Kelvin recently in Kiev in the architectural along benches—a $20,000,000 could thirty-eight financing closed common stocks, which market.

Nashville nation $600,000,000 ing at the wealth Tiflis has interest in the TVA and that the United States, England, and France are actually little nearer a real agreement than they were a year ago. According to this tale, which emanates from an almost too authoritative source, the British are insistent on stabilization of the pound at $4.50, and the United States Treasury is willing to go no lower than the pre-war parity of $4.86. Morgenthau screamed bloody murder across the front pages of the nation because a routine exchange transaction by the U. S. S. R. drove the pound down to $4.91—five points above the level to which this government is willing to see it drop.

**U. S. S. R. in 1936**

*BY LOUIS FISCHER*

*Kiev, early September, 1936*

The Soviet Union is becoming less like its past and more and more like its future. The numerous ugly vestiges of Czarism and the wounds of a costly revolution are disappearing before the emerging contours of another era. The U. S. S. R.'s present is beginning to be a blueprint of its future.

Tiflis has a new and broad Riverside Drive, straight new streets hewn out of the hills in the town, blocks of new students' dormitories, and rows of new workers' homes. Hundreds of fine, big school buildings, started several months ago, are nearing completion in all Soviet cities—in Leningrad alone 116 were erected this summer. Kiev in the last year put up numerous excellent apartment houses—not so coldly cubistic as the inconvenient architectural abominations of an earlier formalistic period. The eye of every Soviet traveler feasts on thousands of recently laid-out parks, some large for culture and rest as in Baku, some consisting only of a few flower beds and benches—a vacant lot converted into a haven. Millions of trees have been planted in double or quadruple lines along streets and roads to banish the shadeless thoroughfares of Czarist times. Benches with wooden umbrellas over them for the hiker have been placed on hot country highways. There are children's day nurseries on crowded Black Sea steamers. Most cities now have richly equipped playhouses for boy and girl pioneers, and Kharkov has devoted one of its finest palaces, formerly the headquarters of the Ukrainian government, to this purpose. Rostov has just completed the grandest theater erected under the Soviet regime. It also boasts a new trolley-bus line through a new central avenue. Novorossisk is building more factories and more homes, and is absorbing a neighboring village. Nalchik, a gem in the North Caucasian republic of the Kabardinians, is expanding ambitiously. Since my last Soviet journey a year ago this one-story town of 40,000 people has finished about twenty structures of two and three stories. Moscow's growth astounds even the permanent resident when he goes on a housing hunt. Leningrad, the Laggard, is also slowly trying to accommodate its increasing population.

Every collective farm I visited has a "but laboratory"—a small building supplied with charts, pictures, models of agricultural equipment, a microscope, and so on. Here the
peasants take courses in the proper preparation of seed, the proper use of machinery, plant and animal diseases, fertilizer, crop rotation. Thus is science being brought down to the lowest producing unit, the mujok, who now resents that name, once synonymous with serfdom and backwardness. Today he is a *kolhoz-ukr*. A considerable number of _kolhozi_ have acquired one-and-one-half-ton motor trucks during the last year. Consequently crops are moved more quickly with less loss, human backs and animals are spared, the chauffeur joins the tractor driver in forming a bridge between farm and city, and the peasant discovers a hitherto unknown interest in good roads. He begins to lay them. The bicycle too has come to the village, and tractors and combines are ubiquitous. Electric threshers are being manufactured. At the giant Zemograd state farm near Rostov specialists have been experimenting with an electric tractor, an electric combine, and a tractor that runs on rubber balloon tires.

Mechanization and an improved agrarian technique proved their value this summer. But for them there would have been a bad crop failure. Most of the Ukraine, which grows 25 per cent of the country's grain, had only one good rain between sowing and reaping. Nevertheless, the Ukraine boasts a better yield this year than in 1935. A better yield was likewise obtained in the North Caucasus, the Soviets' second most productive granary. Everywhere in the collectives I asked for an explanation, and everywhere it was the same. Fallow is now a universal feature; it conditions the earth for richer harvests. Tractors made it possible to plow when the ground still held all its winter moisture and before a horse could have turned the heavy soil. The seed was selected, and planted much deeper than before. That was a guaranty against the effects of drought. When the mad heat wave of July-August smote the fields, burning wheat and rye, the peasants rushed out with their combines and speedily put the grain in barns. On August 15, 1935, some 57,126,000 hectares had been harvested; on the same date this year the figure was 62,318,000 hectares. Earlier in the month on August 10 the discrepancy was greater—7,801,000 hectares.

The U. S. S. R. is garnering the fruits of the expensive process of collectivization. There may yet be bad crop years, but the arbitrary dictatorship of nature is now countered by the will of collective man armed with the mechanical wonders that spring from his inventive brain. These and the soil he puts to their maximum use. As a result, living standards in the countryside are obviously rising. In a Kabardinian peasant but I asked what articles the family had recently acquired. Among the objects were two pairs of shoes for each of the women folk—a pair for Sunday and another for week days—and a fancy umbrella. A household without a cow is now a rarity. Herds are appreciably bigger. Horned cattle in the Ukraine increased 26.7 per cent in the last year; hogs over 60 per cent; sheep 42.5 per cent. A _kolhoz_ near Kharkov was proud of a stable of beautiful young horses which had never worked; animals receive the tenderest care from experts. More is expected of the peasants—I found shock brigades and "Stakhanovites" in the collectives—and more is given to them. The peasantry never ate so well as it eats now. In a tobacco-growing Crimean village a husband and wife last year earned 8,000 rubles in cash, plus fruit, nuts, vegetables, cheese, and so on. I refused to believe this statement until I saw it in black and white in the bookkeeper's ledger. That couple was not an exception. This year there are many like them in the same village. Eight thousand rubles is a year's wage of two good city workingmen. In grain regions the income is smaller but large enough to be hard to spend. There is still a shortage of consumers' goods owing to the continued over-emphasis on heavy industry and armament-making.

The peasant dislikes this, yet understands. He has learned to think collectively. The _kolhoz_ destroyed the fence that separated the peasant's field from that of his neighbor. Therewith, after a time, the fence around his mind also disappeared. His small plot of ground, his rude dwelling, his family, his primitive agricultural work, the church, used to be his whole world. Today he is part of the collective; the collective's business is his business. It is a complicated business. His mind grows in following it and in listening to reports about it. The collective's life depends on industry, on the supply of machines and gasoline, on state policy. Bolshevik politics and, inevitably, international affairs become the peasant's daily concern. He wants to read a paper, listen to the radio. Talented youngsters are sent to the best city educational institutions. A new generation of able, intelligent organizers and leaders is springing up.

A young engineer showed me the Donieper Dam. I asked him about his life. He used to tend the cows in an Azerbaijani village. The director of the Chakwak tea factory near Batum is also a former shepherd boy. I passed a new students' dormitory building in Rostov, entered, and unceremoniously knocked at one door after another. Three women were preparing for a history examination. They gave correct and clever answers to questions about the American Civil War, the French Revolution, and so on. Two had come from a village, worked as housemaids in the city, and gone to night school. Now they were village school teachers taking a six months' special course. The third woman was a Greek Armenian, aged thirty. Five years ago she was illiterate, working underground in the Donetz coal mines. She has been teaching school for a year. She asked penetrating questions about the capitalist world. Such cases are legion. These people are the new Russia. They have remarkable dignity and self-assurance. They make higher demands on life. They will take the new constitution very seriously.

Dignity is also the outstanding impression made by racial minorities. With the coming of Sovietism the suppressed ethnic units of old Russia emerged as communities with their own individuality, their own cultures, their own governments. They are endlessly grateful for their new existence. Among them the regime finds some of its staunchest supporters. The Bolsheviks leaned over backward to meet the needs of these national minorities. The result is a bulwark against nationalism. Throughout the Soviet Union the observer encounters endless pride in the latest achievements of the country. But it is not a pride in
the achievements of "Russia," for half of the U. S. S. R. is not Russia. It is made up of scores of national minorities. Stalin the Georgian, Kaganovich the Jew, Ordjonikidze the Georgian, Mikoyan the Armenian—all of them members of the paramount Politbureau—cannot be proud of "Russia." Nor can they suppose that Georgia or Armenia is responsible for Soviet successes. All the nationalities of the country have contributed to them. The U. S. S. R. is itself a real international.

Public enthusiasm is greater and more widespread than I have ever known it during my fourteen years in the Soviet Union. The fact is as undoubtful as the reason is simple. The enthusiasm is not mere sentiment which has to be fed by "stunts" as in some other countries; it is based on solid material improvement. In the last five weeks I have traveled thousands of miles through the country, visiting many villages and twelve cities. I have inspected factories, rest homes, sanatoria. I have talked to people in trains, on steamers. Of every person to whom I spoke I inquired how much he or she earned. I must have asked over a thousand people. In all instances they earned more this year than last. Usually it was considerably more. At the Kirov (formerly Putilov) plant in Leningrad the average wage of a worker was 252 rubles in 1935 and 311 rubles in the first half of 1936. The income of engineers, technicians, and the like rose from 475 to 599 rubles in the same period, and that of the factory's clerical staff from 223 to 269 rubles. I estimate that average wages have risen 20 per cent throughout the Soviet Union in the last twelve months. Simultaneously prices have fallen, but not as much as people expected and hoped. Prices are still excessive. This applies especially to bread, shoes, and many articles of clothing. The Stakhanov movement, which was launched late in August, 1935, simply means more efficient work by individuals and more rationalized operation by plants. This brings higher individual incomes, more employment, and greater economies in factories—half of the savings, according to a recent decree, must be spent on home construction. In the intervening twelve months the industrial output of the U. S. S. R. has increased 30 per cent. Consumers' goods, however, do not bulk as large in this increase as heavy mechanical equipment. Yet the availability of consumers' commodities is an important determinant of the general price scale. A price slash is promised for the end of 1936. Every price reduction implies another improvement of a living standard which has left the Czarist level far behind but which is still much too low for a socialist state.

Above all, the population needs homes. Housing has made vast progress, but is still sadly inadequate. Seven years ago the Soviets laid the foundation of a new, industrialized nation. That process yielded iron, steel, bricks, glass, for building purposes. From 1929 on these materials went into new plants and into the houses connected with them. This division of materials between industrial and private needs caused housing to lag. The same division persists today owing to the construction of factories, schools, military structures, offices, and so forth. Next year the present emphasis on schools may be shifted to hospitals. Moreover, there is always a shortage of labor. In Moscow I know of large apartment blocks which remain unfinished owing to a scarcity of workmen. Labor efficiency in this branch is extremely low. Few processes are mechanized. Less living space was created in 1935 than in 1934. Plumbing is poor, interior finish bad, and modern conveniences like refrigeration or air conditioning are unknown. Much could be accomplished by a commissar of housing endowed with the energy, talents, and authority of a Kaganovich or Ordjonikidze. Housing must now be placed in the center of Soviet attention, for overcrowding in homes creates serious problems. And nothing so effectively blots out the fact of Czarism as a fresh row of fine houses on the spot where miserable tenements once stood. If prices go down and homes go up, the U. S. S. R. will be able to stop harking back to the pre-1914 period and start making comparisons with advanced Western nations.

Social Security Betrayed

BY ABRAHAM EPSTEIN

Far from being a radical social measure, the New Deal Social Security Act is the most reactionary social-insurance plan in existence. Its major features are neither social nor conducive to security. In a world ruled by slogans it is not surprising, however, to find American liberals ensnared into unquestioning acceptance of the act. The promise of security is most alluring. The slogan of "social security" encompasses all fond hopes and pious wishes. Even enemies of social legislation insist that they favor the idea of social security.

The vast range and complexity of the act have served to obscure its social limitations and sinister implications. The combination of ten different insurance and relief programs, based on three different philosophies of governmental operation, has made understanding well-nigh impossible. The embodiment of good, bad, and indifferent plans in one measure has impeded critical discussion of the socially questionable features.

Sooner or later the American people are bound to realize that, despite its glittering title, the act does not solve the problems of insecurity. The law does not even attempt to meet the major ills of present-day society. The great modern hazards afflicting millions of wage and
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