LAURE PROTECTION IN THE HUMANIST PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

In former Rumania, before August 23, 1944, the bourgeois-regimes showed a total lack of interest for the working and living conditions of the workers. Not even the most elementary measures to protect the workers' life and health existed, therefore accidents occurred almost every day in factories, plants, mines and other work-places. Those who became disabled owing to work-accidents swollen the number of unemployed, who could be counted by the scores of thousands at that time. No law existed which should oblige the employers to observe labour protection measures.

After our country's liberation from the fascist yoke by the glorious Soviet Army and after the setting up of the régime of people's democracy, the care for the working and living conditions of the workers has become a main concern of our government.

After the main means of production were nationalised and the national economy was planned, the large-scale application of labour protection measures has become possible; it has become a State problem.

Our State represents the interests of the broad working masses. This is also clearly reflected in the Labour Code which ensures to the working people the required conditions that their work may be carried on in the best conditions of hygiene and safety and which enables/permanently to increase labour productivity.

The laws for the protection of labour have become more numerous, as our working people scored further successes in the struggle for the building of Socialism. They include all the problems of labour and all the means destined to ensure the development of the process of production in most favourable conditions.

The general principles of labour protection and the socialist regulation of the chief problems of labour are provided for in the Labour Code.

The service of Technical Inspection on Labour Protection and the State Medical Inspection Service control whether the conditions of labour protection, safety techniques and medical conditions are observed. Enterprises have the obligation to pay for the respective antidotes, which they must place at the workers' disposal.
The Labour Code also establishes a 8-hour workday for hard work which is harmful to health. Thus, for instance, the workers dealing with lead (in factories producing accumulators, in printing-shops, etc.) benefit from shorter workdays, working only 6 hours a day. The workers laying underwater foundations and the divers work 6 hours a day at most; some of them work for 4 or even 2 hours a day. As a rule, in those places where hard labour is being carried on and where technical measures for the mechanization and impermeability of the processes of production are not absolutely thorough, the workers enjoy shorter working hours.

The Labour Code also provides for rest-leaves, for the protection of women's and juveniles' labour and for the obligations devolving on enterprises with a view to ensuring the labour protection measures.

The care for labour protection is also reflected in the collective contracts which, among other things, provide for the duty of the management of the respective enterprise to take a series of measures aimed at improving working conditions. For example: In the mining sector, the transport of coal which was usually effected by means of tubes, and which required extraordinary physical efforts, has been mechanized. Electric engines, shaking shoots, push conveyors and endless bands have been put into function and valve-handles have been introduced for overthrowing the tubes.

The cases of silicosis, which were very frequent during the bourgeoisie-lord rule are much less numerous now, due to the adoption of the wet-drilling system.

In the past, the chemical industry was one of the branches where the most rudimentary equipment was used. Due to it, a great part of the workers were left a prey to misery and to professional diseases.

Thanks to the care of the Party and Government important amounts were invested in the chemical industry for labour protection so that this industry is provided today with up-to-date equipment.
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Ventilation by pressure, absorption and air conditioning installations are functioning in work-places where the air is impure such as in foundries, spinning and weaving halls, mechanical joinery shops, dye-works, etc. At the work-places where high temperature is needed there have been introduced, apart from air-conditionning, air-showers and water-curtains, such as in glass-ware kilns.

An important part in ensuring adequate working conditions is played by the approption and adoption of the normes of safety technique worked out according to the branch of production and including rules and measures which must be observed by the technical and administrative organs, on the one hand, and by the workers, on the other.

These rules and measures are studied by the Institutes for Scientific Research and disseminated among the workers by the Ministry to which the respective enterprise belongs.

The normes of safety technique provide for the installation of protecting devices to all the machine parts generating movement, for the ways of keeping up the machines and installations so as to avoid the danger of accidents, for signalling systems at dangerous working-places, etc. (Thus, the workers are no longer compelled to watch the movements of their machines in order to take heed of accidents; they can focus their attention on the problems of production). Consequently, besides reducing the number of work accidents, the application of these normes actually contributes to an increased production and labour productivity, which leads to a higher living standard for the working people of the Rumanian People's Republic.

The application of labour protection measures devolves on the civil-engineer or technician who leads the technological process, while the responsibility for the whole enterprise devolves on the head-engineer or head-technician, assisted by a labour protection department, in big enterprises, and by a civil-engineer entrusted with the problems of safety technique, in smaller enterprises.

Within the Ministries—where the problems of safety technique and labour protection of all the subordinated enterprises are centred—these functions devolve on a deputy minister, assisted by a Labour Protection Service, made up of civil engineers and technicians.
The Central Trade Union Council of the Romanian People's Republic guides and controls the application of labour protection measures through the Technical State Inspection Service. This service consists of technical inspectors who lead the Labour Protection Department of the Central Trade Union Council and of technical inspectors for labour protection of the Central Trade Union Committees per branch of production. They are chosen from among the highly skilled workers, from among the technicians and engineers who are proficient in the respective branch of production and from among those who attended a special labour protection course.

Under a Decree of the Presidium of the Grand National Assembly and a Decision of the Council of Ministers, released in 1953, a regulation was passed on the activity of the technical inspectors for labour protection of the Central Trade Union Committees, granting them important rights and extending their authority and responsibility.

Thus, they control whether the labour protection and safety technique measures are applied so as to ensure safe working conditions in all the units of the respective branch; they take measures to remove all breaches of rules and shortcomings; they can even stop the work wherever an obvious danger for the workers' life or health exists with a view to bringing down the number of work casualties, protecting the workers' health and ensuring the application of labour protection laws.

The trade unions drew into the solving of labour protection problems of enterprises an important mass-active made up of labour protection commissions belonging to shop committees and of social inspectors for labour protection belonging to trade union groups. They see to it that the regulations concerning labour protection be observed and the working conditions in all sectors of production, improved.

A chief mass action organised by trade-unions is the social revision of the conditions of safety technique and labour protection, which is organised periodically, in the main branches of production. This action is aimed at informing the management of the enterprise on shortcomings and the causes which might bring about work accidents, damages, professional diseases, and at their asking to the management to
remove them by adopting the measures suggested by the workers of the respective enterprises and by making the greatest possible use of the internal resources at the working place. Safety technique and labour protection are widely popularised in our enterprises through posters, dialogues, diaries, films, wall-gazettes, new-papers, radio broadcasts and lectures in order to bring, home these problems to all the working people and thus to prevent accidents and professional diseases. The propaganda materials on safety technique are distributed free of charge and in tens of thousands of copies to the enterprises throughout the country.

First-aid posts, provided with all the required materials and trained, voluntary staff exist in all the enterprises of the Romanian People's Republic. Besides, dispensaries are functioning with all the enterprises, and small hospitals are available for the working people in more important enterprises.

In the Romanian People's Republic the whole network of hospitals and sanatoria under the leadership of the Ministry of Health is placed at the disposal of the working people; medical assistance and accommodation in hospitals are paid by the State, being absolutely free of charge for the working people and their families. Thus, they can always enjoy rapid and efficient medical assistance. Special offices of safety technique have been organised with the main enterprises. There, the newly employed workers and those who changed their working places are being trained in the problems of safety technique and labour protection. A periodical training in this respect of the workers in the plant is also effected.

In the safety technique office, there are window-cases in which a whole series of safety technique devices, various instruments and safety equipment are exhibited and the respective explanations are given as to their purpose and application.

In the same office are also to be found various posters showing to the workers the best methods of work - adequate to the specific requirements of the respective factory - for avoiding the danger of accidents.
In safety technique offices, inventors, technicians and civil engineers hold regular meetings, in the course of which proposals for the improvement of safety technique and labour protection in the respective enterprises, are being examined. An Institute of Scientific Research on Labour Protection, engaged in the scientific research and settlement of the problems of safety technique and labour protection is functioning within the framework of the Central Council of Trade Unions. The Institute investigates into working conditions in the various enterprises and finds practical solutions destined to remove the causes which bring about work accidents and to facilitate the physical efforts of the workers. Numerous safety technique devices which are studied at the Institute are afterwards adopted on a large scale in industry. Thus, the problems of air-conditioning, of hot-air curtains which prevent the cold currents from penetrating into work-shops in winter, the ventilation of tunnels and other problems concerning the improvement of the lighting system and of the working conditions where hard work is needed, have been studied and put into practice.

The inventors and technicians of the Institute visit the enterprises and together with the engineers, technicians and workers there, adopt and apply a number of devices destined to improve working conditions. In order that the problems of safety technique and labour protection may be properly solved, the Institute collaborates with scientists from the various institutes of the Academy of the Romanian People's Republic, with front-runners in production and with the engineers of the various enterprises.

Ever more numerous are the workers, technicians and engineers of various enterprises who confidently apply to the Institute showing some aspects of the process of production and the need to improve them. They also present practical proposals for the settlement of such problems.

Courses have been organised besides the Institute for Scientific Research on Labour Protection for the engineers entrusted with problems of safety technique for technical inspectors, for those who are responsible within shop-committees for the problems of labour pro-
Protection. These courses are also attended by those who are entrusted with labour protection measures in enterprises (for instance: air-conditioning, lighting, etc.). Those who attend the courses do not work in the industry while these courses last, but receive, nevertheless full wages for all that time.

Moreover, courses of safety technique and prevention of accidents have been introduced in secondary technical schools and in high technical institutes. There, the future technical cadres are taught problems of labour protection and at the end of the courses the students are also examined on problems of safety technique.

From time to time, the Council of Ministers or the various Ministries present at labour protection exhibitions, machines and equipment provided with most up-to-date safety technique devices, as well as safety equipment which the enterprises grant to the workers free of charge. These exhibitions also include posters and norms of safety technique, concrete data concerning certain mass actions, as well as proposals of the working people for the improvement of the working conditions.

All expenditures for the organisation of exhibitions in our country are borne by the State.

Thanks to the activity carried on in the field of labour protection, considerable success has been scored as far as the improvement of working conditions is concerned. One can see how the enterprises and machines change their aspect with every passing day, offering ever better working conditions, requiring ever smaller physical efforts and making the work easier and more productive.

The new machines, which are being produced on an ever wider scale in our country, are equipped, since the stage of their projection and manufacturing, with all safety technique devices required.

Thus, the turning-lathes, grinders, frame-saws, circular-saws, etc., are provided with safety devices, before leaving the factory.

When new industrial enterprises are projected, the technical measures concerning the lighting and ventilation systems and their proper installation are taken into account. Care is also taken for the proper installation of machines so as to ensure most favourable working conditions. Various safety equipment are now being manufactured for
the first time in our country.

Our State earmarks even more important funds for labour protection.

Struggling for a constant improvement of labour protection, the trade-union and administrative organs contribute to the implementation of the programme of government measures aimed at developing our national economy and ensuring a continual improvement in the material and cultural living standard of the working people in the Romanian People's Republic.

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