repudiation of debts strikes a popular chord in Russia.

Debt Repudiation Population.

“If you are committed to the principle of not paying debts, how can you expect further loans?” I asked.

“France will not pay its debt to the United States, so why should Russia?”

“You would not accept a capitalistic country as a model for your proletarian state?”

“No, but our old debts were contracted for war purposes and the socialist party at the time of the Russo-Japanese war issued a statement that they would not be paid. The soviet state has not defaulted on any of its debts. If we pay those old debts we'll be a colony of capitalistic Europe or America.”

The argument is always the same. Naturally, the soviet state has not defaulted on any of its debts, as there has not been any necessity or opportunity to do so. Among the masses the repudiation of the old debts seems to be accepted as the cleverest diplomacy of the soviet leaders. The leaders have reason in their argument that even though they are willing to modify the blanket repudiation of all debts, their public would accuse them of renouncing a principle which is extremely popular.

Novosibirsk, which, thirty years ago was a few log houses in a pine forest on the east bank of the Ob, shows more building activity than Moscow. The main street, which has a park in the center, is paved. The straggling shacks in what was formerly the market in the centre of the city have been torn down for a park and parade ground, around which will be grouped the new buildings. Those for a post and telegraph office, the All-Siberian executive committee, Gos-torg (State Trading corporation); Gosbank and the House of Living Leninism have been completed. Back of the latter, where victims of the Kolchak expedition are buried, is a monument, merely a hand holding aloft the torch of liberty emerging from a cloven dock. The government building program this year was \$3,000,000, and private individuals invested \$500,000. Next year it is expected to reach \$6,000,000.

A Cubist Dream City.

Siberian architects designed the structures and they were given free scope to revolutionary fancy. Designs are weird. As one emerges from the muddy ride from the railroad station into the centre of the city the impression is of arriving in a cubist dream city. Buildings are painted steel gray with immense squares and stripes of dark blue. Outwardly they look like fortresses or mausoleums, though they are built of brick and faced with cement. O concrete bridge, 456 feet long and ninety-five feet high, has been completed over the Kamenka.

A worker's palace for the offices of the unions, with strange cubist towers, a big office buildings for the textile syndicate and another bank are under construction. An electric power station, all machinery of Russian construction, with two 500-watt dynamos, operates only at night at a cost of 8½ cents a kilowatt. It was completed last year and it to be quadrupled. A water pumping station is to be added. At present carts haul the water up the steep hill from the dubious Ob, flowing north to the Arctic Ocean.

Novosibirsk calls itself the Chicago of Siberia, just as the Bernal district calls itself the Canada of Siberia. Novosibirsk is rising out of the mud. So did Chicago.



Of Interest to the Women

MY NEIGHBORS SAYS.

It is better to scrape potatoes than to pare them thus retaining the full food value.

If a few drops of ammonia are dropped into greasy pots and pans before hot water is poured into them it will be much easier to clean them.

Bacon whether broiled or fried, should be cooked gently. This makes the difference between crisp and hardened bacon. If correctly cooked the fat must be white when cold.

No more tears will be shed when you peel onions if you hold the onion in your left hand with the sprout end up and root down. Cut off the top and with a few strokes peel downward toward the root.

PUMPKIN PIE.

One cup sifted pumpkin, ¾ cup granulated sugar, 1 tablespoon flour 1 tablespoon molasses, ¼ teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon ginger, ½ teaspoon cinnamon, 1 cup milk, ¾ cup cream, 2 tablespoons melted butter 1 hole egg and 1 yolk, plain pastry.

Mix and sift sugar, flour, spices and salt. Add to pumpkin with molasses and mix thoroughly. Slowly add milk, stirring to keep smooth. Add melted butter and well beaten eggs. Turn into a deep pie dish lined with plain pastry and bake 1 hour in a moderate oven. The oven should be hot when the pie is first put in and the heat reduced after 10 minutes.

ROASTED OYSTERS.

Wash and drain a pint of oysters and place them in a baking dish. Add, in the way of seasoning, one-fourth teaspoon of cayenne, a teaspoon of chopped onion, lemon juice and bits of parsley. Lay thin slices of bacon, one-fourth pound in all, over the oysters and sprinkle one fourth cup of grated cheese over the bacon. Bake in a moderate oven.

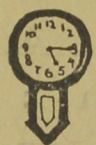
OYSTER SANDWICHES.

Chop one pint of oysters very fine and cook with one fourth cup of melted butter, one fourth cup of milk and two stiffly beaten egg whites four crackers crumbled into a fine dust, one half teaspoon of salt and one-fourth teaspoon of pepper. Allow to cook slowly over a slow fire and cool. The mixture can then be cut in thin slices and placed between thin slices of bread. Delicious to serve with tea at the afternoon bridge party.

TOMATO-JELLY SALAD.

To one can stewed and strained tomatoes add one teaspoon each of salt and powdered sugar and two-thirds box gelatin which has soaked fifteen minutes in one-half cup cold water. Pour into small cups and chill. Run a knife around inside of molds, so that when taken out shapes may have a rough surface, suggesting a fresh tomato. Place on lettuce leaves and garnish top of each with mayonnaise dressing.

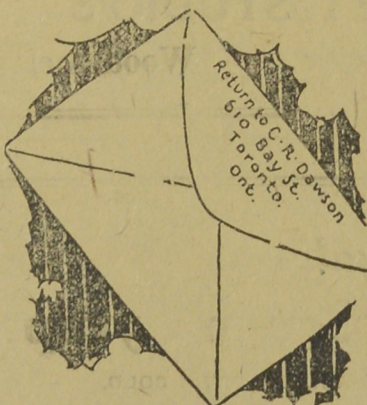
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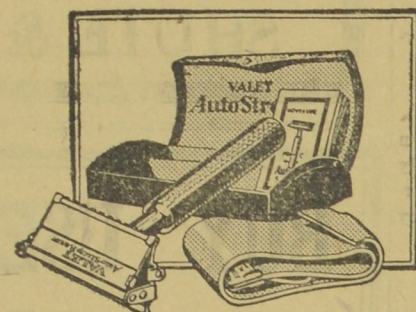
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