

ONE SIXTH OF THE WORLD

BY A. A. HELLER

On November 7, 1937, the Soviet people celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the revolution. This celebration was echoed throughout the world, by all working and progressive mankind. The millions in the Soviet Union were joined by millions outside, the toilers and all the sane and progressive people who abhor reaction, fascism, war. People who see or sense in the Soviet Union the forerunner of a new and better world, of a nation dedicated to peace, of a land where the nation guarantees, under its Constitution, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to every citizen.

A very inadequate picture of this land and its people, and the system under which they live, I shall try to present to you in the following pages.

On numerous visits to the Soviet Union in the past sixteen years, I traveled through many parts of the country, spent days, sometimes weeks in some sections, made friends with many people. I had the advantage over other foreign visitors in speaking the language and knowing Russian conditions before the Revolution. Among my acquaintances in the Soviet Union are Communists and non-Communists, workers and farmers, professional people, government officials, artists, writers. In a word I have a personal acquaintance with a fairly good cross section of the population. Nothing helps so much to understand a country as to know its people and the institutions, or what is broadly called the system, under which they live. Before speaking of the system, permit me to introduce some of my acquaintances to you.

Thumbnail Sketches

Pavel Dmitrievich Osipov in Moscow. Osipov was born in St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), went to work at the age of twelve, became a skilled metal worker, early joined the revolutionary movement, led several strikes and spent a number of years in jail. He was exiled to Siberia in 1912. For a time he was in solitary confinement, the Bible being the only book allowed; he learned it by heart. Later he was permitted other books; whatever education he has now, he acquired through the years of Siberian exile. The revolution released

him; Osipov came to Moscow, was active in the early battles in the city. The years 1918 to 1920 Osipov spent at the front as a political commissar; he was demobilized in 1921, returned to Moscow and went back to his trade of metal worker. When I met him in 1926 he was manager of a small plant. Today he is head of a big "trust" with thirty factories throughout the country, employing some ten thousand people, with an annual turnover of many millions of rubles.

Osipov has a wife and daughter. They live in a modest apartment, but quite comfortably. Tatiana Mikhailovna Osipova is also a Communist; she works in a publishing house; the girl goes to college, and hopes to become an architect.

Osipov goes abroad occasionally in connection with his work; he visited the United States and was greatly impressed by the high technical development, by our workers' skill and the efficiency of our services. The Osipov family is a typical Soviet Communist family; of workers' origin, without the amenities of life or education in their youth; through the fortunes of revolution and native ability Osipov reached a responsible position in the present scheme of things; yet he remained essentially the working man he was in his youth, simple, unostentatious, one with the common people.

Acquaintances and Friends

Another acquaintance is engineer Mitin. He is not a Party man. He comes of a well-to-do Moscow family. Both he and his wife, a painter and musician, had vague sympathies with the revolution; while their parents and kin fled abroad in 1917, they decided to throw in their lot with the workers' and peasants' State. They suffered a great deal the first years; coming from bourgeois environment, they were suspect, and they couldn't easily adjust themselves. But when reconstruction came in 1922, Alexei Mitin found a job at his profession – power engineering, and remained at it ever since. Recently he was transferred to the Ural, as chief engineer of a large power project there. The three children of the family, two boys and a girl sixteen years old, are lovely Soviet children; the girl is a bit delicate, but both the boys are athletic and good students. One will be an engineer, the other dreams of airplanes; the girl takes after the mother, writes poetry, paints, has an excellent ear for music. The mother too, from a high-strung temperamental woman, has acquired stability and poise. She has remained the indoor woman – a good mother and devoted wife; but she finds time to assist the children of her community after

school hours in their painting, music and language studies.

Friend Eremeev is a confirmed bachelor. He is a magazine editor, lives with his mother, an old peasant woman who thinks her son is daffy but who will give her life for him. Ivan Antonovich Eremeev is an old Bolshevik, worked at different trades in his youth, hoboed, spent years in jail and in exile, and is still as youthful in spirit as in his early twenties. He is a tireless worker, writes, lectures – farming is his preferred topic; he knows the land and the peasant's problems. He was one of the first to go into the country at the beginning of collectivization and worked for several years on a collective farm. Even now he spends half his time visiting collective farms, aiding and advising them and taking pride in their success. Eremeev is one of my earliest Soviet acquaintances; we met in Kuzbas in 1921. He was secretary of the miners' union – short and stocky with unruly hair and a blond beard (which he has shaved off since); he talked of collectivized farming even then. His blue eyes sparkle when he recalls the old days; now, over a glass of Crimean wine, he grows intimate: “Drujische (big friend),” he says, “we've just scratched the surface. A hundred million of our people are living on the land, just learning how to use tools and work in common; they are just beginning to acquire civilized habits – eat with knife and fork, put on a clean shirt after work, read a book, enjoy a theater performance. Already they have overcome their slave psychology; both men and women demand culture. They want modern homes with hot water and bath, a radio, a car, a college education for their children. Another five years and we'll be able to give them these things.”

Peasant to Worker

In far off Magnitogorsk I know Stepan Maximovich Frolov. He with wife, two small children and an old mother came there in 1930 when the big plant was started. All his life he followed the plow – and what a plow, one stick of wood tied to another – eking out a poor existence from his few acres. Between 1914 and 1920 he was fighting, first in the war somewhere in Germany, a year of that time behind a German barbed wire fence as a captive; then with the Red Army in the Civil War. He went back to his farm when it was all over but was no longer satisfied with the dismal existence; he wanted a better life for himself and children. So when the call came for workers for the big plant at Magnitogorsk, about sixty miles from where he lived, he decided to move. He packed his family and the few belongings on a one-horse cart and started work as a laborer. The first three

years they had to live in a hastily constructed mud house, with kerosene for light and a shallow well for water. The wife and mother tended a small garden near the house and the man walked three miles to the plant. Frolov slowly progressed from an inexperienced laborer to better jobs. When I met him in 1936 he was foreman in the rolling mill. From their dugout they moved to a three-room apartment in the newly constructed city. The wife also started work in the plant and between them they earned eight hundred rubles a month, which sufficed to keep the family fairly comfortable. The two boys were at school, the older one due to enter the technicum the following year. To see his son an engineer, the second one a school teacher “he always carries a book with him,” was something Frolov never dreamed was possible. “In my village,” he said, “under the old regime, I should have remained a dark peasant; see what the Soviets did for me; I learned to understand machinery, I can read and write, my wife is no longer a drudge in the kitchen, my children will be educated men.” Not far from Magnitogorsk, in Cheliabinsk, I met an old friend, Nicholai Vassiliev, whom I knew in Sverdlovsk in 1921. He was a youngster then doing odd jobs at the local garage, probably the only garage in town at the time. He used to drive us in a dilapidated car over the cobblestones and rutted roads with the least regard for our comfort. I saw quite a little of him during my month’s stay in Sverdlovsk; he used to look at me with wonder, if not with awe – an American, always a tie on and clean boots. He grew up without any schooling, he could hardly read. When I ran into him in Cheliabinsk we embraced like long lost brothers. I could hardly believe my eyes: Nikolka, the reckless driver, now manager of an oxygen plant. He started work in a similar plant in Sverdlovsk as a truck driver. He joined the Party, went to night school and later took a course in welding and oxygen manufacture; two years ago when a new plant was decided upon for Cheliabinsk, he was put in charge of the job and now he is manager of the plant. Vassiliev is a strict disciplinarian, keeps his place spick and span, shaves every day – as an example to others, he says, trains unruly and crude peasant lads to care for delicate machinery, forces them to study; in his own little corner of the Union, Vassiliev is helping to build a new Socialist order.

Young Stakhanovites

Rostov-on-Don is a town I like to visit; the climate is much milder than in Moscow and spring there is delightful. On the outskirts

of the city is the large Rosselmash plant – agricultural machinery. Several hours distant are the two largest State farms in the Union, Zernograd and Gigant. This was formerly the center of the Don Cossack country – tough warriors all of them; now they are among the best collective farmers in the country. I know a number of people in Rostov, one Dunia Tkachuk, in particular. She came, a young Cossack lass, husky and red cheeked, to town in 1928 to look for a job. She could do anything – scrub floors, put up the samovar, run errands; but she could hardly read or write. Two years of common labor in an office was enough for her, however; she decided to “turn to production” – enter a factory. She had been going to night school in the meantime. When I met Dunia last year, she brought her two-year-old son with her, as plump and rosy-cheeked as herself. She was as proud as a peacock – “do you know,” she said, “I am one of the first Stakhanovites in Rosselmash. I make 1,200 rubles a month, and not working hard at all. I just see that my lathe is in good order, that my materials are all on hand when I start in the morning; and I am teaching the other girls how to do it. Our department is 40 per cent ahead of the Plan; last year they gave me a premium – a sewing machine; it is great, comrade, to be alive these days.” Her husband, she told me, was in the forge department, an active Communist and a Stakhanovite, too. “Tell your American friends how we Soviet workers are living,” she admonished.

In distant Armenia I know Comrade Vartanian. He fled his native country as a youngster back in 1910 and didn't return until 1926. During these years he lived in France, Belgium, Switzerland, drifting from job to job. He studied chemistry at the University of Toulouse, married a German girl in Zurich, earned his livelihood more or less. His native soil and the romance of building a new world beckoned him all the while. His wife was in sympathy with his ideas; with a group of repatriates they came back to Erivan. Now Vartanian is chief chemist at Kirovakan Chemical Works; his wife a doctor at the local hospital. Both are busy people; in addition to their jobs they take an active part in the affairs of the town and help to make of it a civilized community. In the ten years since they returned, the Armenian Soviet Republic has grown from a distressed poverty-stricken region to a busy, progressive, industrialized and electrified state. Its many-tongued farming and industrial population is enjoying an ever rising standard of living and culture; native art, music, literature, are flourishing. The Vartanians are doing their bit and get a lot of satisfaction

out of the progress of their native land.

From Armenia to White Russia is a four days journey by rail. Minsk, the capital, is half Jewish, half White Russian. Under the Tsar this was the heart of the Pale – the Jewish valley of tears. Poor Jew had to live off poor Jew, or the poverty-stricken peasant. How people maintained life was a mystery: “by borrowing from one another,” some said; “by transmissions from relatives in the United States,” said others. In Minsk I know the Silberbergs, father, mother, four children. In the old days most of the family was always undernourished, sickly, no steady occupation, no prospects for the children. They survived the years of war and intervention as by a miracle. But now Silberberg is a different man; he knew something about distilling; he was given a job in a distillery near Minsk, studied the chemistry of his trade in off hours, was promoted to a larger plant in the Ukraine. He is back in Minsk as expert on alcohol distillation with a laboratory of his own. One of the Silberberg boys is in Birobidjan. Neither the father nor the older children are Communists. But Silberberg blesses the revolution, and so does his wife, a devoted Jewish mother and housewife; for it solved the racial problem for them, gave them a secure and respectable living; it opened wide horizons for the children; each one can work unhindered at what he or she likes and contribute to the extent of their talents to their own betterment, and to the building of a better world.

Other Jews from Minsk as well as from other parts of the Pale, moved in the middle-thirties to the Crimea and to the Ukraine, there to engage in farming on land provided by the government. A number of Jewish settlements were established, some with the technical and material assistance of Agrojoint (The Jewish Joint Distribution Committee of the United States). These settlements developed into collective farms and are operated on the same basis as other kolhozi.

Jewish Farmers

I spent several days on one of these Crimean farms. Some two hundred families, mostly from White Russia, have built up a model village. White houses, electric light, stores, schools. Bearded Jews (but most without beards) till the soil, raise grain, wine and fruit, saw lumber, make cheese, operate a power plant, drive tractors as though to the manner born. The women for whom only kitchen, children, synagogue, existed before, now tend cattle, even pigs, raise chicken and geese, some drive tractors, plow and harvest with the men. All the kolhozi

adjuncts are there; school, nursery, hospital, people's house with stage and reading room and a house of arts and crafts where they make simple furniture, household utensils, rugs. From the bleak White Russian towns to the sunny Southern country, wholesome food and security – the change is evident in the faces and bearing of the youngsters and of the old people too.

I know other farming communities, in the Ukraine, Central Russia and Siberia. I remember the peasants with whom I stopped back in '21. Houses made of logs with thatched roofs, grass sprouting from them in the summer. Earthen floor, rarely boards. A big brick stove in one corner – with room on top for sleeping. A partition of thin boards, or only a curtain to hide a tall bed heaped with pillows. A rough table in the living room with a bench in front of it, often a cradle for the baby hanging from the ceiling, a kerosene lamp on the wall, an oil lantern in the corner in front of the icons. Often calves and chickens made their home in the same room. For washing, an iron kettle with a spout outside the door, an open pail of water for drinking and the indispensable samovar. Three generations occupied such a house, sometimes a dozen people. Their clothes – cotton shirt and pants for men, cotton waist and skirt for women, the children half naked. A coat made of lambs' fur served the family both winter and summer. Bare feet in the summer and bark shoes over wool or linen rags for fall and winter. Only the wealthier peasants had boots which they sported on Sundays and holidays. For food – black bread, onions, cucumbers, kvas (a drink made of stale bread), tea without sugar. Milk, butter, meat was used only for guests or on feast days. Each family tended its small allotment of land, less than five acres at times, with the most primitive tools, considered itself rich when it possessed a team of horses and a couple of cows. Invariably there was samogon (hooch). There was also the church. No school, no assembly hall, no common enterprise of any kind. Each man's home his castle and starve as he please.

Siberian Villages

The Siberian village where I stayed is now part of a collective. Some of its members are the peasants I knew in '21, but they are not the same peasants. They have assumed a new dignity. They are not dark people any more. Ivan Petrov was a thickset, burly “mujik,” half-drunk, always ready for a fight, illiterate, unkempt. Today Ivan is one of the leading farmers of the collective. His hair is gray but his

body is still erect and his eyes are clear. He can read and write, he understands tractors and farm machinery, he can talk intelligently of early planting and seed selection. He takes pride in the changes that have come in “our Siberia” – humming industries, good roads, prosperous collectives, schools, air transport. And his numerous progeny – there were eight children in the family, have outdistanced him by far. Two boys are in the Red Army, the oldest son is chairman of the village Soviet, one girl teaches school, the others have remained farmers, but “skilled farmers,” Ivan says, “not the sort of lout I was at their age.”

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These thumbnail sketches were selected more or less at random, from dozens that I might have chosen. I know people in most every walk of life, in different parts of the country; some occupying important positions, others workers, farmers, professionals, the average type of citizen. There is one thing common to all the people, whether they are in high places, or in low; they all feel the importance of the job they are doing, they all have the consciousness of participating in a great work, of each contributing his or her share, no matter how small, to a common aim. You’d say only Communists would feel this way, or the young people who grew up since the revolution; but no, it is true of the broad masses everywhere. I’ve talked with workmen in their clubs, over a glass of beer of an evening; with groups of farmers on a kolhoz; with fellow passengers on a train; or in the intimacy of a private home; you are among a new kind of people – active builders of a Socialist society.

Vast Partnership

It is the general feeling of a common responsibility and a common participation in the whole life of the country that gives one a sense that he is truly in a new society when he visits the Soviet Union. All of the deeds of all of the people belong to each and every citizen respectively, no matter what his role. Every citizen feels responsibility for their success while they are in the making; every citizen feels that he has a share in the achievement when they are completed.

Sensing this spirit of the vast partnership of the whole people in the all-embracing enterprise that is their society, one cannot but recall the great objective set forth in the introduction to the second Five-Year Plan, in 1932: “to transform the whole working population of

the country into conscious, active builders of a classless, Socialist society.” To the extent that the spirit I have described pervades the whole people, this great social objective, like the many concrete production objectives of the Plan itself, has been fulfilled ahead of schedule.

The spirit I speak of was foreshadowed long before 1932 among the most socially-conscious workers in the form of “socialist competition” and “shock brigade” work among individual workers and groups of workers. Today it is finding higher and more widespread expression in the “Stakhanovite Movement” – the conscious search by shop and factory workers for improved methods of work and division of work.

The spirit of partnership in the development of society is fostered and enhanced by the ever-present, tangible evidences of actual work done. The new cities, factories, schools; the flowering of the collective farms; the development of aviation, the conquest of the North Pole; the rising literacy and culture of the people, their steadily rising standard of living; – this is what nourishes the spirit of freedom, cooperation and self-confidence which illuminates the peoples of the Soviet Union, and gives them a youthfulness which is peculiar to them in this apparently aging world of ours.

Russia Before the Revolution

Recall what Russia was like prior to the revolution. Try to visualize the tsarist empire in 1913. A population 85 per cent peasant – exploited, illiterate, half-starved people. A small upper crust, drunk with power and riches. Agriculture of the most primitive character, a great part of the produce of the soil exported abroad. An insignificant industry, developed in spots and depending for the most part on foreign capital and foreign technicians. In all of Russia out of about ten million workers only 2,600,000 were employed in large-scale industry. Ill paid, housed in barracks, worked ten and more hours per day, denied the right of organization, of strike. The working and peasant woman’s condition but little above that of serf. Monstrous exploitation of children – in the poor man’s home, in the factories and sweat-shops.

One cannot recall without horror the condition of the minority races – Armenians, Jews, Tartars, Caucasians. In addition to endless political and economic restrictions, direct persecution and frequent pogroms as part of a deliberate government policy. In his treatment

of German Jews Hitler follows the methods of tsarist Russia.

Education was then only for the privileged and well-to-do. Out of a population of 160,000,000 only 7,500,000 children were at school. The government was more concerned with the spread of vodka among the masses, than with the spread of education. Chronic undernourishment, drunkenness, illiteracy, reflected upon the health of the people; infant mortality in Russia was the highest in Europe, epidemics were a frequent occurrence.

Production of electric power is a good indicator of a country's development. In 1913 the total output of electricity equaled 1.9 billion kilowatt hours; today it is thirty-eight billions – twenty times greater. Other branches of national economy show a growth from two to ten times of pre-war; while many products which were not manufactured at all before, are now part of the regular economy. There was no automobile production, nor that of tractors or machine tools, or agricultural machinery. Today 200,000 trucks and passenger cars are produced in Soviet factories, 88,500 tractors, 20,000 combines, and machines for industry to the value of twenty billion rubles. The output of iron, steel, coal, oil has risen manifold. Iron, sixteen million tons against four million; coal, one hundred and fifty-two million tons against twenty-nine million; oil, forty-six million tons against nine million. In textiles, five billion meters of cotton fabrics instead of two billion; of leather footwear, one hundred and eighty million pairs as against eight million three hundred thousand.

Great gains have been made in the production of foodstuffs on a mass scale, as well as that of consumers' goods. The canning industry accounts for an annual output of two billion cans of various foods. The food industry is six times greater than it was pre-war, the consumers' goods industry – four times.

It must be remembered that large-scale production in the Soviet Union is hardly ten years old. In the period 1921 to 1927, known as the Reconstruction Period, the national economy reached only to about the pre-war level. The great strides made by Soviet industry, agriculture, science, date practically from 1928, the year when the first Five-Year Plan was introduced. "For the first time in history a vast country, with inexhaustible natural resources and a population of one hundred and fifty million free people, faces the world with an elaborate plan for upbuilding a socialist economy and culture – a Socialist society."

Subsequent Visits

To look back a bit, I was in Moscow in 1925, during the session of the Congress of Soviets. Speakers from various parts of the country came to the platform and said substantially this: "We have started work to rebuild the country with our bare hands, we have no capital, we have no machinery; we must confess, we possess but little skill and experience. But we feel certain we can do the things which we have set out to do. We have succeeded in getting the old plants in operation, in re-starting our mines and oil wells and we can say with assurance that our plans for greater development in the years to come can be definitely carried out." The atmosphere of the Congress vibrated with enthusiasm, with joy at the little that was already achieved, with high hopes for the future.

The delegates to the Congress reflected the prevailing situation. The country was still bare of goods, living conditions were extremely difficult, but there was more food than in the previous years, the New Economic Policy succeeded in stimulating agricultural and industrial production, the general feeling was "we're getting on."

I have visited the Soviet Union several times since then. On the earlier visits – long lines in front of stores, bread cards, acute shortage of many essentials. The factories and collective farms barely getting into stride. Lack of skill, lack of efficient organization, struck even the casual onlooker. Raw peasant boys and girls at complicated machines with the peasant attitude that a machine is so strong a thing that gentle handling or feeding with oil would spoil it. Hence much damage to machinery and materials. By 1933 the situation was much improved; while not everything worked as efficiently as might have been desired, yet it worked. This was true both in cities and in the countryside. On my visit in 1936 the improvement was still more marked. No more lines in the streets, except before bookstores and theatres. It was a treat to see youth marching on May First on Red Square; boys and girls well built, clear complexioned, head high, each one an athlete. School children, pioneers, boisterous, happy, with the consciousness that the world is theirs written all over them. Life in the Soviet Union has become better, has become gay.

Later in my travels – and I visited many parts of the Union – I had ample opportunity to "witness history in the making." A village had grown into a city, dirt roads had become highways, factories which were in the course of construction a while back were operating

full blast, primitive farms gave way to collectives working with tractor and combine. New railways joined towns, new power stations provided light and power, new canals irrigated former deserts, swift airplanes darted across the sky. Former illiterate peasants and laborers dressed in clean clothes after work, or on their free day, read books and newspapers, went to theatres and concerts, gathered in their club rooms for games or discussion. Happy crowds filled parks and playgrounds, a good-natured and orderly crowd, laughing, singing, even dancing in the open.

I visited a number of rest homes in the Caucasus, sanatoria in the Crimea. Beautiful new buildings among trees and shrubbery, or old palaces enlarged and modernized, facing the sea or high up in the mountains. Crowded with vacationing people, laborers, Red Army men, clerks, technicians, artists, functionaries. Children with their mothers, or in groups with instructors, gay, carefree. A worker can afford a vacation in the Soviet Union – his time off is paid, his job waits for him. If he needs medical attention, special treatment, mineral baths – his social insurance entitles him to all services which formerly were reserved for the privileged alone.

Soviet Children

If one can speak of privileged persons in the Soviet Union – it is, unquestionably, the children. Russian parents, like parents everywhere, are devoted to their children. The Soviet State, however, spends more money, gives greater and more intelligent care to the young than any country on the face of the globe. Through nursery, kindergarten, school and college – the government helps the parents give the child every advantage. The best is reserved for the child. There are special playgrounds and feeding stations in the parks; special children's palaces, equipped for play and study. Children's theatres and literature for children are outstanding features of Soviet life. There are thirty million children in Soviet schools, nearly two million in colleges and universities and four million more in vocational schools. As part of the education program, the government has established special industrial museums where children can work, under skilled instructors, on models of every kind of machine in use in the Union. Such is the Polytechnic Museum in Moscow, the Palace of Pioneers in Kharkov, the Leningrad Museum and others in major cities.

“In their remaking of the Russian people,” say Sidney and

Beatrice Webb, "Lenin and his followers began, not with Adam, but with Eve!" Woman enjoys equal political and economic rights with man – no position in industry or office in the government is closed to her. There are women factory directors, ambassadors, judges, commissars. There are women engineers, chemists, architects, aviators. Nearly ten million women are gainfully employed; one million two hundred and seventy-one thousand in education, seven hundred and seventy-six thousand in public health service, over three million in large-scale industry. "Woman, the co-worker in Socialist construction, is taking the place of woman the household drudge, woman the slave," said Stalin.

Of course improvement in child care, in the position of woman – maternity provisions, special labor regulations affecting women – goes hand in hand with the improving living conditions generally, with the steadily increasing material and cultural well-being of the whole population.

Rising Living Standard

Whereas in 1912 the consumption of meat and fish *per adult* amounted to 49.5 pounds a year, today it is 110 pounds *per capita*; of milk and dairy products 372 pounds are consumed today, 27 pounds of sugar, 16 pounds of confectionery and 1,170 pounds of bread, potatoes and cereals as compared with 16 pounds of sugar and 1,040 pounds of bread, potatoes and cereals formerly. In countries like Poland and Italy the annual per capita consumption of meat was 41 and 35 pounds respectively in the years 1930 to 1934; it is considerably lower today; while the lessening of consumption of such foods as meat, milk, butter, eggs, etc., in Germany is a notorious fact.

Production in general, and that of consumption goods in particular, is rising all the time. If some branch of industry falls behind temporarily, the country's attention is immediately aroused. The Soviet press does not hide shortcomings and doesn't hesitate to criticize severely those who are responsible for them. "In the first six months" (of 1937), writes G. Smirnov, "industrial production increased 15 per cent above the same period last year. What this means can be seen from this simple comparison: the volume of production of large industry in the first six months of 1937 is about (104 per cent) the total annual volume of all industry in 1932; the increase alone of industrial production in the six months of 1937 over 1936 equals 5.2 billion rubles, or half the total annual production of pre-war Russia. The

volume of retail turnover, in State and cooperative trade, amounted to sixty-one billion rubles in the six months, which is 22.8 per cent greater than the retail trade turnover for the same period of 1936. Retail prices were reduced at the end of April on all mass consumption products. The harvest this year broke all records. This was due not alone to favorable climatic conditions, but to the improved collective method of farming, and the large number of Stakhanovites in the collective and State farms. The total grain production this year will reach over 115,000,000 tons. As can be seen from these figures, we have obtained considerable successes in the first six months. But it would be a grave error to overlook the deficiencies in a number of branches; the raising of output in these branches is the most important task of the second half year.”

The greatly improved material well-being of the population, coupled with the mental well-being which comes from the sense of security and freedom in a Socialist state, finds a direct reflection in the better health of the people. In 1934 the general mortality rate for the U.S.S.R. was one-third below that of pre-war Russia, while infant mortality had declined by one-half. The death rate from tuberculosis, which was 226 per 100,000 in 1913 (in Moscow), dropped to 116 in 1933. The decline in mortality has been accompanied by an increase in the average span of life, amounting to ten years for men and thirteen years for women; bringing up the average life span to 42 years for men and 47 years for women, in 1934.

“My country, the land of the Soviets, appears before me young and marvelous, in excellent health, invincible.... Only my country has created a real brotherhood of peoples. What happiness it is to be a son of such a fatherland!” (*Nikolai Ostrovsky*).

Soviet Russia in 1937 – the country of Socialism, has weathered the early storms, has built a vast and firm foundation for the New Society, stretching over two continents. Among its federated republics, its many-tongued constituent races, there is one united effort, one common aim: to build jointly and in peace the great structure of Socialism.

The Third Five-Year Plan

Already the third Five-Year Plan, which is being discussed and elaborated now, outlines truly gigantic prospects:

In Agriculture:

Of the land area of the Soviet Union – 5.4 billion acres, over 10 per cent is arable; of this only 58.4 per cent – about three hundred and twenty million acres were under cultivation in 1936. (In the United States three hundred and twenty-seven million acres were cultivated in 1936, out of a total land area of 1.9 billion acres.) In the third Five-Year Plan it is proposed to increase the tillable acreage, also improve and extend pasture lands. The experience in large-scale, mechanized farming gained through collectivization, will be utilized to the fullest extent; employment of selected seed which will be used exclusively on all wheat farms by 1939, scientific methods of crop rotation, chemical fertilizers will be in universal use in all branches of agricultural production. New thousands of tractors – diesel and other new types, combines, and latest farm machinery will be introduced.

Cattle raising – increase of quantity and quality of herds through scientific care of animals, will be one of the major tasks.

Increase in farm production will go hand in hand with industrial advance – with Stakhanov methods applied in both branches. Industrial and farm labor will meet on common ground, differentiation between town and country will tend to disappear. In farming – “new technique, new methods of work, will free the workers from dependence on the forces of nature, will subdue nature to the will of man.” Sir John Russell – the well known English agricultural expert, after a recent visit to Soviet collective farms, reports that:

“the development of farming surpasses all just expectations and permits one to hope that Russia will never again be visited by droughts and starvation.”

In Industry:

Greater mechanization and development of skill will lighten physical labor. Old plants will be modernized; obsolete equipment – even if installed within the last ten years – will be replaced by new. The emphasis will be placed on quality. New plants will be established in proximity to sources of raw material. The burden of freight traffic will be lightened by the elimination of avoidable transport of raw materials, fuel and finished products. Greater efforts will be made to utilize waste products of industry and agriculture.

Forward to First Place

It is estimated that the production of iron will reach 27 million

tons in 1942 – second only to the United States.

Power development will be greatly increased. In the Volga region alone a series of hydroelectric power stations will be erected with a capacity of 2.5 million kilowatts – three times greater than the Dnieper Power Plant. This project provides for the deepening of the Volga and its tributaries, and the irrigation of vast arid spaces on the left bank of the Volga; other power developments in Siberia, in Transcaucasia, in Central Asia, are part of the Plan.

The Ural-Kuznetsk “combine” will be greatly extended, to provide metals, chemicals, coal, machinery for the East; together with Far Eastern developments – in Cheremkhovo, Bureia, Suchan, and those of Altai – all of Siberia will become a highly industrialized region.

The textile industry will receive great extension. With Transcaucasia added to the cotton belt, with new textile plants in Kazakhstan, Kirghisia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, the output of textiles will be doubled and trebled; while production of woolens and linens will be substantially increased.

The railroads of the country will be augmented by new trunk and branch lines; a new transcontinental line – Moscow to the Pacific coast via Magnitogorsk-Barnaul-Stalinsk-Taishet – is being planned. Waterways likewise will be improved and extended by the inauguration of a system of canals – in existence and to be constructed – joining Leningrad with Moscow and the Volga through to the Black Sea. Moscow, an inland city, is already a port of call. Next comes the building of the Volga-Don canal to the city of Rostov – another engineering project of the first magnitude. In every section of the country major works are projected; the draining of the Kolchida swamps, between Tiflis and Baku, will turn a huge region back to its ancient glory; while a wide system of irrigation in the Fergana desert will bring life to an arid land. Also to the frozen land of the Far North will new life come as new mines, factories, farms and cultural institutions are established there.

Under the New Constitution

The third Five-Year Plan will witness a great extension and development of the Stakhanov movement. In other words – with improved technical equipment and greater skill, there will be better organization, higher efficiency; permitting higher labor productivity, improved quality of products, reduction of costs, hence much larger

return to the workers in wages and material and cultural services. This period will be the first to be governed under the New Constitution, on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. The government elected on December 12th consists of two chambers; the Council of the Union, and the Council of Nationalities. All citizens, excepting the insane and those deprived of electoral rights by sentence of court, have the right to elect and be elected on reaching the age of 18, irrespective of race or nationality, religion, standard of education, domicile, social origin, property status or past activities. Women enjoy complete equality and may be elected to office as well as men. Citizens serving in the Red Army and Red Navy have the right to elect and be elected on equal terms with civilians. The Constitution provides:

Citizens of the U.S.S.R. have the right to work – to guaranteed employment and payment.

Citizens have the right to rest and leisure.

Citizens have the right to maintenance in old age, in case of sickness or loss of capacity to work.

Citizens have the right to education.

Women are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life.

Citizens are guaranteed freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda.

Citizens are guaranteed freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of street processions and demonstrations.

The 20th anniversary of the Soviet Union marks an epoch: the Soviet Constitution defines the epoch – the achievements of the Soviet idea in twenty years, and the pattern for the next period. The Soviet Union and the progressive people of the world celebrate this anniversary in a world torn by conflict and strife. The fascist and Nazi rulers of Germany and Italy, where reaction is in its last, therefore most brutal stages, are carrying the fight outside the borders of their own countries. As a preliminary step to setting fire to the world, the fascist powers have set Spain on fire, as their allies have done in China.

The Soviet Union is deeply concerned about fascist threats and aggression. The unity and brotherhood which pervade the country extend also beyond its borders in fraternity with the rest of mankind. The people of the Soviet Union want peace for themselves. They also

want to help their brothers in other lands find the road to peace.

The Soviet government came into being in the midst of the World War, 20 years ago. Its first official act as a government was to call upon the warring nations to end hostilities, to make a peace without annexation, indemnities or other spoils. This plea was ignored. But in all of its twenty years the Soviet Union has never ceased to strive for peace.

It was the Soviet Union which startled the world in 1922 with a challenge to all the Powers to effect total disarmament. It was the Soviet Union which set an example of a "good neighbor" policy by initiating pacts of non-aggression with all her neighbors. The Soviet Union contributed the principle of the regional security pact and the mutual assistance pact as further guarantees for the maintenance of peace between nations.

The Soviet Union joined the League of Nations when it saw a possibility that it might be converted into an instrument of peace rather than a mere instrument of enforcement of the unjust Versailles Treaty. Whole-heartedly it subscribed to the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact of 1927.

The statesmen of the Soviet Union, notably Maxim Litvinov, have contributed important ideas and principles to the struggle for peace: the principle that peace is indivisible, the principle of collective security, the need for collective action by the peace-loving nations of the world against those who break the peace and violate the provisions of international treaties.

Soviet Union a Bulwark of World Peace

But the peace policy of the Soviet Union has not been confined to stating principles or signing pacts. On every occasion during the last three years when the fascist war-offensive has pushed on to new outrages, the representatives of the Soviet Union in the League and other international bodies led in demanding decisive action by the great world powers, pledging the full cooperation of the U.S.S.R. in such action. The Soviet Union stood out as the only uncompromising champion of sanctions against the fascist invaders of Ethiopia. And what a record Soviet diplomacy has made for itself in supporting every appeal of the democratic Spanish government to the League and the Non-Intervention Committee! Every dodge and maneuver of the fascist powers, every hypocrisy of the British Tories has been scathingly exposed by Litvinov in Geneva and Maisky in London.

Who fought for the right of the legal government of Spain to carry on legitimate commerce with the outside world? Who fought for action against Italian and German aggression in Spain, except the Soviet Union and its statesmen in the international forums of the world?

The Soviet people were the first to come to the aid of Republican Spain – with food, clothing and other supplies. Factory and office workers, collective farmers, raised large sums and sent ship after ship to loyalist ports. Thousands of Spanish refugee children were brought to the Soviet Union away from the horrors of war.

In the Japanese invasion of China, the Soviet Union has again taken the lead in demanding the enforcement of international law against Japan. The Soviet people were quick to demonstrate their solidarity with China by concluding a symbolic pact of non-aggression with that country in September of this year.

Truly, the Soviet Union has become the voice of the peace-loving, democratic peoples of the world, the conscience of nations, showing up the hypocrites, the double-dealers and intriguers who are leading us headlong to a new world war.

But the Soviet Union's struggle for peace has been carried on not only outside her borders, not only in the congresses of international diplomacy. An essential part of this struggle has had to be carried on within the Soviet Union itself, against the agents and allies of the fascists and war-makers.

Fascist Threats and Aggression

The example of Spain demonstrates the manner in which the fascist intriguers work to realize their schemes of penetration and conquest of foreign lands. They do not depend simply on their armed forces to attack openly from without. First, they prepare the way by bribing groups within their victim's borders to act as their agents and allies, to undermine the morale and cripple the defensive power of the people. When the ground is well prepared in this way, then and only then do they attack. Even then, if possible, they prefer to carry on their attack in the guise of "unofficial" support to their agents within, as Germany and Italy did with Spain prior to open military intervention, as Japan did with the "Manchukuoan autonomous movement" in 1931-2, as Germany has done in the formerly Free City of Danzig, and is preparing to do with the Henlein party of Czechoslovakia.

If the fascists were ready to go to such lengths to achieve their

plans of conquest in a small and relatively poor country like Spain, what would they not do to gain a foothold in the vast Soviet Union, one-sixth of the world, teeming with untold natural wealth? Both Germany and Japan have openly vaunted their dreams of seizing large areas of Soviet territory. But their dreams are frustrated by the ever-growing might of the Soviet Union, its growing economic power, the rising cultural level of its people, their conscious loyalty and Socialist patriotism, and the increasing strength of its great army of peace.

The fury of the fascists is further enhanced by the fact that the ever-growing power of the Soviet Union means not only increased ability to defend itself, but increased ability to check fascist aggression against other nations which are the objects of their imperialist designs: Spain, China, Czechoslovakia. They see that in proportion to the growing might of the U.S.S.R., there is a growing world peace front of all democratic, peace-loving peoples, who increasingly look toward the U.S.S.R. as their best and staunchest friend.

Fascists Shall Not Pass

The growth of this peace front spells death to the fascist schemes of conquest. The fascists make every effort to check it. To this end they have spared nothing in their attempt to cripple the Soviet Union and undermine its morale. They have commissioned some of their citizens, invited by the U.S.S.R. as high-salaried industrial experts, to carry on spying and sabotage. They have hired the services of expelled Russian "white guards" and monarchists, and smuggled them in on false passports. These agents contrived to make contact with small groups of Soviet citizens who, because of continued opposition to the program of Socialist construction, were ready to abandon all principles to work hand in glove with the fascist agents. Together they plotted against the Soviet government, carried on wrecking and sabotage in industry and other fields, did not stop at murder. It is fortunate that this dastardly plot was uncovered in time, and the fascist agents and their allies summarily dealt with by Soviet courts.

The U.S.S.R. is not the only country in which the fascists and their agents are at work. Every democratic nation on earth, including our own United States, can find within its borders many fascist agents spying, plotting treason and sabotage to undermine the freedom of the country. But the agents of fascism in other democratic countries have not been exposed and punished as they have been in the

U.S.S.R. because in those countries there exist groups and interests similar to those which financed fascism and brought it to power in Germany and Italy; it is not to their interest to expose fascist spies. But in the Soviet Union no such interests exist. The fascist agents can find no support among the people. And when they are exposed, the whole people demands their just punishment.

These are crucial times. The conflagrations started by the fascists in Spain and in China must be extinguished before they spread to the rest of the world. Aggression anywhere must be resisted, can be resisted. President Roosevelt said in Chicago:

"Most important of all, the will for peace on the part of the peace-loving nations must express itself to the end that nations that may be tempted to violate their agreements and the rights of others will desist from such a course. There must be positive endeavors to preserve peace."

The way to peace is indicated. It lies in the close cooperation of the democratic, the progressive, forces of the world for united action against the aggressors. Governments in democratic countries exist by the consent of the governed. It is the common people in these countries – American, English, French, Soviet and other democratic peoples, who give the direction to their governments. The direction of the Soviet peoples is unmistakable: for peaceful construction, for peace with their neighbors, for world peace. Can the American people, or other democratic peoples, do less?

Peoples Against Aggression

But since Nazi and fascist governments disturb the peace, they must be stopped. They can be stopped by common and concerted political and economic action. The Nyon Conference in September stopped piracy in the Mediterranean. It was not done through bombardment of Italian cities; it was done through a declaration of the Nine Powers assembled at Nyon that no such breach of international law will be permitted. Had the Non-Intervention Committee in London had the courage to take a similar stand – Italy, Germany and Portugal would not have dared to make of Spain a bloody battlefield of fascist conquest. Again it is the peoples who must demand positive and concerted action to force Japanese withdrawal from China under pain of political and economic isolation. Cut off American and European supplies from Japan – and her aggression in China is bound to

collapse. At the same time this will serve as a warning to the fascists of Europe to desist from their threats and attacks which endanger the peace of the world.

Japan's undeclared war on China; Italy's and Germany's undeclared war on Spain; Hitler's and Mussolini's threats against the Soviet Union cannot be looked upon as local affairs. It is the concern of the American people as much as the peoples of Europe and Asia: it is your and my concern. The common people in America suffered death and desolation as a result of the last war; we could not have escaped the world economic crisis even if the U.S. hadn't taken part in the war. It will be so again should world peace be shattered by a combination of fascist powers. Should the Soviet Union be attacked tomorrow as China is today, we shall not escape the consequences. Hence we must take steps right now to "actively search for peace." We must strengthen our friendly ties with the Soviet Union. The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., the two strongest peace-loving nations in the world, must stand together as an impregnable bulwark of peace, as a deterrent to fascist threats and aggression.

The American People Must Work for Peace

For American friends of the Soviet Union history has carved out a grateful task: to spread the truth about the Soviet Union far and wide; to bring about greater friendship, more neighborliness between our two great peoples. Ambassador Troyanovsky recently said, apropos of the transpolar flights:

"Between the United States and the U.S.S.R. there are no political or territorial conflicts of any kind. Chkalov, Gromov were warmly received in the United States as emissaries of peace and friendship between two great peoples.... Every step in advance on the road of American-Soviet friendship is a step strengthening world peace."

America wants peace. The great majority of us, in farm, factory and office, earn our living by honest toil. We strive to improve our condition, the future of our children, so that we may know the joy of human life, of security in our jobs and in our old age. We want to live in peace with our neighbors, with every nation on earth. For only when the world is at peace can we achieve permanent prosperity, increased wellbeing of the people. We in America must combat the forces of reaction which are blocking the way to abundance for the

mass of the people. We must combat Nazi and fascist aggressors everywhere, who in league with our own fascists, aim at the destruction of our freedom and our rights. Unity of the progressive forces in America, in free cooperation with the democratic forces of other countries and especially with the workers and farmers of the Soviet Union, will halt the fascist aggressors and will permit our own progress to march on.

Let us hope the coming years will be years of peace. I am an optimist. I do not fear destruction of civilization. I see the forces of progress stronger than the forces of reaction. I do not want to see fascism in any part of the world. I shudder at the shambles which fascism is preparing for us. But I know that these shambles will have buried an outlived civilization – the money civilization of the present day. I know that the sane forces of mankind will not be crushed by disaster; toilers of the world, on farm, in factory and office, quickened by the blow and conscious of their mission, will rapidly clear away the debris and build a better world.

Twentieth Anniversary of the Soviet Union

And the Soviet Union, I know, is unassailable within its borders. The twenty years of Socialist construction have brought freedom, security and happiness to 180 million people. No foe, or combination of foes, will take the gains away from them. Left in peace, the Soviet masses will in another ten years reach a level of culture and prosperity not attained by any nation. And they will always remain in the vanguard of all builders of a new world. They have not swerved from the road indicated by Marx and Engels, and cleared by Lenin and Stalin in the twenty years since the revolution. There is no other road to the Blessed City as direct and certain, already well-mapped out.

For twenty years the Soviet peoples have labored and built. Stone by stone they raised the structure of a Socialist state, a society where no man is master and no man is slave. A society free from economic crises, from unemployment, from exploitation and insecurity. Where children and youth have a secure future, where every opportunity is open to man and woman without distinction of race or color. Where the native talents of diverse peoples join in a common stream for the betterment of all. Where the restraints of economic dependence have ceased to rule, and where one man's advance advances the whole. Where leadership is attained through unselfish devotion and service to one's fellow men and not through fortune of birth or special

privilege. Where the steadily rising level of culture and material well-being is shared by the many, not reserved for the few. Where every today marks an advance over yesterday, and every tomorrow is sure to bring new gains.

This is the Soviet Union. This Socialist state of 180,000,000 people, spread over one-sixth of the globe, stands firm and true, a symbol of human brotherhood, a beacon light for all who labor, a guide of man's destiny. It stretches its arms out to all honest and sincere men for the common effort of maintaining peace, for the onward march toward human betterment.

The Coming Years in the Soviet Union

In the coming years, if no war comes to disfigure the earth, we shall see the Soviet Union a happy and abundant land. Socialized agriculture and industry will provide an abundance of products. Every worker – on land, in the factory or office – will, for six or seven hours of a day's labor, receive a wage sufficiently high to provide all material needs without stint, together with the full enjoyment of social benefits of a highly developed, cultured society. The individual member of that society will be the freest in all creation. His livelihood assured, his old age secure, his children provided for, following a trade or profession of his choice, enjoying an unbounded opportunity for education, the Soviet citizen, man and woman, will be a person of culture and wide social interests. He will be highly individual in his gifts and his talents, since a Socialist society cultivates the best there is in races and individuals; at the same time a conscious social being, an active cooperator in the life of his community, his country, and the world.

The people will live in wholesome surroundings. In cities not too overwhelming, in country towns not too depressing. In cities – they are assuming that aspect now – of stately buildings, wide streets, shaded parks and playgrounds. Neither slums nor private palaces will disgrace the city. And in the country – in the midst of rich fields, good roads, waterways, blossoming orchards and gardens.

There will be abundance of food, a sufficiency of comforts and conveniences, perhaps not a car in every garage or a bathtub in every apartment, not yet – but ample facilities of transport and hygienic accommodations. There will be rest homes to accommodate all workers, and homes for the aged, and medicinal stations for the sick and indisposed.

The children will be well-born, under best medical care. They will be raised by loving parents who welcome their coming because they are wanted, and because the parents are secure for their future. Well equipped nurseries take care of the child while the mother is at work; after that – kindergarten, school; every child will spend a minimum of ten years at school after which he can choose what career or profession he may desire. Since children are the most precious possession in a Socialist land, the utmost will be provided for their physical and mental development and for play. Children's summer camps, children's theatres, children's palaces – for after school study and play, with skilled and devoted instructors, teachers, guides.

The Blossoming of a New Society

The youth will attend higher educational institutions with room for all who wish to study. Sports and athletic facilities will be available with proper equipment and instructors. Numerous laboratories will be open to the students, in plants or on farms or in scientific institutions. The level of scholarship will tend to be high, as industry, agriculture and science will demand graduates with thorough training; students will be required to learn one, possibly two foreign languages. They will have to know the art, literature, history, scientific and industrial development of foreign lands. They will be maintained by the state while studying and positions will be open to them the minute they leave school. Girls and boys will be on an equal footing – even as they are today; the same facilities and the same opportunities will be open to them: scientists, artists, workers, aviators, farmers, political leaders; or housewives should they prefer it.

The adults must all work – he who doesn't work doesn't eat. The six and seven hour work day of today may be cut down with the introduction of more machinery, more mechanical equipment. Unskilled trades will tend to disappear as more machines are put to work. The system of social insurance will be greatly extended, to permit every worker a month's vacation with pay, free and full medical, dental and hospital care; women will receive, as they do already, special consideration during pregnancy. And all workers – men and women – will receive a liberal pension on reaching retirement age. Facilities for spending one's leisure will be greatly extended, clubs, libraries, theatres, concert halls, parks, stadia. Since everyone will be encouraged to cultivate a hobby, an abundance of facilities will be provided for that: open air games, or gardening, or art and scientific

pursuits, or social and political occupations, or invention.

Life and Joy of the People

Literature and art will blossom as never before; with science marching in advance in the service of man. Since it is to be expected that every Soviet citizen will be a person of culture, the demand for cultural facilities will increase many fold. Already more books are published in the Soviet Union than in any country; in ten years there will be need of at least a new book per month for every person; similarly with theatres, cinema, television facilities, museums, art galleries, exhibitions of all kinds. Musical study and entertainment will make an enormous advance, also dancing; music, dancing, literature are absorbed by the Russian from the cradle.... Science in the Soviet Union is already abreast of scientific development in the United States, France and England. In economic and social sciences and in the science of planning it is far ahead.

More power plants, greater and better factories, higher and more extended agricultural fields, more oil and coal fields, more gold production, more iron and steel, more and better transportation, more handsome cities, vast waterways, deserts irrigated and made habitable. The frozen wastes of the North cultivated, new life in regions hitherto inaccessible to man. The land dotted with prosperous collective farm settlements, little towns in the midst of green fields. But greater than all this will be the life and joy of the people. Living standards of the population will rise to a higher level than the present standard of the middle classes in Europe and America. The sense of security and wellbeing will have become the normal accepted thing; relations between man and man, between the individual and society will cease to be money relations. Today's worries in five-sixths of the world: What will it cost? I can't afford it, What's in it for me? will have no place in the Soviet Union. Man will have unlearned to think and live in terms of money.

The Soviet citizen will have lost all sense of material pressure. The satisfaction of his material needs will have become a matter of course, like breathing fresh air in the open country. He will live in a world where the supplying of material necessities and comforts will have become the function of society – the municipality, or the state, like the supply of running water, electricity or transportation today. Freed from material preoccupations he will be able to give his whole thought to his labor, his mental and moral growth, his function as a

social being.

The Soviet citizen will have achieved the good life, will have entered the Blessed City – in the expression of the great French Socialist Jaures – and will continue with greater skill, and more strength, with more perfect organization, to build a still better City – with even greater blessings – the extent of which, or its limits, we can hardly visualize today. The Soviet people are able to build this greater and nobler civilization because the foundation for it was laid by the Revolution of November 7, 1917; because the great leader of the revolution – Lenin – had a correct and all-enduring plan; and because Lenin’s plan has been followed unswervingly by Stalin: “the man,” in the immortal words of Henri Barbusse, “with the head of a savant, the figure of a workman, in the clothes of a simple soldier....”

Now, twenty years after the Revolution, it is fitting for the peoples of the Soviet Union to manifest their boundless joy in the achievements of the Socialist state already attained.

In the words of William Morris:

Forth they come from grief and torment;
 on they wend toward health and mirth,
All the wide world is their dwelling,
 every corner of the earth.

With the peoples of the U.S.S.R., with all true friends of the Soviet Union throughout the world, with marching labor of farm, factory and office, with the active youth of the world, let us all join hands and hearts in saying:

All hail to the Soviet Union, all hail to the land of the workers,
all hail to peace and human brotherhood.