

The Soviets on the Threshold of the Twentieth Year

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In August, 1917, the Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party characterized the economic situation of Russia as follows:

“After three years of war, the economic situation of Russia appears in the following way:

“A complete exhaustion in the sphere of productive labor and a disorganization of production; an all-round disruption and collapse of the network of transportation; a situation of the state finances which is close to a final crash; and as a result of all this, a further crisis reaching the stage of famine, an absolute shortage of fuel and means of production generally, a progressing unemployment, a tremendous impoverishment of the masses.”

Two months later the Bolsheviks seized power. The country was to return to peaceful productive labor. The country was to be organized to produce for the use of those who produce and not for the profits of the exploiters. But the latter did not allow the workers to enjoy the fruit of their victory. They did not allow the peasants to benefit by the seizure of the land which took place right after the seizure of power. The exploiters, aided and abetted by the imperialist powers, started their civil war against the young Soviet Republic. The war was conducted for about three years more – practically until the spring of 1921.

Civil war meant concentration on the requirements of the front rather than on the requirements of the broad masses of the population. By a stupendous superhuman effort the enemies were crushed. The country became free again. When the Soviet government took stock of the situation in the summer of 1921, it found that industrial production had fallen to 17 per cent of the pre-war level. The production of coal which, in 1913 was 28,900,000 tons, fell in 1921 to 8,500,000 tons. The production of oil decreased from 9,300,000 to 4,000,000 million tons. The production of cast iron, from 4,200,000

tons to 116,000 tons. Out of 136 large and small blast furnaces operating in 1913, only 17 operated in 1921. Out of 204 open-hearth furnaces only 22 remained in operation in 1921. Agricultural production was only 55 per cent of that of 1913. The industrial section of agriculture suffered particularly heavy losses. The Volga district was stricken with famine in 1921. The railroads were in bad shape. Total freight carried on the Russian railroads in 1913, 132,400,000 tons; total freight in 1921, 39,400,000 tons.

A vast country sprawling over one-sixth of the surface of the earth, with a comparatively small working class, with a huge peasantry, with very bad roads even in “good times”, with a low literacy which in certain regions was no more than 5 to 10 per cent, with a population impoverished and physically undermined by seven years of war and civil war, with a new government not experienced in the ways of managing economic affairs, with a new class in power that had never managed industrial production, with the old-time technicians, engineers, and scientists mostly hostile, with few schools and fewer teachers to train new technical personnel, with the class enemy lurking within the country, and the imperialist powers waiting for a chance to destroy the only state where the dictatorship of the proletariat ruled – such was the country in which Lenin’s party under the leadership first of Lenin, then of Stalin and his closest associates, began the building of socialism.

The enemies rejoiced. The critics scoffed. Friends shrugged their shoulders. Can it be done? Socialism in a peasant country, with nearly twenty million individual peasant households? Socialism in the most backward country of Europe? What can Soviets do? They are no magicians. They are *committees of workers*. What can a committee do against the “inexorable economic laws”?

Counting in terms of the 1926-27 ruble, the distribution of the total assets of the national economy of the U.S.S.R. for 1923-24 appeared as follows:

State industry	4,367,000,000 rubles
Private industry	661,000,000 rubles
Cooperative industry	172,000,000 rubles
<i>Percentage of private industry to the total of industry: 11.6</i>	
State agriculture	1,197,000,000 rubles
Cooperative agriculture	175,000,000 rubles

Private agriculture	19,340,000,000 rubles
<i>Percentage of private agriculture to the total: 93.4</i>	
Transportation and communication (all in the hands of the state)	10,740,000,000 rubles
Trade: State and cooperative	42.3 per cent of the total turnover
Private trade	58.7 per cent of the total

Such was the relationship of the economic forces about the time when Lenin died. The country had not moved very fast in the three years after the introduction of the New Economic Policy (1921). But the Nepman thought he had. He accumulated huge profits; he rented factories from the government. He was heavily taxed, but he managed to “carry on”. He hoped to outdo state industry and become as powerful in production as he was powerful in retail trade. The kulak did his damned best. It is here, in these conditions, that one has to look for the sources of Trotskyism- Zinovievism and for the other “theories” of the renegades. They lost faith in the revolution. They did not believe in the constructive forces of the proletariat. They did not believe in the ability of the Bolshevik (Communist) Party to swing the country in the direction of socialism. They were mouthing phrases while their heart had reconciled itself to the return of capitalism. They never regained that conviction which was the foundation of Leninism – the conviction *that the Soviet proletariat, led by the Communist Party, and working hand in hand with the poor and middle peasants, would be able to organize not only industrial production on a socialist basis, but also introduce socialism into the realm of agriculture and raise the production capacity of the country to levels compatible with the idea of socialism*, which is the economy not of want, but of growing, expanding abundance, an economy that is vastly superior to that of capitalism.

This task was formulated in the most lucid manner by Lenin in the spring of 1918 in a tract entitled, *The International Situation of the Russian Soviet Republic and Basic Tasks of the Socialist Revolution*.

“In every socialist revolution, after the task of conquering power by the proletariat has been solved, and in a measure as the task of expropriating the expropriators is be-

ing solved in the main, there moves necessarily to the fore the fundamental task of creating a socialist system which is higher than capitalism, namely, increasing the productivity of labor and in connection with this (and for this purpose) organizing it on a higher plane. Our Soviet power finds itself in just such a position when, thanks to the victories of the exploiters, from Kerensky to Kornilov, it has obtained the possibility of approaching this task directly, of tackling it practically. And here it becomes obvious from the beginning that if it is possible to take hold of the central state machinery in several days, if it is possible to crush the military and saboteur resistance of the exploiters even in the various corners of a great country in several weeks, the sound solution of the task of raising the productivity of labor demands at any rate (particularly after the most painful and most ruinous war) several years. The protracted character of the work is predicated here by absolute objective conditions.” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. XXII, p. 453.)

None better than Lenin knew the difficulties confronting the Soviet Republic. None knew better how much *more* difficult the task had become after three years of civil war. But Lenin knew also what the enemies did not wish to know and what the friends often overlooked – the great social and economic assets of the revolution.

The Soviet country possessed tremendous undeveloped resources. “The development of these natural riches by the methods of the most modern technique will lay the basis for an unprecedented progress of the productive forces”. (Lenin.) The Soviet country possessed a liberated proletariat and liberated masses generally. The Soviet country possessed the dictatorship of the proletariat led by the Bolshevik (Communist) Party.

“Our revolution differed from all the preceding revolutions just by this that it has aroused the hunger for upbuilding and for creativeness in the masses at a time when the toiling masses in the most out-of-the-way villages, degraded, beaten down, oppressed by their tsars, the landlords, the bourgeoisie, are rising, and this period of the revolution is being completed only now, when a village revolution is

taking place which builds life in new forms". (Lenin, March, 1918.)

Lenin and Stalin knew what the enemies still refused to see and what the renegades dread – that the new class, the proletariat, having seized power, and marching shoulder to shoulder with the other exploited classes, is capable of conquering such difficulties, climbing such heights and achieving such marvels that could not be possible under any other social system.

Only twelve years ago there were many things the bulk of the Russian population considered to be the special domain of "Europe", meaning the most developed industrial countries of the West. The Russians knew how to produce wheat and rye and oats in the old-fashioned primitive manner, but they did not know how to produce a good steel scythe, let alone a good harvesting machine. The Russians had an abundance of timber but sawmill machinery was ordinarily imported. The Russian land was famous for its coal and iron ore, but who would have ever dreamed of producing in Russia the basic machinery for the production of iron and steel. The Russians had had marvelous factories with the good modern equipment even before the war, but those were almost totally imported from abroad, and even the engineers and the mechanics who installed them were, in most cases, Belgians, Germans, Englishmen, or Swedes. The Russians never knew how to produce a decent sewing machine, most sewing machines in Russia being Singer-made. When you went to buy a pocket knife you insisted on one made of English steel. It was somewhat of an accepted truth, an axiom almost undisputed, that the Russians were not the people able to produce the finest machinery, the best and most advanced engineers, let alone to make industrial inventions and to go ahead trying to outdo the most industrial countries in the world.

When, therefore, in 1928-29, after the country had, painfully, haltingly and with a tremendous clatter and strain, reached, by and large, the level of industrial production of 1913, when a new slogan reached the outside world, the slogan of the First Five-Year Plan with its tasks "to catch up with and overtake the most advanced capitalist countries", the news was met with a smile of incredulity. It was an unwarranted assumption to say the least. It was an ambitious venture meant mostly for home consumption. It could never succeed. It carried with it all elements of defeat.

Those “critics” failed to realize the tremendous molecular transformations that had taken place in the Soviet Union since the beginning of reconstruction. The proletariat had grown both in numbers and in the cultural level of its development. The Communist Party had become a greater leading force than ever before. The Soviet system had aroused millions upon millions of toilers to new activity, to participation in solving the economic and social problems, large and small. The general level of education had been raised; new schools had been established; illiteracy had been fought successfully among the adults. A great craving for education had seized the entire population. New habits of work had developed. A new discipline growing out of common tasks for the common good had become rooted in the masses. The Soviet masses were learning rapidly not only how to work but also how to manage and how to trade. The Nepman was being systematically driven out of his happy hunting grounds by the successful competition of state industry, state trade, and cooperative trade. The ground was being made hot under the feet of the rich peasant by strengthening the economic position of the village poor and by putting ever new life into the local Soviets, which meant putting them more and more into the hands of the poor and middle peasants to the detriment of the kulak and his henchmen.

All this progress guaranteed the success of the First and Second Five-Year Plans.

Figures are not always very absorbing reading – except the figures of economic progress in the U.S.S.R., which have something of the charm of magic in them. They may not tell the whole story, but they tell basic things about the growth of socialist economy in the U.S.S.R. Here are a few.

Total value of large-scale production in 1913: 10,251,000,000 rubles. Total value of large-scale production in 1935: 58,800,000,000 rubles (all in 1926-27 rubles).

Increase for 1936 approximately 33 per cent over 1935, which will mean that, figured on the same 1926-27 basis, the total output of heavy industry for 1936 will have reached 80,000,000,000 rubles.

Production of electric energy: 1913 – 1,945,000,000 kilowatt hours; 1935 – 25,900,000,000 kilowatt hours.

Coal production for the corresponding periods: 29,117,000,000 tons and 109,000,000,000 tons, respectively. Oil production – 9,234,000,000 tons and 26,795,000,000 tons. Pig iron –

4,216,000,000 tons and 12,489,000,000 tons. Steel – 4,231,000,000 ton and 12,600,000,000 tons.

Agriculture machinery (valued): 1913 – 1,131,000,000 rubles; 1935 – 17,595,000,000 rubles.

In every branch of heavy industry we must add an increase of approximately 30 to 40 per cent for 1936.

Production of tractors. The first tractor was born in Russia with the First Five-Year Plan. The number of tractors produced in 1935 was 127,700. In 1936 the output is scheduled to be 154,300. By 1937 the agricultural machine-building industry will be advanced from a total production valued at 980,000,000 rubles (in 1936) to 1,480,000,000 rubles.

These figures could be multiplied. They show that all the hopes placed by Lenin and Stalin in the creative forces of the liberated Soviet masses, of the Soviet proletariat, of the Soviet state, of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. have been abundantly fulfilled. One more figure should be cited. There have always been “narrows” in the economy of the U.S.S.R. These were points of difficulty, strategic points which often hampered the development of the entire system. Such a “narrows” was, for years, the railroad transport. Not so long ago daily carloadings amounting to 50,000 were considered a great achievement and the entire country had to be mobilized to overcome the difficulties connected with it. Today, under the leadership of Comrade Lazar Kaganovich, daily carloadings exceed 90,000 and there were days in September when they exceeded 100,000. Total trade turnover in 1928 – 15,156,600,000 rubles; in 1933 – 43,402,600,000 rubles; in 1935 – 73,722,700,000 rubles. The increase for 1936 is about 32-33 per cent, which will bring the total up to nearly 100,000,000,000 rubles.

The figures are eloquent but they do not tell the whole story. The Soviet Union is now one of the foremost industrial countries. Gone are the days when Europe was the producer of machinery while Russia, decrying through her intellectuals her “Asiatic backwardness”, was supposed to be the producer of raw materials only. Gone are the days when Russians looked with awe upon industrial progress. The Soviet Union has mastered that progress. There is no intricate machine in the world which the Soviet Union cannot produce – sometimes better than other advanced countries. The Soviet Union has an advantage in that its plant is modern and its equipment up-to-date. Its socialist organization permits it to discard old plant

and equipment and introduce the best there is. The Russian workers have shown a tremendous capability for mastering modern technique. Natural resources of the Soviet Union have been developed enormously. New gigantic deposits of every kind of mineral are discovered. New power dams, colossal in proportion, are in the process of construction. New industrial areas have been developed (Magnitogorsk, Kuznetsk, Karaganda, etc.). New industrial areas are in the process of development. New canals, new water projects are in the process of construction. The waterway between the Baltic and the White Sea (Arctic Ocean) which was opened not so long ago is only one of many such developments.

All this is the granite foundation of the socialist economy. The Nepman who so worried the Trotskyites not long ago has vanished. Socialist industry is triumphant. Socialist industry, which during the First Five-Year Plan of necessity had to pay major attention to the production of plant and equipment, has, during the life of the Second Five-Year Plan, been able to turn more and more attention to the light industry, *i.e.*, to the production of means of consumption. During the first eight months of 1936 the output of light industry increased by 37.6 per cent over that of the same period in 1935. As time passes, more and more attention is paid not only to the quantity but also to the quality of consumers' goods. All essentials for the abundant life are here. Industrial production in the U.S.S.R. is socialist production.

“Can we maintain that our small-peasant farms are developing on the principle of expanded reproduction? No, we cannot maintain this. Our small-peasant agriculture, in the main, is not only not developing on the principle of expanded reproduction yearly, but is not even always able to realize simple reproduction. Is it possible for our socialist industry to continue to accelerate its speed of development, when it relies for support on an agricultural basis like the system of small-peasant farms, which are incapable of increasing reproduction, but which at the same time represent the preponderant force in our national economy? No, by no means. Can the Soviet government and the work of socialist reconstruction depend for support for a more or less lengthy period on two different bases: on the basis of the greatest and most concentrated socialized industry, and on

the basis of the most backward and scattered peasant farming with its small marketable output? No, this is impossible. This would be bound to end sooner or later in the complete collapse of the whole national economy. What is the solution? The solution lies in enlarging the agricultural units, in rendering agriculture capable of accumulation, of expanded reproduction, and in thus reorganizing the agricultural basis of national economy.

“There are two ways: the *capitalist* way, in which the agricultural units are enlarged by grafting capitalism upon them, and which leads to the impoverishment of the peasantry and to the development of capitalist enterprises in agriculture. We have rejected this way, for it is incompatible with Soviet economics.

“There is a second way: the *socialist* way, which is to set up collective and Soviet farms. This way leads to the combination of the small-peasant farms in large collective ones, technically and scientifically equipped, and results in the squeezing out of capitalist elements from agriculture. We are taking this second way.

“We therefore have to choose between the one way and the other: Either *back* to capitalism or *forward* to socialism. There is no third way, and there cannot be one.”¹

For decades the critics of Marxism were asking how it would be possible to introduce socialism in the field of agriculture. The revisionism of Eduard Bernstein had as one of its foundations the prevalence of the small owner in agriculture. The revisionist David wrote an ingenious volume to prove that the concentration of capital, essential for the possibility of socialism, did not take place in agriculture. The Narodniks of Russia had created a whole literature to prove that capitalist relationships had not taken root in the Russian village. They reached different conclusions than the revisionists but they agreed that capitalism was not “cooking up the peasant in the capitalist kettle”. The Socialist-Revolutionists, followers of the Narodniks in the twentieth century, continued the same line of argumentation.

¹ Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. II, pp. 255-256. December, 1929.

Lenin, the most powerful thinker of Russian Marxists, devoted the major part of his early writings to proving that capitalism did seize hold of the village, that the relationships peculiar to capitalism were rapidly developing in Russian rural economy, that the rich peasant was developing traits of capitalist exploitation, that the class of rural proletarians had made its appearance in Russia – landless peasants living on their labor only, that the poorest peasants even in possession of certain patches of land were also exploited as laborers by the rich peasants, that all this exploitation was aggravated by the existence of semi-feudal conditions where the noble landlord was the main exploiter of the entire village and where the poor and middle peasants, devoid of the most elementary human rights, could not offer any resistance either to the landlord or to the rich peasants. What was needed, said Lenin, was the abolition in the village of the remnants of the feudal system, the introduction of democratic reforms, the most drastic of which would be the nationalization of the land and the distribution of it among the peasantry. It could be accomplished only by the alliance of the workers as the leading factor in the revolution with the peasantry as a whole. Once this revolution is accomplished, there would immediately begin the transition to the next stage of the revolution, the socialist revolution, which would be accomplished by an alliance of the proletariat with the poor peasantry against the bourgeoisie in the cities and the rich peasants in the villages, with the middle peasants neutralized.

Lenin, more than any other Marxist, helped to clarify the attitude of the workers towards the peasantry. He more than anybody else realized that, after the October Revolution, the way to socialism led not only through industrialization of the whole country, but also through the introduction of large-scale enterprises in the villages. Those large-scale enterprises under the Soviet system could be only state farms and collective farms.

Both kinds of agricultural enterprises were introduced after the revolution, especially after 1922. But the progress was very slow. It was not very easy to overcome centuries-old habits. It was not easy to raise the peasants to a higher level of education. Above all other things it was not easy to provide the peasants with the equipment necessary for collectivization. By 1928, only 1.7 per cent of the total number of peasants were collectivized. In 1929, this number increased to 3.9 per cent. It was a great advance compared with 1928,

but the collective farms and the state farms were still tiny islands in the sea of individual peasant households.

As the Five-Year Plan gathered momentum, as more and more agricultural machinery, improved seeds and other technical aid were poured into the village, as the successes of the first collective farms began to make themselves apparent to those peasants who had doubted their practicability, more and more peasants joined the collective farms. The years 1930 and 1931 are the turning point. By the end of 1931, 52.7 per cent of all the peasantry, some nine million households, were embraced by collective farms.

The collectivization of the individual households meant the elimination of the kulak. He had to join, if he was at all admitted, and that meant to be shorn of all privileges. If he was a pernicious element his property was confiscated and he was sent to a distant collective farm. There remained no room for an exploiter in a collectivized village.

Here is where the old property-owning classes made their last stubborn stand. The enemy was resourceful, cunning, ruthless. He employed all methods of deception, of intimidation, of working on the prejudices of the backward, of outright damaging activities, of terroristic attacks. A civil war on a new scale flared up in the villages. One of the expressions of this civil war was the slaughtering of the cattle by the more well-to-do peasants. In consequence of this attempt at depriving the village of traction power and the country as a whole of essential foodstuffs, the number of heads of large-horned cattle decreased between 1928 and 1931 from 70,500,000 to 47,900,000, the number of horses, from 33,500,000 to 26,200,000, the number of pigs from 26,000,000 to 14,400,000, the number of sheep and goats from 146,700,000 to 77,700,000.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Soviet government, the leading cadres in the village and in town replied by mobilizing their forces for the last determined battle of organization. It was not only a battle of eliminating the kulak. It was the battle of introducing order in the chaos of the collectives. It was the battle of making the collectives work, produce, prosper. If, before, the Machine and Tractor Stations were the force that made collectivization possible – the Machine and Tractor Stations, being a center of industrial organization and equipment placed in the midst of rural districts – now the Political Divisions of the Machine and Tractor Stations were organized. If, before, the best sons of the proletariat

were sent to the village to work with the collectives and help them straighten out their affairs, now more experienced and better equipped comrades were delegated. The industrial proletariat was giving its best sons to the villagers engaged in the process of building socialist agriculture.

The crisis was overcome. Harvests, one more abundant than the other, became assured. Obstacles were conquered. The organization of the collective farm began to work more smoothly. Accounting was placed on a business-like basis. Pay in shares according to the quantity and quality of work became the rule. Together with this progress, collectivization was making rapid strides. By 1935, 16,982,000 households had been organized in 244,314 collective farms. In the spring of this year 18,322,000 peasant households were counted as members of 245,734 collective farms. There remained outside of the collective farms only 11 per cent of the peasants as compared with 19 per cent a year before. This negligible quantity will soon be absorbed, too. Many areas of the vast land are already areas of 100 per cent collectivization.

How was that possible? The answer was given by Stalin.

“The peasantry did not turn toward collectivization all at once. It could not begin all at once. True, the watchword of collectivization was proclaimed by the Party even at the Fifteenth Congress. But it is not enough to issue a slogan to get the peasantry to turn toward socialism. To secure such a change at least one more circumstance is needed, namely, that the masses of the peasantry themselves become convinced of the correctness of the slogan proclaimed, and should adopt it as their own. Hence this change was prepared gradually. It was prepared by the whole course of our development, the whole course of development of our industry, and particularly the development of those branches of industry which supply machines and tractors for agriculture. It was prepared by our policy of decisive struggle against the rich peasantry (kulaks) and the course of our grain-collecting campaign in its new forms in 1928 and 1929, which placed the kulak farms under the control of the poor and middle-peasant masses. It was prepared by the development of agricultural cooperation, which accustomed the individual peasant to the collective management of af-

fairs. It was prepared by a network of collective farms, where the peasant tested out the advantage of collective forms of economy as compared with individual forms. It was prepared, finally, by the network of Soviet farms scattered throughout the whole of the U.S.S.R., and equipped with the new technique, where the peasant had the opportunity to become convinced of the strength and advantage of the new technique.”²

One recalls with a smile how frantic the Trotsky-Zinoviev traitors pretended to be some ten years ago over the growth of the kulak and the slow growth of the Soviet farms and collective farms. They suggested a “short-cut” to socialism in the village – forcible collectivization. How that would have alienated the peasants! How it would have wrecked the alliance between the workers and the peasants which alone made the success of socialist construction possible.

Large-scale agriculture on a collectivized basis goes hand in hand with increased mechanization of production, which means greater yield and security against bad crops. The Soviet Union on October 1, 1924, possessed in all its vast provinces a total of 2,500 tractors. October 1, 1928, it possessed 26,700 tractors. January 1, 1936, the number of tractors ready for work in the U.S.S.R. was 355,000. All tractors used in the U.S.S.R. are now Soviet-made. So is the rest of the agricultural machinery.

In 1931 the Soviet Union did not produce any harvesting combines. Whatever it had it imported from abroad. January 1, 1932, it possessed 6,400 harvesting combines, mostly American-made. January 1, 1936, it possessed 52,300, the overwhelming majority of them made in the U.S.S.R.

October 1, 1928, there were no motor trucks functioning in agriculture; January 1, 1932, there were 4,700 of them; January 1, 1936 – 40,000.

As a result, traction power became the predominantly mechanical power in Soviet agriculture. In 1928, mechanical power formed only 4 per cent of the total traction power in Soviet agriculture. In 1936, mechanical power forms *60 per cent* of the traction power. The role of animal power of every description correspondingly de-

² Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. II, pp. 338-39.

creased from 96 per cent to approximately 40 per cent of the total traction power.

Not only a social revolution of the greatest magnitude and deep-going significance took place with the transformation of over 18,000,000 individual peasant households into members of collective farms, but alongside with it a gigantic technical revolution took place. Agricultural labor ceases to be different from industrial labor. In the most advanced agricultural enterprises, agricultural labor differs but slightly from industrial labor. Thus the difference between city and village, between concentrated industrial production and scattered individual agricultural production, an inheritance of capitalism, is being overcome. New men and women are growing up in the villages, the distinguished citizens of the socialist countryside. These people are mastering technique, they develop the discipline and the culture of the industrial worker.

The collective farm, having overcome the initial difficulties and having learned to master technique, has done away with that affliction which plagued the Russian countryside for decades – insecurity of harvests, famine and near-famine. The collective farm is secure against bad crops. It has all the technical means of so improving the land and the work as to avert a bad crop. It has a surplus to tide it over a bad year even were such to happen once in a while.

The abundant life is here. In October the collective farms of the leading territories and regions began to distribute the harvest in kind. The writer remembers a time when three pounds of grain per day for every peasant “soul” was considered abundance. That was in tsarist times. Now we learn that in the Azov-Black Sea territory there are many collectives where each member will receive from ten to fifteen kilograms (25 to 37.5 Russian pounds) of grain for each work day. We learn about farmers in the Ukraine where a family of three able-bodied persons received 24,000 pounds of grain and 10,000 rubles in cash, not counting vegetables and fruit from the collective gardens and orchards and not counting income from the individual vegetable garden left for every member of the collective.

One sign of abundance is that the collective farms deposit increasing amounts of undivided cash surpluses in the banks. In 1933 the total deposits of the collective farms in the Agricultural Bank of the U.S.S.R. (as funds for future capital investments) were 96,000,000 rubles, the total in 1934 was 218,000,000, in 1935,

653,000,000 and the total for 1936 will reach the sum of 1,200,000,000 rubles.

The peasants are learning to consume better goods, to live in better houses. They want automobiles, motorcycles, pianos. They want the best clothes. The women want silk stockings and fine dresses.

The draft of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. – the Stalin Constitution which will soon be ratified – proclaims only what has taken place in the great land of the social revolution – exploitation of man by man has disappeared. The historic difference between industrial and agricultural labor is fast disappearing, the age-old seemingly unbridgeable gulf between intellectual and physical labor is also slated to go. A new man, the Soviet toiler, equipped with the most modern knowledge and in possession of an unusual degree of culture, is coming to the fore. The road is open to the next stage of social progress – from socialism to communism.

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“Citizens of the U.S.S.R. have the right to work, the right to guaranteed employment and payment for their work in accordance with its quantity and quality.”

“Citizens of the U.S.S.R. have the right to rest and leisure.”

“Citizens of the U.S.S.R. have the right to maintenance in old age and also in case of sickness or loss of capacity to work.”

“Citizens of the U.S.S.R. have the right to education.”

“Women in the U.S.S.R. are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social, and political life.”

“The equality of the rights of citizens of the U.S.S.R., irrespective of the nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social, and political life, is an immutable law. Any direct or indirect restriction of these rights, or, conversely, any establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as any propagation of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, is punishable by law.”

These fundamental rights of the citizens of the U.S.S.R., supplemented by broad democratic rights of the freedom of speech, press, assembly, processions and demonstrations, etc., forming as they do the Magna Charta of the citizens of the first socialist country, give the full measure of the road traversed by the Soviet land in the nineteen years since the Revolution.

The first Soviets, in 1905, were organized as Soviets of Workers' Deputies. There were no peasant Soviets as that time. The Soviets of March, 1917, were Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Soon they were joined by Soviets of Peasants' Deputies. After the October Revolution, when they became the government of the country, they were renamed Soviets of Workers', Peasants', and Red-Army Deputies. The new Constitution introduces the *Soviets of Toilers' Deputies*. The Constitution makes no more distinction between workers and peasants. It recognizes that the population has become more homogeneous, that the Constitution is to operate in a classless society.

Socialism is here. The Constitution formulates this in the following way:

“The socialist system of economy and the socialist ownership of the implements and means of production firmly established as a result of the liquidation of the capitalist system of economy, the annulment of private property in the implements and means of production, and the abolition of exploitation of man by man, constitute the economic foundation of the U.S.S.R.”

The country, whose system of education was the most backward among the great states of Europe, has now a system of education equal to none. The country whose masses were mostly illiterate has now a force of cultured workers and collective farmers the like of which is to be found nowhere in the world. Rapid progress in the field of education goes hand in hand with progress in the field of industry and agriculture. The number of pupils in primary and secondary schools in 1914 was 7,800,600. A great majority of the “schools” of that time could hardly be called educational institutions. The number of pupils in the primary and secondary schools of the U.S.S.R. in 1935 – 25,515,100. The prevailing type of school is rapidly becoming the ten-year school which is a primary and secondary school combined. The number of students in the higher institutions of learning in 1914, 124,700, in 1935, 515,900. The number of students in technical schools in 1914, 48,000; in 1935, 698,100.

The number of students in workers' faculties in 1914, none; in 1935, 276,000. The number of stationary libraries in 1914, 12,627; in 1934, 50,569. The number of books in the above libraries in 1914, 8,900,000; in 1934, 92,573,000. The number of club houses for workers and collective farmers in 1914, none; in 1934, 58,782. The number of books sold during 1914, 113,400,000; in 1935, 456,031,000. The number of papers published in 1914, 859; in 1934, 11,873.

One could go on citing figures which are in themselves instructive. But figures do not show the qualitative difference between the cultural production of the past and the present. Neither do they show the change in the consuming public. The consumers of good books, of advanced theater, of the operas, of high class music in old Russia were a limited number of educated people representing an oasis in a desert of uncultured, often unlettered masses for whom a special brand of diluted "popular" culture was concocted to be administered in microscopic doses. The consumers of the highest fruits of culture in the U.S.S.R. are the masses, scores of millions of workers and collective farmers. The highest type of culture has become mass culture in the U.S.S.R.

The highest type of culture is not only assimilated by scores of millions but these millions have begun to advance creative talent in large numbers in every realm of artistic and scientific work. Gone are the days when writing or acting or painting or scientific research was reserved for intellectuals only. The worker-painter, worker-sculptor, worker-poet, worker-dramatist, worker-singer, etc., has become a mass phenomenon in the country of socialism.

Education, recreation, physical culture in a country where there are no unemployment, no fear of losing the job, no private employers, no insecurity, but a steady improvement in every realm of life – all this gives life a new aspect. There is strength, there is readiness to tackle the most difficult problems, there is the will to rise. Soviet culture has blossomed up in a manner that could not have been foreseen ten years ago. On this rich soil, the personality of the individual worker and collective farmer develops. Initiative from below is no mere slogan. It was the initiative from below in the form of socialist competition that made possible the carrying through of the First Five-Year Plan. It was the higher level of mass development, mass culture, coupled with a higher level of technique that made the Stakhanov movement possible during the Second Five-Year Plan.

The movement was a mass challenge to routine in the field of production, to conservatism in using industrial technique, to following "precedents" established by old-line engineers. The Stakhanovites showed, not in words, but in deeds, what mass enthusiasm coupled with knowledge can achieve on the basis of a developed industrial technique. The Stakhanovites said in effect that, with the present equipment, the country could force the machines to yield more production with less effort for the workers, provided work is organized on a new basis. The Stakhanovites revolutionized conceptions of what a worker can do with a machine. In certain ways it influenced the entire course of Soviet economy. It has raised socialist competition to a higher level. It has pointed the way which leads to the abolition of the difference between physical and intellectual labor. In the words of Stalin, it is preparing conditions for passing from socialism to communism.

Where there is no exploitation of man by man, there can be no exploitation or oppression of one nationality by another. Russia, the "prison of nations", has been transformed into a brotherhood of nations living peacefully side by side, cooperating, making the prosperity of one the conditions for the prosperity of all. The Soviet Union is as strong as the smallest of its several dozen nationalities, says the U.S.S.R. To make equality of all nationalities not only a principle on paper but a reality, a living force, it was necessary, side by side with assuring to every nationality the freedom of using its native tongue and developing its culture which is national in form and socialist in content, to secure for it the material means for the prosperity of the people and for the maintenance of national culture.

In a world where each capitalist country is torn by economic crises, periodic collapse of the entire economic system, destruction of productive forces, waste of human energies and stunting of human growth, here is one country in which economic progress is proceeding uninterrupted, in which the best achievements of human knowledge are applied to human labor for the best advantage of all, in which creativeness in the sphere of economic progress is given full sway. In a world in which every country is filled to overflow with people on the brink of starvation, where insecurity is the lot of hundreds of millions, where hunger stalks the length and breadth of countries reputed to be cultured and advanced, where death from the most primitive lack of food in front of warehouses bulging with foodstuffs is the most common occurrence, here is one country

where there is no unemployment, where a job is secured to every man, woman and youth, where a job pays a living wage, where rest and recreation are guaranteed by law, where ever greater wealth is spent on the care of the sick, the convalescent, the man and woman in need of illness-preventing rest, where human lives, human health, human well-being are increasingly regarded with that loving care which they deserve as the most precious in human society. In a world where woman is still considered inferior to man, where, whether in factory or in the family, the woman worker bears a double burden, where, in unemployment and insecurity, the woman is the first victim, in a world where motherhood is often considered a curse, where the care of mother and babe is most often unknown as a state duty, and where every additional child is considered a new and heavy burden in the families of nine-tenths of the people, here is one country where the woman has been made fully the equal of man, where all realms of life, from the simplest work to the highest, are open to the woman, where the economic independence of the woman from her husband is the guaranty of her freedom, where motherhood is sacred, where the state takes care of the mother before and after the birth of her child, where illegitimacy in relation to children is unknown, where the care of the child is one of the greatest tasks of society as represented by the state, where pre-school education has been developed to a degree unknown in the other countries that boast an older culture. In a world where nations are arming with feverish haste, where the whole international situation is likened to a powder magazine, where the imperialist states declare openly that it is their aim to conquer whole or parts of other nations' territories, where race hatred, national hatred is fanned to madness, here is one country where a great multiplicity of nationalities are living side by side, crossing and re-crossing each other's territories, helping each other, loving each other, and respecting each other's rights, thus giving a concrete living proof of the peacefulness of the U.S.S.R. in relation to other peoples.

In a world where every country is torn by class conflicts, where the gulf dividing the classes is becoming an ever deeper abyss, where the rich wax richer on the blood and sweat of millions, while the millions are plunged into ever greater misery and want, here is one country which is developing a real internal unity – unity based on the absence of exploiting classes, unity based on common work for the benefit of all, unity cemented by the struggle against the en-

emies of yesterday and today and against the forces of nature which are made to serve society as a whole, unity based on the constant improvement of life, through the cooperation of all, unity made real by the leadership of one and only one vanguard, the Bolshevik (Communist) Party and by one and only one common ideal – socialism. In a world where the growth of science is stunted by incessant catastrophe, where culture is trampled under the heavy boot of the militarist, where human genius is thwarted and creativeness dwarfed by the rule of claw and fang, here is one country where science reigns supreme, where knowledge is cultivated by the masses, where culture is the great banner of the whole country, where good manners and good taste are acquired by the entire toiling population, where the stream of creativeness is rich and colorful, where the genius of many nationalities is fused to create a newer and more fascinating cultural life. In a world where the individual worker, be he an industrial worker or an intellectual, is so often hounded by fear, lashed by want, crushed by economic adversity and degraded by the brute force of the ruling powers, here is a country where the individual man and woman has every chance to grow, to develop all the faculties, all the capabilities, all the genius, and where a new type of humanity is making its appearance.

Hail the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the nineteenth anniversary of the October Revolution! Defend the Soviet Union!