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UNDER
THE BOLSHEVIK
UNIFORM

BY
VLADIMIR LAZAREVSKI

Translated by Una, Lady Troubridge

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LONDON
Thornton Butterworth Ltd

First Published 1935
First Impression in the Keystone Library . . . 1937

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MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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INTRODUCTION

THE speeches delivered at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, and the motions there and then adopted, clearly delineated the international position of Communism to-day.

It is now easy to trace the windings of the spiral-shaped action that has been developing for the last eighteen years, and ever since gaining more strength and power to impel the world towards further confusion. The basis of that spiral is the scheme of international relations.

The German Empire tenderly welcomed Communism when it was in its cradle ; the Weimar politicians made a precious ally of that youthful prodigy, and availed themselves of this alliance to threaten other nations with the possibility of a German-Sovietic coalition. There was an interval of respite when Hindenburg was elected President of the Reich. The German Government proposed to the French Government (according to the German press reports) to effect a final reconciliation between the two leading countries of the Continent and to cold-shoulder Moscow as the source of universal trouble.

But the radical French Government, having no confidence in those obnoxious " Prussian Junkers," believed more readily the promises and compliments of the Soviet diplomats. Forgetting the danger of such stratagems, the French Government found it quite fascinating to revenge itself on its antagonists by using their own methods against them.

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Result : the League of Nations admits U.S.S.R. to its Council ; the power of Moscow is no longer unsteady ; the conferring of such an honour upon the Soviets has given them political prestige ; they are now proclaimed as one of the elements of European stability. The League of U.S.S.R.'s friends proposes that Litvinoff be awarded the "Nobel" prize for Peace. A very queer proposal indeed !

The first winding of the spiral ends here. But the second circumvolution has long since appeared. Its substance is of a different material ; it has nothing to do with diplomatic contrivances ; it only deals with the inmost forces of Nations, the essence of which is psychological and moral.

The interference of bolshevism in the lives of Nations has called forth violent opposition. The so-called Fascist movements rise up here and there, assuming various aspects, according to circumstances, racial variations, and the valour of their leaders. Those movements are brought to a head, and if they give evidence of such dangerous activity as is actually manifested by Germany on the ground of national aspirations, and by Italy on that of international direction, their uncompromising attitude is due in a great part to the aggressiveness of the Bolsheviks.

What is likely, then, to be the reaction of the champions of social and individual liberties ? They are being tempted to join the Bolsheviks, whose action has stimulated the impetuous advance of the Fascists. It is no more a question of the social and political invasion of bolshevism, but of its moral intervention, of greatly increased power, driving straight home to the heart of the world order.

* * * * *

Such are the vast prospects that are to-day envisaged

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by the foreign policy of the Soviets ; their domestic situation is urgently pressing them to take all advantages of these possibilities.

As we shall see in the last chapter of our study, the Russian communist structure has now risen to such heights that it threatens to collapse. The awakening of the national conscience is gradually destroying the spell of communism. The Western Nations seem to have overlooked this fact, but it is the principal reason why the Communists have given up their old exclusiveness, and have organized a "mustering of all the anti-fascist forces," including not only the Socialists, but also the revolutionary elements of the "bourgeoisie."

At its last Congress, the Comintern plainly laid down the programme of its practical work on a world-wide scale, i.e. a "common front" composed of Communists and Socialists and a "popular front" formed by an alliance with bourgeoisie sympathizers—in Europe and America, and also in the colonies ; in "the capitalist countries," appointment to government posts of men belonging to the above parties ; lastly, the enthronement of a proletarian dictatorship, because, insists Dimitrov (the new "helmsman" of the Comintern), "we openly tell the people that only the Soviets can bring them definite welfare!" In other words, the Bolsheviki have not modified their final aims, but are working towards them by indirect routes, well knowing that in politics these often prove the shortest way to the goal.

From now on communism will adopt those methods that have secured the triumph of bolshevism in Russia. Will other nations see through this stratagem which Dimitrov has openly compared to the famous "Trojan-horse dodge"?

Another simile may prove even more illuminating.

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Modern shells intended to penetrate armour-plates are made of the hardest steel, but they are provided with a soft metal point which, when on striking the armour, composes an alloy with its substance and thus facilitates its penetration. The "common front" and the "popular front" stand for that soft point meant to ensure most effectively the explosion of the Communist shell !

* * * * *

Let the voices of the great forces of order and peace now be heard ; those forces to which modern civilization is beholden for its development, whatever aspect they may assume in political life or in professional, religious, cultural and other groupings. Those who wish to oppose the excesses of Fascism must not step inside that train the doors of which are most obligingly held open by the leaders of the Comintern. That train's terminus is the "universal communist revolution" ; it never halts on its way and it has no brakes.

The communist manœuvres were, on the whole, successful in France at the first attempt. This, of course, delighted and encouraged the Soviets. But the United States sent a most energetic protest to Moscow before the closing of the Congress, and a few days later the British Trade Unions rejected all compromise with Communism. Moscow will nevertheless continue to pay flattering attentions all round. It is well worth their while for the Soviets to entice into their snares, under the pretext of the "anti-fascist movement," the two great Anglo-Saxon democracies. Herein lies a tangle of problems the solution whereof will decide the future of mankind.

* * * * *

The Soviets' diplomacy and propaganda abroad aim

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at concealing the strategy of international communism. It has ever been the mark of evil minds to practise deceit when preparing for arrogant action. The Gospel tells us of the wonderful power of re-embodiment possessed by the demons. Amongst Dostoievski's heroes, those who are the Evil One's delegates on earth are always subject to a division of their personalities. And that faculty of dissembling and dividing one's personality can be described as the "sublimation" of falsehood. We do not here mean to insist on the unequalled art of deceit of the Bolsheviks ; we shall enter that subject later on. But it is necessary to keep what follows well in mind : the double meaning of the terminology of Communists' leaders, and the clever duplicity of their watchwords.

They give out that they are passionately opposed to war, but "the Revolt of Proletarians" does not mean war, according to them ! They muster the "anti-fascist coalition," but for them a fascist government is any government which is able to oppose the destructive action of the Comintern. For years past, Moscow has branded the names of Chamberlain and Poincaré as the representatives of fascism.

So have they contrived to spread before the world a thick mesh of lies and blackmail, through which facts and events appear entirely distorted. When deceit is systematized and robed in the garments of statesmanship, it becomes infinitely dangerous, for then all the resources of the nation are assembled to sustain it.

It is certain that this form of activity is now encountering a reaction. For some time past a group of politicians and publicists has been gathering, who have made clear the real nature of communism, its aims and methods. Notably the British Press, with its wise and accurate utterances is, for the most part, pointing out to its readers,

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with the utmost sagacity, the underhand dealing of the Communists.

But daily information only gains its full worth if one can maintain a general grasp of the home and foreign policy of the Bolsheviks. To give the present study on Communism all due weight, we have borrowed our colourings almost exclusively from the Soviets' own pallets, but not from those pallets that produce publicity material for export purposes.

The author would be happy if his work should prove of some use to British and American readers in helping them to pierce through the mischievous screen so craftily set up by the wary schemes of the Bolsheviks' propaganda.

September 25, 1935.

CHAPTER I

FROM THE IMPERIAL EAGLE TO THE RED FLAG

I

The Crumbling of the Russian Monarchy

ABOUT two months subsequent to the outbreak of the Revolution of March 1917, the author of this volume, being at the front, near Riga, was invited to attend a "plenary session" of the soldiers of the company in which he was a junior officer.

There was no set procedure established beforehand, but the resolutions voted were none the less important. Moreover, they were of a very varied nature. The reader may be allowed to judge of this for himself:

The soldiers demanded :

That the property of landowners should be divided among the peasants.

The divulging of all secret diplomatic treaties and conventions (!?).

Peace at the earliest possible moment without annexations or contributions.

In addition, they protested against the "luxury" carriage provided for the use of the colonel of the regiment.

Such were the clauses which were most vociferously applauded and which evoked the most violent speeches.

At that time meetings of this description were being held in every one of the innumerable units which

combined to form the vast Russian front. The demands and petitions advanced by the troops were practically identical in all units (with the exception of a fairly large proportion of the cavalry and artillery), and gave rise to a thousand sinister and resounding echoes.

It may thus be seen that even during the first few months which followed the Revolution of March, the Russian Army was well on its way towards disintegration.

The "grey multitude" of soldiers, far from regretting the fallen régime, was not even concerned with continuing the struggle against the foreign enemy.

Why?

Because the millions of men herded along those interminable front lines in the spring of 1917 were but the "second edition" of the Russian Army, and were of a markedly inferior quality to the first. The real army, that which in 1914 had entered into the war with such immense enthusiasm, was no longer in existence.

All the armies engaged in the war endured terrible hardships, but the Russian Army, by force of circumstances, was placed, from the earliest months of hostilities, in a particularly perilous position. At the very outset, sacrificing itself to the interests of inter-allied high strategy, it sent several of its best corps to certain annihilation by initiating a necessarily imprudent thrust into the difficult territory of Eastern Prussia.¹ This sacrifice was fully justified since it entirely defeated the plan for a general offensive on both fronts, a plan

¹ Without mentioning the numerous and arduous difficulties met with by the Russian Army in Eastern Prussia, we may quote the artillery forces available on either side. In the course of the three great battles which were fought in Eastern Prussia the Russians put into the field 210 light batteries and 3 heavy batteries, and the Germans 320 light batteries and 100 heavy batteries, representing a superiority of $2\frac{1}{2} : 1$.

which had been closely studied, considered and adopted by the German Headquarters Staff.

For the Allies it resulted in a tremendous strategic victory. But the shifting of the German strategy, so far as the Russian Army was concerned, only led to new and tremendous difficulties. Germany transferred her offensive to the East and its command was handed over to Hindenburg, seconded by Ludendorff. Elsewhere the German High Command hastened to reinforce the Austrian front lines which had been badly shaken by the Russian offensive. This offensive, which was productive of such brilliant results, was not accomplished without strenuous effort. At the moment when, in the spring of 1915, the great German-Austrian push was launched, the Russian Army had already suffered severely. Moreover, a fatal defect, and one which was for a long time to prove irremediable, was beginning to make itself apparent: the lack of munitions, and more especially of shells.

A tragedy then unfolded itself: suffering under a positively crushing inferiority of technical equipment, the Russian Army saw itself compelled to replace shells, bullets and barbed wire by the living flesh of its rear-guard. Day by day the troops were decimated by this necessity.

In a few months' time not only were they driven from the very considerable gains won during the autumn and winter of 1914, but they were forced to abandon vast stretches of Russian territory.

The entire country reacted profoundly to the gravity of the situation. The Tzar determined to assume personal command of his armies. A gigantic effort was made to increase the production of munitions; the Duma was invited to assist in the accomplishment of this task. These measures being energetically combined, the

Russian Army, at the moment of the downfall of the monarchy, found itself powerfully equipped for the offensive which had been planned to take place in the spring of 1917 and which was prevented by the Revolution.

On the other hand, it became necessary to repair the losses which had decimated the troops. At first sight this task appeared comparatively easy of accomplishment. The Russian High Command and the Allied G.H.Q. placed their confidence for the future on the possibility of drawing upon the vast reservoir of men provided by the twenty-four million square kilometres of Russian territory. They did in fact draw heavily upon it and on more than one occasion. Towards the beginning of 1917, the Russian Army, whose equipments had been appreciably improved, appeared stronger than it had been in 1914.

This appearance, however, did not correspond with reality.

There is no army in which a recruit can become a soldier until he has undergone training which transforms not only his outward appearance, but also his inner man. This is particularly the case in a country whose human "raw material" is as amorphous and ignorant as that supplied by the villages of Russia. The hasty conditioning of recruits in time of war must of necessity in that country offer very poor results.¹

¹ In the recent work by Lieutenant-Colonel Henri Mélot (*La Mission du Général Pau dans les Balkans et en Russie Tzariste*, Payot, Paris, 1931) may be found a very high opinion of the Russian Army. His observations, as eloquent as they are accurate, were made on the eve of the great Austro-German push in the spring of 1915. The only statement which must be considered over-optimistic is that to the effect that the quality of the reserves was equal to that of the active troops; even though Colonel Mélot is alluding to those reservists who were the first to be mobilized and which consequently retained a large measure of that military education received during their term of active service.

Apart from its cavalry and artillery, the Russian Army, on the eve of the Revolution, hid beneath the uniforms of its millions of soldiers a soul that was not military but of the soil.

It therefore behoves us to inquire what, at that time, was the moving spirit of the Russian countryside?

In the first place it was by no means belligerently inclined. In 1914, the peasants, influenced by the patriotic fervour of the educated sections of the nation, had been quite prepared to welcome the idea of war, imposed by Germany on Russia and France. But this frame of mind was not lasting; it weakened and perished owing to the hardships of daily life and the impression made by the reverses of the year 1915 with their toll of hundreds of thousands, dead, wounded and captured. Moreover, the very idea of national interests was really non-existent for the peasant; he was unable to understand the danger of defeat since he did not feel himself personally threatened in his own secluded corner.

Let us remember the exclamation of the Governor of the provincial town which is the scene of the action in Gogol's *Revisor*: "Leave our town, gallop for three years and you will not reach any foreign land!" Gogol died in 1852. Undoubtedly there have been great changes since then. The reforms made by Alexander II and later those of the last reign have transformed public life from top to bottom. Sixty years having passed, neither a governor nor even a simple policeman would have made such a statement. But the peasant had remained unaltered.

During the third winter of the war the pacifist formula found its way to the hearts of the people the more easily in that it was accompanied by another: "The land for those who work!"

This slogan coincided with the long-standing covetousness of the peasant for the manorial territories ; a covetousness fed for a long period both by revolutionary propaganda and by the existing economic régime under which the peasants were not encouraged to develop any sense of private property or personal responsibility.¹

* * * * *

The word of command, "Peace and the Land," addressed in March 1917 to the peasants at the front and in the rural districts, found therefore that the soil was already carefully tilled. The harvest was swift and abundant.

The countryside promptly gave its support, not only to the new régime which came to replace the monarchy, but also to the principle of "extending the Revolution" proclaimed by the elements of the extreme left.

The peasants at the front, eager to play their part in the man-hunt which was taking place in the rural districts, had no longer any thought but that of dispatching their military duties with the utmost celerity and returning to their homes. It became necessary to proceed with the demobilization of the classes in order of seniority. But in many cases the soldiers did not even await their turn, but departed without asking leave of anyone. This spirit of independence very soon led to the abolition of all discipline. The trenches were inundated with subversive publications. Committees of soldiers were formed everywhere to initiate the struggle against their officers, with a view to arrogating their rights and their authority.

The officers, generally speaking, opposed a very

¹ The régime of the "mir," that is to say of the peasant community, with annual distribution of the plots to be cultivated by each family which formed a part of it.

Feeble resistance : indeed, one of the most fatal contradictions in the chain of disasters of which the Russian Revolution was composed lay in the fact that many officers eagerly accepted the new order of things, but for reasons which were exactly the opposite to those which had obtained the support of the soldiers.

Since the time of the serious military reverses in 1915, the officers had been daily falling more completely under the influence of the opposition as personified by the Progressive Coalition in the Duma. This opposition was moderate and patriotic. The point of departure of the attack launched at the Government by the Progressive Coalition was the undeniable fact of that Government's incapacity to organize the resources of the country towards a prompt and relatively economical victory. Criticism, inspired by genuinely patriotic sentiment, augmented daily in violence, culminating in the autumn of 1916 in the celebrated speech made by Paul Milioukov, leader of the Cadet party.¹ After enumerating the blunders and inadequacies of the Government, the liberal leader concluded each section of his inventory with the moving inquiry : 'What is the reason : stupidity or treachery ?' At the tribune of the Duma, the word "treachery" was then uttered, as may be seen, in an interrogative mood. But opinion beheld in that fact only a rhetorical licence

¹ The Cadet party (constitutional democrats), the spokesman of the liberal intelligentsia, which desired to impose upon the Russian Monarchy a constitutional government modelled upon those in Western countries, formed the left wing of the Progressive bloc. The centre and the right wing of the Coalition were represented respectively by the Octobrist party (whose programme was established on the principles of the Constitution granted in October, 1905) and the Nationalist Party, both of which had, before the war, provided an almost infallible support for the Imperial Government.

and did not hesitate to interpret Milioukov's word as constituting a direct accusation. For the word "treachery" had long since been whispered here and there. An entire legend was quickly evolved accusing if not the Government as a whole, at any rate certain extremely influential elements, protected (some went so far as to say inspired) by the Tzaritza Alexandra of making underhand preparations for a separate peace with Germany. This legend had no foundation in fact, as was clearly revealed by subsequent events, by a searching inquiry into the matter initiated by the Provisional Government and by the various records published since the end of the war. But legends which come to birth among a general effervescence of emotions so soon as they have acquired a measure of vitality cease to concern themselves with fact.

Haunted by the fixed idea that "the Government was debarring the army from victory," the officers were convinced that the liberal opposition, should it come into power, would bring health to the public body and ensure prompt and certain success against the foreign enemy.

Not many weeks elapsed, however, before the officers understood the tragic implications of their error. They then realized with fear and anguish that only a colossal misunderstanding had led them to join the soldiers in welcoming the new order.

Every day that passed emphasized the profound discord which existed between the genuine aspirations of the two sections of the army.

It soon became a question of how the brakes were to be applied on the steep downward slope. Such a task was utterly beyond the power of the officer, considered in his individual capacity as the commander of subordinates who were daily becoming more un-

manageable. The brakes could only have been applied by concerted action, by a general control. But the Headquarters Staffs and the High Command remained silent ; in their loyalty to the Revolution they were awaiting orders from Petrograd, and alas ! Petrograd was equally inactive. The Provisional Government which, in its own eyes and in those of public opinion, had its *raison d'être* in the need for active patriotism and for an energetic prosecution of the war, remained a totally inactive witness to the disintegration of the Army and to the anarchy that was consuming the entire country.

Such a statement appears incredible, but the course of events will be best understood if we examine more closely the three great political powers which, in 1917, found themselves face to face at the crossroads of Russian history. These powers were : the monarchy,¹ the liberal party and the revolutionary radicals.

* * * * *

Two years prior to the birth of the Tzar Nicholas II, his grandfather, the Liberator—Tzar Alexander II—became for the first time the focus of a revolutionary attack. Since then, attempts against the Sovereign succeeded one another until they culminated in the regicide of the 1st of March, 1881. Nor was the revolutionary terror solely aimed at the person of the Tzar. The terrorists desired to destroy the entire administrative structure of the State and their fury sought for victims from high dignitaries to simple police officers. The childhood of the future Tzar, Nicholas II, was filled with hideous experiences. He was thirteen years of

¹ We shall avoid the use of the disagreeably artificial term "Tzarism" to which numerous calumnies circulated for many years by emigrated Russian revolutionaries and repeated by foreigners, have given an unpleasant after-taste.

age when his grandfather died in agony, his legs shattered by a bomb.

The murdered Tzar was succeeded by Alexander III who, with a firm and heavy hand, put an end to his father's efforts at reformation and, in many respects, aimed at retrogression. Inspired by the traditional ideal of "Holy Russia," he sought and acquired control of his people as a *bonus et diligens paterfamilias*, obtaining for them security at home and abroad.

What then was the lesson provided by the two preceding reigns for the benefit of Nicholas II when, in 1894, he ascended the throne of his ancestors? On the one hand he had before his eyes the life of his grandfather, Alexander II, a life consecrated to the realization of an ideal of liberal reconstruction, a life devoted to the effort to free the Balkan peoples from the Turkish yoke. Its results? At home, an unprecedented uprush of terrorist and revolutionary activities; abroad, the humiliation of Russia at the Berlin congress where Bismarck succeeded in largely annihilating the fruits of Russian conquests. On the other hand, Nicholas II had been able to observe the strictly conservative policy of Alexander III, who succeeded in giving Russia thirteen years of internal peace and in brilliantly restoring her international prestige.

Is it to be wondered at if, in such conditions, he chose to follow in his father's footsteps?

He failed, however, to realize the forward trend of history and did not comprehend that a policy which may be good, even salutary at a given moment, may become, and that with surprising rapidity, harmful and out of date. He remained ignorant of the fact that the economic development of the country, with its multiple repercussions upon public life, a development resulting as much from the efforts of Alexander II

as from the peaceful conditions accomplished by Alexander III, had made the assumption of liberal reforms essential. Nor did he realize that he lacked that element which had made of his father an autocratic Tzar. Finally he overlooked the law of "cyclical oscillations" and that alternation of periods of rise and fall, of progress and of stabilization, which is as integral to economic life as to art, to science and to politics.

The revolutionary outburst of 1905 came as a first warning, and one sufficiently serious to cause the Tzar to depart from the principles which he had adopted at the beginning of his reign. Yielding to the advice of the minister, Witte, the Tzar, after long and anxious hesitation, granted the Constitution of October 17th, 1905, which abolished the autocratic régime.

Nevertheless, this action was far from being the outcome of any new political conception on the part of the Sovereign. On the contrary, he very soon began to regret his gesture and the attitude of the first Imperial Duma, convoked in accordance with the terms of the Constitution of October 17th, only served to confirm him in his personal views.

The Duma, on opening its sittings at the Tavrichesky Palace, displayed a spirit comparable to that of a Revolutionary Assembly and appeared to regard itself in the light of a Constituent Assembly rather than in that of a Parliament summoned to consult with an independent Government. In such conditions the question of its collaboration with the Government could not even be considered. The Duma was dissolved and revolutionary effervescence thereby increased a hundredfold.

At this critical moment the Monarchy had the good fortune to discover the man who became its lifebuoy and who might even have been capable of protecting

Russia from the catastrophe of 1917. This was Stolypine, the last great man of the old régime, who became Prime Minister on June 8th, 1906. He succeeded in repressing the agitations of the moment ; he also succeeded in attaining to a clear view of the situation. He conceived an entire series of liberal reforms of which the most important were to be the " second enfranchisement of the peasants " : the methodical abolition of the " mir," the individualization of peasant economy and the suppression of those special laws which established a blank wall between the rural population and the rest of the country. This transformation was intended to create, within a period of twenty years, a prosperous peasant class which would become a new and solid basis for the modernized monarchy. Stolypine expounded his programme with deep conviction and great eloquence at the second Imperial Duma which was summoned on February 20th, 1907, and he invited the Cadet party, that of the liberal opposition, to collaborate with the Government.

This proposal was ignored. The Cadet party remained dumb, nor did they attempt to defend the minister from the hooting of the revolutionaries.

Contrary to what is generally believed abroad, Russian history has more than once witnessed periods in which liberal aspirations have gained the upper hand ; on several occasions liberal statesmen have been at the helm of the country. To confine ourselves to the nineteenth century, we need only recollect the earlier half of the reign of Alexander I which is inextricably associated with the name of Speranski, and subsequently an entire constellation of Alexander II's collaborators. But after the death of the latter sovereign, during a quarter of a century, liberal views were banished from the political arena and did not again make their appear-

ance until they emerged at the Tavrichesky Palace. It is therefore not surprising that liberal suspicion with regard to anything emanating from the Government was too great to allow of any association with Stolypine. Moreover, a majority such as was required for collaboration with the Government could only have been attained by means of an entente between the Cadet and the Right-hand parties, and the Right-hand party demanded one thing only : the dissolution of the Duma.

After a brief hesitation, Stolypine was compelled to accede to this demand, while an imperial decree was promulgated, in despite of the Constitution, modifying the electoral law in favour of the proprietary classes.

In other quarters, during the interval which preceded the new elections, a great change was taking place in public opinion. The conservative forces, dispersed and dispossessed for some years past, pulled themselves together and began to organize. The moderate elements of liberalism, satisfied with Stolypine's programme, accorded him their confidence and their support.

Stolypine entered upon the third Duma in triumph ; but he was welcomed not so much as a liberal reformer as a conqueror who had succeeded in crushing the head of Revolution. The right hand adopted him as their champion. He succeeded, at the price of incredible efforts, in putting into application a part of his projects which obtained the right-hand vote not because the party sympathized with the minister's ideas, but because it was still obedient to his personal authority. On the other hand, the liberals stiffened themselves against the liberal programme simply because it emanated from Stolypine. They demanded " all or nothing," and the alpha of their " all " was the enthronement of Parliament, or in other words, a parliamentary ministry

responsible to the Duma. As for the revolutionaries, they were openly in full cry after the Prime Minister ; conspiracies and attempts on his life succeeded one another without interruption.

Moreover, the discontent of the right-hand party led finally to a frenzied campaign launched against the Prime Minister ; as M. Maklakoff expressed it : “ the right hand was bent on stabbing the only man who might yet have brought them salvation.”¹

Stolypine was forced to give way : abandoning his long-standing motto “ Forward with a light hand on the brakes ” he put them on vigorously, rather with a view to preventing retrogression than with any hope of advance.

The right-hand party prevailed against the achievement of his lifelong ambition : the construction of a liberal empire. His other enemies—the revolutionaries—put an end to his days. He was killed at Kiev, on September 1st, 1911, shortly before the expiration of the powers of the third Duma.

It was the victory of immediate reaction, with revolution in the near distance.

The Tzar seized upon the moment as opportune for a return to those views with which he had begun his reign.

The country reacted by an immense evolution towards

¹ In his preface to the collection of documents entitled *La Chute du Régime Tzariste* (Interrogatoires des Hauts Fonctionnaires de l'Empire par la Commission Extraordinaire du Gouvernement Provisoire), Payot, 1927. This preface, consisting of eighty pages, written by the former ambassador of the Provisional Government in Paris, contains a brilliant and intensely instructive analysis of Russian political life since the Revolution of 1905 until the triumph of the “revolutionary democracy” in 1917. We have here attempted to condense into a few sentences the principal points of M. Maklakoff's circumstantial exposé.

the left, a fact which was quickly made apparent by the elections to the fourth Duma.

The recrudescence of the movement of opposition served only to irritate the Tzar and to complete his bewilderment. Impressed by the noisy manifestations of the extreme right, he required a conviction that the Duma was no more than a negligible emanation of the chronically sulky intelligentsia, and that the mass of the "people" were on his side and only desired the re-establishment of absolute autocracy.

In other words he abandoned political realities and entered into the realm of fiction. His innate mysticism made such an evolution only too easy of accomplishment, and when that mysticism had reached a certain degree of development, the political influence of Rasputin became both possible and inevitable.

Of Rasputin and the part he played many bitter truths have been recorded and much also that was untrue. The importance of this strange and sinister personage had its origins in the intense, complicated and tragic devotion of the Tsaritzza Alexandra for her son, the Tzarevitch Alexis. For many years this ambitious woman had suffered deeply in consequence of her failure to provide an heir to the Russian crown. At length, the heir was born, but the life of this loving and intelligent child proved to be in continual danger; a danger of which she herself, his mother, was the cause! For the incurable disease which afflicted the Tzarevitch was the hereditary disease of the House of Hesse, a disease manifesting itself only in the males, but transmitted from one generation to another in the female line. The life of the Tsaritzza became one of incessant torture, of unremitting anxiety and devotion.

Rasputin undoubtedly contrived to persuade the

Tzaritza that his prayers and his pious protection could avail to safeguard the life and health of her child. Moreover, an astonishing series of circumstances arose to confirm, time and again, the "staretz's" claim to such salutary powers. Notably the case of the accident at Spala. While staying at that place, the heir to the throne had a fall which caused so severe a hæmorrhage that the doctors abandoned any hope of effectual treatment. At the very moment when the Tzarevitch's life was despaired of, the distracted Tzaritza received a telegram from Rasputin encouraging her and predicting a prompt recovery. Within a few hours there occurred a sudden reaction of the small patient's organism, a reaction inexplicable to his doctors and which placed the child out of danger.

What woman, in a state of mind comparable to that of the Tzaritza, would have failed to believe in Rasputin's power or in the divine inspiration from which it arose? The Tzar, by nature much inclined to mysticism and strongly under the influence of his wife, was not long in sharing her belief.

Rasputin became in his eyes the incarnation of the "people," the mouthpiece of "Holy Russia." And if this was the case, was it not obviously right to follow his advice in matters concerning the State?

After the death of Stolypine, there remained in the Tzar's entourage no man in any way capable of counteracting and combating the influence of the "staretz" who possessed, according to unanimous report, extraordinary personal forcefulness, who always addressed the Sovereign with impressive frankness and sincerity, whose actions appeared to testify to his complete disinterestedness and whose suggestions were in complete agreement with the turbulent manifestations of the extreme right, with the discreet counsels of the courtiers

and finally with the views of those officers of the guard who were the Tzar's chosen companions.

Rasputin, for his part, behaved with perfect tact ; he made no attempt to domineer and asked for nothing for himself. When recommending to the Tzar this or that individual who had solicited his favour and his support he was perhaps sincere and believed himself to be acting in the public interest. But it is obvious, on the other hand, that those who flattered him and led him astray into infamous debauch in order to win his friendship were not worthy of the offices they coveted and were sometimes able to obtain.

It is also obvious that the country was unable to understand or to justify the Tzar's frame of mind or his actions. Public opinion was veering daily further from him and his Government. The collaboration of the latter with the Duma was meeting with ever-increasing difficulties. It could hardly be otherwise in a period when, as M. Maklakoff reminds us, it was a common jest to say, with a measure of reason, that Russia's parliamentary system was invented : that the Duma's vote of confidence sufficed to "upset" a minister.

And yet the years which immediately preceded the war beheld enormous progress in the social and economic life of Russia. The reforms initiated by Stolypine played a large part in this progress. Little by little the peasant masses were becoming associated with the general life of the Empire, were becoming richer, more educated ; industry, trade and railways were developing ; science and art were meeting everywhere with encouragement and respect. It was licit to hope that time and circumstances would lead to the evolution of the government machine without the intervention of painful accidents.

* * * * *

The first moments of the war appeared to afford

striking testimony as to the political health of the Empire. In an outburst of patriotism the Duma decided to cease opposition and to efface itself in order to give the Government a free hand. Unfortunately the latter was not long in affording evidence that it was quite incapable of dealing with the numerous difficulties which arise in time of war. The opposition then returned to the charge and, inspired by genuine patriotism, its attacks were a hundred times more violent and more effectual. The formation of the Progressive Coalition, whose full scope has now become perfectly apparent, completed the victory of the opposition in the eyes of public opinion.

If the Tzar, by approving the programme of the Progressives, had given way, all might yet have been well, but he did exactly the opposite. Actuated by a fatal aberration of judgment which can only be explained by a complete understanding of his particular mentality, he chose to regard the patriotic programme of the Progressives as a manifestation of the revolutionary spirit.

Before the Tzar's departure for the G.H.Q., the Tzaritza Alexandra had acquired a decisive voice in State affairs, and thus began the period of the overwhelming influence of Rasputin and of his sinister entourage. During the summer of 1916 the Tzar expressed his thanks to the departing ministers, among whom was M. Sazonov, who had sought to compound with the Duma and who retained friends in that body. The new nominations were entirely disastrous. The central mechanism of the government machine was grinding audibly and heralding the downfall of the régime.

The assassination of Rasputin in December 1916 did nothing to alter the situation. The Revolution was at hand.

It was not, however, the Duma which gave the signal for revolt. Although the prorogation of its sittings afforded the immediate pretext for the insurrections which broke out at Petrograd, the Duma itself did nothing of any kind to inflame them. It accepted the power as a ripe fruit which had fallen into its hands.

For the Tzar, after a brief moment of hesitation, had at length realized the impasse into which he had been driven by his neglect of realities. His manifesto of abdication afforded a proof, to posterity at any rate, that throughout his disastrous reign, while accumulating blunder upon blunder, he had always been actuated by honest motives and that his attitude had been due to a succession of misunderstandings and not to any criminal intent. His manifesto, together with his farewell to the Army, is a moving and sincere appeal to the patriotism of his people, and an invitation to his former subjects to obey the Provisional Government and to continue the war with all possible energy.

In appointing his brother, the Grand Duke Michael, as his successor to the crown, the Tzar begged him to take the oath of fidelity to the Constitution. At the same time he agreed to all the claims put forward by the Progressive Coalition and nominated as Prime Minister the Duma's candidate, Prince Lvov.

It was an overwhelming triumph for the liberals on whom devolved the direction of the Provisional Government. Not that they gave any evidence of satisfaction. Inflated by recent parliamentary disputes, they rejected the *modus vivendi* which had until then been their utmost aim, and advised the Grand Duke Michael to abdicate in the name of the dynasty, thus deliberately violating the fundamental laws of the Empire.

Always terrorized by the spectre of reaction, the

Provisional Government hastened to shatter, with violent blows, the administrative armature of the country. It went back upon all local authorities, the police and the municipalities, proclaimed a general political amnesty and left the coast clear for the propaganda and interference of the extremists both in the interior and at the front.

Having decided to sweep away all traces of autocracy, the liberals felt themselves entitled to count upon the support of the "revolutionary democracy" of which the chief organ, the "Soviet of the Delegates of the Workmen and the Soldiers," had established itself at the Tavrichesky Palace ever since the first days of the Revolution. Blinded by visions of a past, recent but vanished for ever, they hoped to find an ally in the person of their one real and deadly enemy. Seeking desperately to keep themselves on a level with the Revolution by concessions made to the Soviet, the liberals very soon reached the stage when they no longer had any *raison d'être* in the Provisional Government. Kerensky's hour was at hand.

In his memoirs, published in the French language a few years ago, Kerensky has set as a heading to the chapter in which he relates the story of his ascension to the office of president-minister the arrogant title: "Victory of the Nation." What actually occurred was precisely the contrary. The appearance of Kerensky on the pinnacle of power led inevitably and quickly to defeat: defeat, both military and national. Placed in the limelight by the revolutionary left, this man was not of a stature to hold his own against the extremists. His rôle was the more disastrous in that, from the earliest beginnings of the Revolution, his presence among the foremost ranks of the "revolutionary democrats" bewildered the liberals and prolonged their fatal illusion

with regard to the possibility of making common cause with the Soviet.

While Kerensky, having established himself in the Tzar's apartments at the Winter Palace, was vainly attempting to conjugate the patriotic verb by means of "the defence of the conquests of the Revolution" and was seeking to galvanize the already evaporating war-like spirit of the troops with bombastic speeches,¹ a small but well-organized minority, commanded by Lenin, was gaining the suffrage of the masses by their simple slogan: "Peace and the Land." Meanwhile, the Bolsheviki were quietly establishing the "Red Guards" with whose assistance they were able, when the propitious hour struck, to sweep away the bourgeois revolution in favour of that of the proletariat.²

As for the Constituent Assembly, which mustered shortly after the bolshevik *coup d'état*, that was duly routed by Lenin in a few minutes with the aid of a handful of drunken sailors.

II

The Liberal Vendée

The bolshevik power did not however establish itself immediately throughout the entire country.³

¹ When Kerensky occupied the post of commander-in-chief of the armies he was given the nickname of "persuader in chief."

² The documentation with regard to the *coup d'état* of November 7th (old style October 25th) is brought together in M. Serge Oldenburg's volume, *Le Coup d'État Bolchevique*, Payot, Paris.

³ The area of the country had in any case been considerably curtailed by the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and in consequence of later concessions agreed to by the Bolsheviki.

The total of the Russian territorial losses exceeded 800,000 square kilometres (the extent of France = 550,000 square kilometres) together with about 25,000,000 inhabitants. It is true that the greater part of these populations were not of Russian origin. Nevertheless,

During the year 1918, fronts of civil war sprang up on every side. "The North-Western Army" commanded by General Youdénitch held Petrograd, throughout the summer of 1919, under continuous menace. To the north, around Archangel, General Miller's army, supported by the British forces, kept a considerable number of Red troops fully employed. To the eastward, Admiral Koltchak's vast front scored some brilliant successes during the spring of 1919, but weakened, undermined by Red propaganda, and went to pieces entirely at the end of that year. Finally, the southern front formed by the Volunteer Army was called into being by the aged General Alexeier, a learned scholar and Russia's best strategist throughout the Great War. General Kornilov, first commander-in-chief of the Volunteer Army, after accomplishing with his small force the celebrated "ice march" across the Koubanese steppes, was killed by a Red shell not far from Ekaterinodar. Soon afterwards his army, reinforced by men recruited from the countries of the Don and Kouban Cossacks and by British munitions, launched a vigorous offensive.

the Baltic States, in which the national minorities constitute 20 per cent of the number of the inhabitants, and especially Poland, where this percentage rises to 37, have acquired several millions of subjects of Russian nationality. In order to attenuate the importance of this fact, the Polish Government has officially decided to regard the population of the Eastern frontier districts (Kresy) as being of Ukrainian Nationality.

The Baltic coast-line of Russia, which, before the war, represented about 3,000 kilometres, was reduced to 130 kilometres, and Russia was deprived of all her Baltic ports with the exception of Petrograd.

The ports inherited by Lettonia do not at the present day achieve even one half of their pre-war trade; that of those ports which now belong to Esthonia is practically non-existent and the Esthonian Government lacks the means needful for the upkeep of their costly equipment.

In the autumn of 1919, the White Army of the South was in possession of a territory equal in area to that of all France. Its advance guards were within 300 kilometres of Moscow. But the winter months were to behold a complete change. At the beginning of the following year, General Denikin retired and was succeeded by General Wrangel, while the British notified the White Army of their decision to withhold any further assistance. In spite of this, and in spite of the terrific reverses which the army had recently endured, Wrangel, a commander of the highest calibre, contrived to reform the front and continued the struggle for several months longer, the efforts of the Soviets being mainly directed against Poland, which had been in a state of war with the Bolsheviks since the end of April 1920. The 12th October saw the signing of the preliminaries of peace between Poland and the Soviets, and on the last day of that month the White Army and thousands of civilian refugees left the Crimea for Constantinople and for all the hardships of exile. Thanks to the solicitude of General Wrangel and to his personal control of himself and of others, 145,000 persons were embarked in the space of two days with a degree of order almost incredible in the circumstances. At that time the numbers of the Red army exceeded five million men.

The activities of the White Armies were not inspired by any idea of a restoration, if such a word is to be interpreted in the sense of a re-establishment of the old régime. The "White Cause" aimed simply at national redress without specifying the mode whereby it was to be accomplished, and the leaders of the movement, whatever might be their personal sympathies, always let it be understood and frequently stated openly that the future life of the State should be regulated in accordance with the will of the people as a whole. The

convocation of a Constituent Assembly to that effect under one form or another, was always regarded as necessary and inevitable. This was the prominent feature of the Russian Vendée which differentiated notably from many other "counter-revolutions" known to history.

The aristocracy, the upper middle class and in general manner the former land-owning and privileged classes were far from being in preponderance, either in the direction of the movement or in the army. The latter was chiefly controlled by officers of humble origin, particularly those who had served in the war and by the Cossacks of the Don and of the Kouban. Admiral Koltchak's forces were almost exclusively composed of peasants and operatives; they suffered from a great deficiency of officers.

The "integral monarchists" find fault, even with the emigrants of the White Movement, for not having inscribed upon their flag the word "Monarchy." They are wrong. The groups to which the slogan "Monarchy" would chiefly have appealed and with which it would have been more efficacious than that of "National Renaissance," were not, at that time, either the most courageous or the most powerful among those elements that were hostile to Bolshevism. Those groups have as a whole given evidence of a visible lack of civic qualities and an obvious deficiency of the spirit of sacrifice. Numerous brilliant and heroic exceptions may serve to modify this criticism but do not invalidate the general statement.

The anti-bolshevik struggle was therefore chiefly undertaken by the middle classes who, while not definitely opposed to the idea of a return to the Monarchy, did not desire it at any cost. The circumstances in which the Revolution had occurred leave no doubt a

to the reasons for their mental attitude. The Monarchy had compromised itself during the final months of its power, and this fact was then a vivid and recent reality. Only time could hope to give to the Monarchy its correct place in the history of the Empire, whose majestic edifice has acquired a certain special splendour in the livid glow afforded by the years of terror.

Taking everything into consideration, the "liberal counter-revolution" was that which had the best chances of success.

Why then did these chances prove insufficient for the attainment of victory?

The reason must be sought in the undeniable fact that the moderation, the prudence, the circumspection and the indecision which are characteristic of liberalism and which constitute its charm and its strength in times of peace, may easily become its weakness in times of trouble.

Among the Bolsheviks the vigour which they brought to the defence of their ideas was increased tenfold by their passion for power. Among the White leaders, on the other hand, the sense of responsibility frequently interfered with the spirit of decision. General Wrangel was alone in possessing a determination and a taste for power which kept him immune from sincere but depleting hesitations.

That same sense of responsibility prevented the Whites, and particularly their leaders, from indulging in certain practices which obtained universally among the Reds: deceitful pronouncements, cruelty towards enemies, and the employment of mercenary troops such as the Chinese and Lettish battalions. All these expedients could be adopted by bolshevism, since they fell in with its doctrines; the same methods were out of the question for the Whites, since, being incompatible with

their fundamental ideas, they could only have done harm had any reluctant effort been made to adopt them.

From the first moment of their attainment of power the Bolsheviki refused to consider the existence of any other political party. The liberal counter-revolution by its very essence, repudiated such intolerance. The White Army of Siberia could not regard as enemies those moderate socialists who did it infinite harm by launching among the masses that ambiguous slogan "Neither Lenin nor Koltchak." Elsewhere, the Army of the South was perceptibly undermined by the actions of certain leaders of the Cossack Diets who, guided by their own small ambitions, sowed among the Cossack troops a certain element of mistrust with regard to the command of the Volunteer Army.

The wiser liberals, who were General Denikin's advisers, proposed that he should take measures which, while their results might have been excellent in normal times, were, in time of action, entirely deplorable. It was, for instance, considered necessary to institute a system of strict economy. It was obviously a highly commendable sacrifice on the part of the commander-in-chief to accept a salary which did not allow of his buying new boots when necessary, but the absurdly small pay received by officers at the front (and frequently only received after prolonged delay) was not favourable to their military success. Moreover, these men, reduced almost to beggary and rendered incapable of supporting their needy families, became deeply embittered. Some of them indeed ended by giving way to the temptation to loot. Everything incited them to adopt this easy but disastrous solution: their natural resentment, the example afforded by their bolshevik enemies, the daily perils to which they were exposed, the atmosphere of impurity in which they lived, and the envy and exaspera-

tion inspired in them by those who, to adopt a current expression : "drank coffee behind their backs."

Then there were other factors. Gradually, as the Army advanced and conquered territory and its victory became more probable, dubious elements in ever-increasing numbers associated themselves with the Volunteer Army with a view to obtaining lucrative posts in its administration, and particularly by means of speculation upon various provisions and merchandise : the disorganization of transport and trade had made this occupation extremely profitable. The speculation fever invaded the front ; in the turgid atmosphere of that period it required an exceptional degree of heroism to resist infection.

The front held firm for several months, and, thanks to individual exploits and courage, even succeeded in accomplishing some measure of advance, but the first serious defeat was decisive. The units of Cossacks broke up, having been undermined long since by bolshevik propaganda and by the activities of certain dishonest or misguided "Cossack politicians." The divisions in which the officers constituted the majority remained in the open, and, moreover, their morale had already been shaken. They were compelled to fall back in haste. Very soon only the Crimea remained in the hands of the volunteers. Wrangel contrived to re-organize the army upon that remnant of territory, but a relatively small base put all thoughts of a new offensive out of the question.

If the offensive of the autumn of 1919 had been sufficiently vigorous to reach Moscow, bolshevism might have been routed. There are some who blame the Allies for not having supplied General Denikin with the troops that he required. There is little doubt, in point of fact, that even a very limited measure of

support might have sufficed. The international situation, however, was an obstacle to such an eventuality. Nevertheless, the Allies, and particularly France, could have benefited to an extent which can only now be fully appreciated. But that which at the time was chiefly serious, was that the intervention which had already been announced, failed to materialize. The result was a profound disappointment which completed the collapse of the morale of the troops.

Yet another reproach has frequently been aimed at the Army : that of having failed to compound with the "Ukranian" Government of Petlioura and with the Transcaucasian republics of which Georgia was the most important. As regards these latter, the intransigence came from their side and not from that of Denikin. In these republics the power was in the hands of Socialists who beheld in the Volunteer Army a reactionary scarecrow ; they did everything in their power to render the task of the army more onerous, and notably consented to afford hospitality to nuclei of bolshevik propaganda from which agitators and money could be disseminated among the troops. The consequences of this blind policy were not long in becoming apparent : after the final collapse of the Volunteer Army, the Caucasian States survived but the space of a few weeks, with the exception of Georgia whose independent existence was prolonged for several months.

As for Petlioura, those who contemplated the possibility of his collaborating with the Volunteer Army, suffered under a complete misunderstanding. The headquarters staff of the Ukrainian separatist movement had long-standing and intimate connections with Germany and Austria, although, after the German defeat, it had sought the support of the Allies. In order to arrive at any understanding with Petlioura the Volunteer

Army would have been compelled to abandon two essential principles of its political programme: its loyalty to the Allies and the idea of a national renaissance incompatible with any dismemberment of Russia, a dismemberment which, be it said, was one of the war objectives nourished by the central Empires.

In any case, not only would collaboration with Petlioura have been contrary to the fundamental ideas of the Volunteer Army, but it would have been ineffectual into the bargain from a military standpoint. In so far as Petlioura had acquired authority over the masses, he drew that authority from a source identical with that which sustained the Bolsheviks: he put his money on the people's greed for land and promised that they should dispossess the rich landowners. The Petliourian movement, under its deceptive national aspect, had a social character identical in every respect with the vague bolshevism of the peasants: a psychological bolshevism devoid of any doctrinary content.

In these circumstances it is by no means surprising that Ukranian "separatism" should have proved incapable of any serious resistance in the face of the Red Army. It employed the same weapon as the Bolsheviks, but with less competence and determination. Bolshevik demagogy was bound to triumph over that of Petlioura.

It also got the better of the Volunteer Army, for in the final issue, it was the mistrust of the masses with regard to Denikin's political programme which gave a mortal character to those of its blemishes which we have already mentioned. During the years of civil war, the slogan, "Peace and the Land," emanating from the Bolsheviks, still found much favour among the people, and the countryside refused to associate itself with the cause of the White Armies.

CHAPTER II
THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE
BOLSHEVIK RÉGIME

I

The Administrative Organization of the U.S.S.R.

ACCORDING to its constitutional laws, the U.S.S.R. presents itself in the form of a Federation of States. Its present structure dates back to the end of the year 1922 ; there have, however, been modifications made in it since that time.

To-day, the Soviet Federation consists of seven States :

- (1) The Federative Socialist Soviet Russian Republic (F.S.S.R.R.).
- (2) The Socialist Soviet Ukranian Republic.
- (3) The White Russian Republic.
- (4) The Transcaucasian Republic.
- (5) Ouzbekistan.
- (6) Turkmenistan.
- (7) Tadjikistan.

The seven members of the Union are not upon any level of equality. The last three cities which occupy the former territory of Turkestan and of two countries under Russian protectorate in Asia (Khiva and Bokhara) were made subject, in many respects, to the authority of the "Economic Council for Middle Asia," which was only recently abolished in October 1934.

The first of the States of the Union, the "Federative Russian Republic," is itself a made-up State, but of a

construction different from that of the U.S.S.R. The main part of its territory is directly subject to the power of the government of the F.S.S.R.R., while certain other parts form so-called "autonomous republics" and "autonomous territories."

The Transcaucasian Republic, in imitation of the U.S.S.R. itself, is a confederation of three States : the Georgian, Armenian and Azerbeidjan republics, of which the first and the third also possess satellites in the shape of various autonomous territories and republics.

The remainder of the confederate republics are organized in a much simpler manner.

II

The Wheel-work of the Soviet Organisms

The initial cell of the soviet system, the Rural Soviet (Council), extends its authority over a mean of 1,700 persons. At the very heart of the Soviet itself, the delegates are mustered on a theoretical basis of one per hundred inhabitants ; nevertheless, the number of members may not be less than three or exceed fifty. According to the declaration of Molotov a few weeks ago the number of the Rural Soviets was more than 63,000 in August 1935. The dispositions of the law confer a very vast field of activity upon these Councils ; it is their duty to elect the delegates to the district Soviets which, in their turn, send their chosen candidates to the regional Soviets or those of the republics in which are elected the deputies who are to sit on the Congress of the Soviets of the U.S.S.R. Theoretically, this last is the supreme legislative organ of the Republic of the Soviets. The Congress elects its Central Executive Committee which in its turn forms its Office on the one hand and on the other the Council

of the Commissaries of the People. This last is the official Government of the U.S.S.R.

The soviet structure thus appears to be inspired by a careful application of the democratic principle, and this appearance is all the more impressive in that at each degree of the administrative hierarchy the organs of the executive power are chosen by the Assembly of the Soviets of that particular degree. In the republican, members of the U.S.S.R., for instance, the leaders of the Commissariats governing different branches of the administration are nominated by the Executive Committees elected to the Congress of the Soviets by such-and-such a republic, and the holders of these offices are in principle responsible to the Assemblies which have elected them.

In the lower degrees, in the "regions" and in the autonomous republics, the regional and republican Soviets also elect their Committees, and these latter, in their turn their Bureaux, and to the "sections" of these Bureaux belongs the control of the local nominations to their respective commissariats.

Finally, analogous organisms exist in the districts and in the towns, the only difference consisting in the fact that in such cases the sections are less developed and that each one deals with the business connected with several Commissariats.

III

The Wheel-work of the Trades Unions

The system of the trades unions in the U.S.S.R. is built upon the same model as the pyramid of the soviet organisms, and is consequently different in its principles of formation and operation from the trades syndicates of Western Countries. In "Bourgeois States" it is of

course licit to form at will syndicates in every branch of trade, and, moreover, such syndicates have in their turn the right to form groups according to their inclination. This is not the case in the U.S.S.R. Trades organization is there strictly regulated and uniform. There are in existence some 150 trades unions corresponding to the various branches of production and they are all constructed in accordance with the same scheme.

The lesser organizations are the "local sections" which sometimes coincide with one enterprise and sometimes represent two or more. The general assembly of the section nominates on the one hand its own executive in the shape of a local Committee, and on the other the delegates to the Congress of the district or town of the trades union to which it belongs. The district or town Congresses choose their Bureaux as executive organs and nominate the delegates whom they send to the regional or republican Congress of their respective trades unions. The regional or republican Congress elects its Committee and its delegates for the general Congress.

In addition to the vertical points of contact there exist horizontal liaisons at every degree of the hierarchy. Such, for instance, is the attribution of the Congresses of the trades unions of regions, of republics and of the U.S.S.R. Each of these Congresses elects permanent Bureaux.

The junction of the two systems, that of the soviet organs and that of the trades unions, is effected in a manner which is tangible in the inferior stages, as, for example, at the election of the Soviets of the towns which, from the administrative standpoint, are equivalent to one or several districts.

The "Town Soviet" is elected by the "working population" of that town. Not only do the trades

unions supply the large majority of the electors, but the electoral procedure itself is accomplished under the direction of the Bureaux or the Committees of the trades unions. Such electors as are not subject to the civic organization, lose thereby any influence upon the result of the vote.

The superior organisms of the trades unions are theoretically entirely independent of the soviet organs. But, practically speaking, the central Council of the Trades Unions, elected by the General Congress and directed by a Secretariat of six members, fills the rôle of a high-state administration and may be compared with the Ministry of Corporations in fascist Italy.

From top to bottom, in any case, the Trades organisms are frequently called upon to play the part of State administrations upon an equal footing with the soviet organisms. Moreover, both are commanded and actuated by the third system : that of the Communist Party.

IV

The Wheel-work of the Communist Party

The edifice of the Party rests upon the " cells " (now called " initial " or " basic " organizations). These are formed in every place where at least three Communists are gathered together, be it in the bosom of an administration, in an office, a school or a military unit. Each cell elects its " bureau " and also the delegates who will represent it at district or civic meetings. At these, in turn, are chosen the members of their committees and the delegates to the regional or republican meetings, which, for their part, nominate the delegates to the general Congress of the Party.

The Congress, which is supposed to be the supreme organism of the Party, nominates the Central Committee,

which in turn chooses the members of the three following offices : the general secretariat of the Party, its Political Bureau and its Organization Bureau.

In the days of Lenin the Central Committee, which consisted of fifteen secondary leaders, played a very considerable part. Nowadays, the extent of its powers has been much curtailed, and its task is practically reduced to the obligation of listening to the speech of some leader and of voting unanimously in favour of some resolution which has been carefully prepared beforehand in private by one of the more intimate and really powerful organizations such as the General Secretariat or the Political Bureau. Thus the actual importance of the Central Committee is negligible as compared with that of offices which it has itself begotten.

The Secretariat directs the work of a whole series of offices of various descriptions. Some of these, it may be noted, are entrusted with the preparation of the decisions of the Bureau of Organization concerning the nominations of candidates for all the posts, even the least prominent, in the Communist hierarchy, as well as in the soviet administration and that of the trades unions.

The choice of administrative personnel is obviously a much more difficult and important matter in the U.S.S.R. than it is in "Bourgeois States." In these latter the possession of a certain degree of education and of practical knowledge are sufficient preparation for a successful career. These qualities do not suffice in the U.S.S.R. ; they may even at times be an obstacle. It is essential before all things to have acquired the reputation of being a good Communist, to have manifested an absolute devotion to the Party and a rigorous observance of the rules of conduct imposed upon its members.

Stupendous task ! Reflection reveals it to consist of

choosing the directors of every known human activity, for do not all these belong to the State ! There is no such thing as private commerce or industry ; the production of agricultural supplies and of raw material is also under State direction. Nor are there any of those independent activities which in bourgeois countries correspond with the free professions : journalism, teaching and art are monopolized by the Communist State, and writers, artists and students are placed under the control and direction of the Party by means of the trades unions.

But how does the grip of the Party impose itself upon the elections and upon the working of the soviet and trade mechanism ?

Let us begin by examining the manner in which the elections are held at the lower strata of the soviet system, that is to say in the Rural Soviets. The rural administration is not called upon to compile a list of electors, but, on the other hand, it is obligatory to furnish lists of those who are not entitled to vote. On these lists are inscribed all those persons who might show signs of any undesirable independence. The local authorities are empowered to establish the criterion and those concerned have no means of appeal.

The sifting of the electors once accomplished, propaganda is employed upon those who will vote. In the Soviets the elections figure among the official " campaigns " of the Communist Party. The monopoly of electoral propaganda is absolute ; anyone who dared to question it would lay himself open to the most severe reprisals. But there is another factor which puts the final touch to the proceedings : in the U.S.S.R. there is no secret vote, and there are few who dare to compromise themselves by displaying a fruitless audacity and voting against the official candidate.

Nevertheless, the Party does not succeed in establishing a communist majority in the Rural Soviets, for the simple reason that its nuclei are insufficient ; there are only three or four hundred thousand Communists among the total rural population ; it is therefore hard to find more than four or five Communists in any territory subject to the authority of unrural Soviet.

The communist majority is nevertheless achieved (thanks to the same procedure) in the district Soviets, and that majority is progressively more pronounced in the higher grades of the soviet pyramid where the Party's control becomes in consequence more rigorous.

The same obtains in the case of various offices supplied by the various kinds of Soviets. Not only do the Communists fill all the important posts, but among the employees of every office or bureau, all those who are adherents of the Party form themselves into "fractions," each of which is directly subject to the authority of its own Party Committee. These "fractions" ensure the realization of all communist objectives.

Before making a decision of any importance, every soviet office, in the person of its "fraction," will submit the matter to the Party Committee under which it functions, unless indeed it has already received instructions on the subject.

Let us postulate, for instance, that it is a question of nominating a "commissary of the people" to the Financial or Agricultural Committee of an "autonomous Republic." Officially the Congress of the Soviets of that republic will select him, but the candidate's name will have been supplied to it by the competent Party Committee and practically speaking the choice will be made by the Party's Bureau of Organization.

That is the reason why the complication of the administrative structure of the U.S.S.R. and of the

sovietic wheel-work which corresponds to it is more apparent than real. Practically, all the controlling threads are in the hands of the chief Committees of the Party which are subordinated to the directing centre ; the official name of this centre is " General Congress " (with its permanent Executive Committee), but it is in reality none other than the Politbureau and the General Secretariat of the Party.

The frontiers of the circumscriptions subject to the chief committees of the Party serve to mark the true and indeed the only essential administrative division in the U.S.S.R. ; in comparison with this division, the limits of the " republics " and of the " autonomous " territories (unless they happen to correspond with the frontiers of the communist circumscriptions) have only a secondary importance.

For a long time the grip of the Party on the soviet mechanism was officially denied, but it is now openly recognized. The thesis is the following : the working masses who have been recently enfranchised require to remain under the guardianship of the Party if they are to defend themselves adequately against their " class enemies." Just as Karl Marx regarded the proletariat as the vanguard of humanity, so the bolshevist doctrine considers the Party to be the vanguard of the proletariat. This vanguard is charged with the " duty " of retaining, without any modification, the entire power of the communist State.

The last Party Congress (February 1934) officially consecrated the complete subjection of the system of sovietic administrations to the organisms of the Party. The Congress decreed the suppression of the Commissariat of labour and peasant inspection which is replaced by the Commission of Sovietic Control, and the choice of this commission, although it is attached

to the Council of the People's Commissaries, must be approved by the Party.

The seventh Congress of the Soviets, which was held at the end of January 1935, was a new and striking manifestation of the submission of the Soviet wheelwork to the lash of the Party. While the supreme legislative organ of the U.S.S.R. was completing its task, the Central Committee of the Party, on the personal initiative of Stalin, instructed the president of the Council of Commissaries of the people, Molotov, to "propose" to the Congress the project of a reform designed to revolutionize from top to bottom the very foundations of the soviet system. (The reform in question will be examined in detail in a succeeding chapter.) And the high Legislative Assembly, like a flock of sheep, unanimously acclaimed the Party's command, whereupon the Dictator allowed himself to be elected to the new Central Executive Committee of the Soviets and even went so far as to accept a position in its Bureau.

v

The Red Dictatorship

Certain admirers of the bolshevik régime, such as Pierre Dominique, take pleasure in comparing the Communist Party to a monastic order. This comparison seems, if not reckless, at any rate out of date after the revelations that have been made, not only by the enemies of the régime and by neutral observers, but also by the Communists themselves, both by those who are still attached to the official press and by those who having taken refuge abroad have published their experiences; among these latter we may mention two chekists of the "repentant" brand, one a Georgian and the other

an Armenian: Doumbadzé and Agabékov. These writers, and many others, demonstrate the extent to which the communist conscience dispenses with all moral scruples. It must however be conceded that in one respect, M. Dominique's comparison is fully justified: in no monastic order, however austere, could a more rigorous discipline be enforced.

All the efforts of the leaders are directed towards the formation of staffs as homogeneous and as pliable as possible.

This aim is immediately apparent in the system of enrolment. Every applicant is the subject of a minute investigation, and if, by reason of his mentality and his origins, he appears worthy of admission, he is granted the status of a candidate only upon condition that he is guaranteed by several members of the Party.

The recruiting of the staffs of the Party is subject to a quota and high authority determines the obligatory percentage of operatives, these being regarded as the soundest element.

The members of the Party, the candidates and the young Communists all undergo the education of the Party. A string of special schools exists for this purpose, and extends even to "academies" which hold the rank of institutions for advanced study. Nevertheless, the greater number receives its education in the "cells" by means of a method of discussion upon theses prescribed by the superior committees.

Each committee owes obedience to its leaders, not only in what concerns its work but in its private actions and in its manner of thinking. It is a special part of its duty to report to the political police any investigations which it is able to make and which may be of assistance to the G.P.U.; this without in any way exempting the members of its own family. This duty finds its best

expression in the following slogan which is much favoured by zealous Communists : " Every Communist should be a Chekist." (" Chekist"—Russian word meaning : agent of G.P.U., formerly Cheka.)

Two highly developed organisms of the Party are specially detailed to observe and estimate the quality and the degree of orthodoxy of every member. The first is the Bureau of Organization which, in collaboration with the services of the general Secretariat, controls the promotion of comrades to administrative posts ; the other is the Commission of Control, a kind of Cheka focussed upon the members of the Party, which is charged with the " purging " of its ranks, a duty which it performs with implacable severity.

Alas, we shall upon many occasions be compelled to note, in the course of our study, the deep fissures which mine the edifice of the Party ! But these are not the fault of the directors of the régime nor of any lack of vigilance on their part. They are the inevitable consequences of the doctrine itself and of the intimate essence of bolshevism.

Does the communist hierarchy really rest upon the power of the collectivities, in which all personal authority is effaced ? If such is the case, such a system of collective power appears to be without historical precedent. But reality is far from corresponding with this purely theoretical scheme. Practically, at every one of its various levels, authority pertains, not to collectivities but to individuals. These are as in the Italian fascis, the secretaries of the various committees. The Secretary General of the Party, Stalin (or, to give him his real name, Djougashvili), is the dictator of the Party and of the U.S.S.R. and in this rôle he is the successor of Lenin. It is undeniable that neither in the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. nor in the Statutes of the Party does there

exist any paragraph which justifies the assumption by the Secretary General or by any other member of the Party of dictatorial powers. Lenin, however, exercised them in his capacity of a leader who commanded the universal admiration of the Party. After his death there was contention for the supreme power. In the first instance Stalin, making common cause with Zinoviev and Kamenev, overthrew Trotsky; after which, turning upon his recent allies, he annihilated them. This struggle was enacted in the bosom of the Politbureau, and the period of the interregnum saw the apogee of the power of that organism.

Stalin's victory was much facilitated by the fact that he already held the post of Secretary General and was therefore in a particularly good position to instal his loyal friends as Secretaries of Committees.

After Stalin's triumph, the Politbureau, while remaining the most influential organism of the Party, lost none the less a great measure of its former importance.

Certain people who have fully realized the grip of the Party upon the soviet mechanism consider the Politbureau to be the real Government of the country, and regard the Council of the People's Commissaries as merely filling the office of executant of the Party's commands. Undoubtedly, among the institutions existing in the U.S.S.R. the Politbureau ranks as the most powerful. M. Bessedovsky, the former soviet diplomat, recently supplied a most picturesque description of the weekly sittings of the Politbureau, of those lengthy uninterrupted sittings in the course of which the "people's commissaries" and other soviet dignitaries, summoned to make their reports and receive their orders, patiently await their turn for admittance to the sanctuary; tortured by emotion and by hunger, they dare not depart, lest they should be unable to reply

“ present ” at the precise moment when they will hear their name uttered by the chief of the secretariat of the Politbureau. Nevertheless, this quasi-government may be regarded rather as an assembly of the dictator’s personal advisers. He himself is in no way compelled to obey the behests of this assembly ; he listens to the opinions which it advances, but when it becomes a question of decisions, these are imposed by him upon the Council, whose members, incidentally, he is at liberty to elect or to depose.

It is characteristic of any dictatorship that feels itself to be independent of any law or of any moral obligation that it should become progressively more exclusive and more arbitrary at the expense of the general rights of those who support it. Such is in fact the internal procedure that has been at work for several years past in the heart of the Party. We shall later have occasion to examine this phenomenon more closely, but let us begin by stating at once that therein may be found the true reasons for the important reform with regard to the functioning of the soviet system of which a special commission, presided over by Stalin, is at present engaged in regulating the details, with a view to its application in three years’ time. Also the commission is in no hurry. Assembled for the first time on the 7th of July, it appoints several sub-commissions ; and from then till half-way through September we hear nothing of its work.

This reform was voted on the proposition of Molotov by the Seventh Congress of the Soviets at its final sitting on the 6th of February, 1935. The Molotov motion operated a radical change in the constitutional procedure of the soviet organisms. The elections by successive stages are suppressed in favour of direct suffrage which will be applied in future, and for the first time, three

years hence. All citizens entitled to a vote will thus participate in the elections to all the organisms of the soviet system, beginning by the Soviets of villages and towns and proceeding upwards to the Central Executive Committee.

Nor does this reform confine itself to the proclamation of direct suffrage ; it also introduces suffrage that is secret and socially equal. So that if, up to the present time, all elections in the U.S.S.R. are held in the open, in future citizens will have to register a secret vote. On the other hand, the social equality of the suffrage will put an end to the privilege which has so far been enjoyed by the town Soviets as distinguished from those of the countryside in the election of Assemblies of higher status. This privilege gave to the operative representatives, in the higher grades of the soviet pyramid, a heavy preponderance over the peasant representatives. For example, at the Seventh Congress of the Soviets, as stated by Molotov himself, a peasant delegate represented 125,000 electors while an operative delegate represented only 25,000. In future, the voice of each individual elector will have the same weight.

In such conditions only one thing will in future be lacking to the complete observance of the purest Western democracy : the U.S.S.R. will still be without universal suffrage, since it is not proposed to allow access to the ballot boxes by the "non-working and suspect" elements : whose number was estimated by Molotov as slightly over two millions. To these figures must be added political prisoners and the population of the "concentration camps," that is to say, a further two millions. Thus at least four millions of adult citizens will remain without a vote even after the reform.

In order clearly to understand the fundamental motives by which Stalin was led to decide upon the

reform it is necessary briefly to outline the causes of the rupture which we have mentioned, between the head of the Party and the communist masses.

The "rank and file" of the régime are not contented; their material privileges are insufficient; the long-promised well-being fails to materialize; the country, ruined by the socialist system, provides meagre sustenance for the too numerous Party. Moreover, the masses find the communist discipline over severe and the obligations imposed upon them too heavy and too exacting; they are weary of proclaiming enthusiasm with empty bellies, weary of applauding, obeying and grovelling. The directing element, for its part, is dissatisfied with the masses, with the local committees which are too ignorant and too incapable, and which, under a mask of obsequiousness, conceal a greed for material gain allied to indifference with regard to doctrine. The leaders of the Party are only too well aware of the extent to which the subordinate committees frequently display "small-bourgeois degenerescence" (such is the official terminology) in espousing the cause of the populace in their dumb but dogged struggle against communism. More especially are the leaders displeased with the manner in which the local communist organisms handle the soviet institutions. Why?

In order to avoid confusion it is indispensable to study the activity of the soviet organisms as revealed by the press at the time of the recent elections, in November and December 1934. The reader need not be apprehensive, for the study will be a brief one, for, as is clearly demonstrated in a number of newspapers, the activity of the soviet institutions, in the majority of cases, has proved to be non-existent. Moreover, in many places, the members of the Soviets failed even to remember that they had, three years earlier, had the good fortune

to become deputies. It can thus easily be understood that, in such circumstances, the electors remained in ignorance of the identity of the candidates whom they had elected in 1931.

This situation caused an infinitude of trouble to those who were desirous of organizing the pre-electoral meetings prescribed by the law, at which the members of the Soviets were supposed to give reports of their activities. It was impossible to discover any records of the "instructions" drawn up in 1931 by the electors, or rather on their behalf, for the guidance of the deputies. In one Soviet, these instructions, pasted up on the wall, had been covered by a new wallpaper; elsewhere, the instructions, together with other documents, had been sent to a factory as waste paper. It sometimes happened, as at Baku, that this precious document, leaf by leaf, had been dismembered so that various certificates could be written upon the blank reverse of the pages.

Not only had the instructions vanished, but in some cases the deputies themselves could not be discovered. A typical case is related by the *Izvestia*, of November 27th, 1934. In this case it is not a question of some remote village, but of the town of Stalinabad, the capital of the confederated republic of Tadjikistan. The Soviet of the town of Stalinabad had been dissolved by the Central Executive Committee of Tadjikistan; in its place had been created a "Bureau of Organization," which was itself dissolved shortly afterwards. Thereupon followed the electoral period and it became necessary for the Soviet of the town to make its report to the electors. A hunt was promptly made for the list of members of the Soviet; it had vanished and it proved impossible to retrieve it! The deputies themselves judged it wisest to lie low and three reporters were hurriedly appointed. Completely ignorant of the

matter in hand, they tackled the situation by inveighing against the vanished Soviet. This dissolved Soviet, they declared, had failed to ensure the realization of the views of the Party ; it had dissociated itself from the people ; it had not placed itself at the head of the workers of the town and of the district ; it had neither wished nor attempted to mobilize the masses for the decisive struggle against the resistance of the enemy classes and their agents.

The paragraph that follows this declaration is of so rich a flavour that we cannot resist appending a translation as faithful as that which we have given of the preceding sentences : "All these circumstances only serve to demonstrate yet again what enormous possibilities are afforded by the system of the Soviet régime and what prodigious successes might have been achieved if the work had been carried out in a regular manner."

So far as we are concerned we are permitted to assume that the populace does not see eye to eye with this point of view. A host of facts combine eloquently to prove to us that the people as a whole have arrived at a full understanding of the total insignificance, inconsistency and general inadequacy of the Soviets. As far back as in 1931, the elections had been marked by the desperate struggle of a multitude of persons who found themselves excluded from voting on the pretext of classifying them as "Koulaks" or "non-workers," and who defended their right to participate in the elections. Nothing of this description occurred in 1934 ; the elections were regarded by everyone as a tedious and useless imposition.

Official utterances do not fail, it is true, to assure us that the greater part of the electors had attended electoral meetings. But we are aware that this was a

duty entrusted to the subordinate organisms of the Party, and we also know that in all cases where unimaginative communist committees had failed to impose penalties or to forge the figures, the records of attendance never exceeded 10 or 15 per cent, and the explanation of these facts given by the Soviet press was an honest and truthful one: the insufficient activity of the Party organisms. For these latter, matters were frequently made very uncomfortable. *The Dawn and the East* (No. 33, 1935), which is published at Tiflis, relates in a correspondence emanating from Baku the following revolting story: at the time of the last elections, the secretary of the Town Soviet, the chief of the electoral offices of the newspaper *The Working Man of Baku*, and other officials had given the figure of 25 per cent as that of the attendance at the polling booths; the office of the communist committee of Baku failed to reveal the "anti-revolutionary actions" of these individuals. It was not until two months later that the Communists of the Central Executive Committee of the Republic of Azerbeidjan put the cap on the situation by announcing that the number of voting electors was 94.3 per cent and banishing from the ranks of the party those Communists who had been "guilty of calumny." Now with all due respect to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Azerbeidjan, we believe that of the two figures 25 and 94.3, the former is the more exact and that the chastised Communists fell victims to their own veracity.

In places where the local communist committees displayed special energy (and also, it must be conceded, brilliant intelligence) the results can only be described as shattering: at Gorokhovetz 117 per cent and at Kharkoff 123 per cent of the electors had attended the electoral meetings!

Let it be noted by way of parenthesis that the matter seems to be no better now, for in the last days of August 1935, it was impossible to ascertain who elected the 15 members of the same Town Soviet of Kharkoff (*Pravda* of 2 September 1935). The Kharkoff's Committee of the Party was therefore punished.

In the light of these facts, we shall be better able to understand the motives for the reform. The local communist committees had crushed the Soviets, had reduced them to nothing instead of animating them and turning them into useful servants : at the electoral meetings they had assembled from 10 per cent to 123 per cent of the electors ; too frequently the personal candidatures nominated by the communist organisms proved to be disastrous. In the town of Troitzk there occurred an incredible thing : on the suggestion of the communist group of the Health Office a certain Molokova was elected as a member of the Soviet, and this candidate happened to be a nun !

It was obvious that there were small grounds for complacency.

And so the principle of equal suffrage which puts operatives and peasants upon an equal footing and serves, actually, to cement the disgrace of the poilus of the régime, of those operatives who constitute elsewhere the majority of the subordinate communist committees. It is a disgrace which is very skilfully imposed, since it is camouflaged under the demagogic appearance of favours offered to the peasant populace as a corollary to collectivization.

Nor is the principle of secret suffrage less demagogic. It is designed to reawaken the interest of the population in the elections. On the other hand, it is officially stated that the secret suffrage will "shake up the bureaucratic elements," which "bureaucratic elements"

are, of course, the subordinate committees of the Party. They are expected to give evidence of a more sustained vigilance and of a greater discernment. Does there remain any aspect from which the new project may be dangerous to the leaders of the Party? Most assuredly not! If the voting is to be secret, electoral propaganda is free, but only for the Communists. Their enemies have no possible means of organization. Finally, in case of emergency, nothing is easier than to dissolve, under the flimsiest pretext, any undesirable Soviet? A proceeding which has obtained heretofore. But it is unlikely that such a need should frequently arise. There is little doubt that as a general rule the electors will vote meekly for the candidates proposed by the Party, more especially as they will be aware that these candidatures emanate from high authority.

And why from high authority? Therein lies the secret of this principle of direct suffrage. We have seen that up to the present the picking of the delegates to be sent to the higher storeys of the Soviet pyramid was accomplished at each step of the electoral ladder: it formed a part of the duties of the subordinate communist committees. We have also seen that the results of this practice were the reverse of encouraging. Well, this task will in future be undertaken by the high authority of the Party. Doubtless the local committees will be invited to nominate candidates; they will, at the proper time, submit these nominees to the approval of headquarters; the "Bureau of Organization" of the Party will have every facility for verifying and for "purging" the lists of candidates, and finally these lists will be "proposed" to the electors, who will be called upon to vote on the basis of a "direct, secret and equal poll."

This, then, is the real meaning of the reform: in

place of the "communist democracy" which is the aspiration of the "grey masses" of the members of the Party, but which might prove to be fraught with dangers, the Dictator grants an inoffensive "soviet democracy" which is the purest fiction.

Nor is there any neglect of propaganda. Molotov (who must have enjoyed himself at that moment) stated, when announcing the reform, that: "While the bourgeois countries are engaged in liquidating what remains of the electoral rights of their citizens, the Soviet Union draws progressively closer to the abolition of all restrictions upon universal suffrage. . . ."

In reality, the reform served only to consolidate the grip of the leaders of the Party upon the Soviet mechanism, by restraining the authority of the subordinate communist committees. It is interesting to note that the Moscow press does not deny this fact. It states, with an inversion of the most elementary logic, that: "The ulterior development of the soviet democracy will reinforce the proletarian dictatorship." Such was the statement made by the *Troud* when commenting upon the reform. If this slogan fails to conform with logic, it fits in very perfectly with one of the most ingenious maxims expressed by Stalin, namely, that the success of socialism and of "society without classes" should correspond with the reinforcement of the dictatorship of the proletariat. One is led to inquire by what means a class dictatorship can develop in a "society without classes"? We may however accept the fact that the reality presents no such complicated problem: there is no question of classes or of dictatorship by any one class; we are dealing only with the personal dictatorship of Stalin!

* * * * *

In the conditions of such a dictatorial régime the

rôle of the International Committee is necessarily modified.

In principle this institution should be the directing organism of the international federation of the communist parties throughout the entire world. The Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. is officially only a "section" of the Third International, and this section is represented in the International Committee upon an equal footing with the Communist Parties of all other countries. Nevertheless, the reality is entirely different. The "Section" of the U.S.S.R. is the only one in possession of large material resources, for it wields the power of a vast country. It is therefore perfectly natural that it should not be submissive to the International Committee but that the contrary should obtain; that it should, as elsewhere, be the sustaining and commanding element, supporting and directing the foreign "sections" of the Third International. We have seen an example of that in August 1935 when the Seventh Congress of the Third International decided to follow the same "policy of the concentration of all anti-fascist powers" which Stalin chose more than a year ago. The International Committee is actually one of the most important offices controlled by the red dictator. It is pre-eminently designed to direct communist action abroad and to hasten, by every means in its power, the coming of world revolution. Moreover, the International Committee exercises the functions of an advisory organ to the Politbureau in questions of foreign politics. We are informed, by the statements made by the communist leaders themselves, that on more than one occasion grave decisions in the field of foreign politics have been made by the Politbureau after consultation with the Executive branch of the International Committee, without asking the advice of

the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, and even without the knowledge of the Council of the People's Commissars, which is the official Government of the U.S.S.R.

The leadership of the Third International is invariably entrusted to an intimate collaborator of the Red dictator.

* * * * *

As a sequel to the study of the manner in which public power is exercised in the U.S.S.R. one is tempted to compare the governmental mechanism of that country with a certain child's toy: its eggs are accurately encased one within another. The exterior egg consists of the soviet system and the trades unions, both of which would appear to ensure for the people the maximum of participation in the Government, and which theoretically admit of the widest local autonomy. But this first egg is only a camouflage. Beneath its fragile shell lurks another egg of much greater solidity: this is the organism of the Party, a homogeneous organism, both disciplined and privileged, which controls all those other offices whose independence is purely fictitious. The second egg would appear to be an oligarchy exercised by the Party, but it is itself a shell which encloses yet another which is a solid substance: this core is the régime of the Red dictatorship, a dictatorship which is absolute, centralized and bureaucratic and which admits of neither national rights, local autonomy or individual liberties.

The Red dictatorship as at present exercised by Stalin ¹

¹ There exists a brilliant study of Stalin's personality emanating from the pen of one of Russia's finest writers, M. Aldanov. There are also two volumes, both entitled *Stalin*, of which the first was written by M. Essad Bey and the second by M. Dmitrievsky, formerly a high bolshevik official and who finally broke away from the Soviets. There is in addition to these an interesting appreciation of Stalin in a book by Boris Bajanov, formerly secretary

is effectively the most doctrinaire that can well be conceived ; it seeks to command and regulate in every domain of the life of the State, not only the material, but also the moral and intellectual existence of individuals in accordance with the dogma of the Party.

The governments of modern States, whatever may be their political programme, are chiefly concerned with the well-being of their peoples, thus conforming to the old latin maxim : *Salus rei publicæ suprema lex est*. Such considerations are essentially absent from the present government of the U.S.S.R.¹ The communist doctrine aims, it is true, at human happiness.

to the dictator, who has also left the bolshevik ranks (*Editions de France*). Finally, an entire volume devoted to Stalin and written by M. Bessedovsky in collaboration with the repentant French communist M. Laporte, has been published by the Editions de la Revue Française.

¹ This state of affairs is often misunderstood, unrecognized or ignored by Western public opinion, which is too easily led to see in the activities of the Soviet Government the actions of a "Red imperialism," the direct heir to the imperialism of Tzarist Russia. The abuse of the term "imperialism," as indeed of any other term, leads only to a confusion of ideas and is detrimental to clear thought. "Imperialism" is the will to material and spiritual extension which is proper to every great nation. Undoubtedly the Red dictatorship also aims at extension, but in this aim the nation which it has contrived to dominate has no say. "Red Extension," in other words, the world revolution, dreamed of by the Communist International, is in no sense the extension of a nation : it is the extension of an idea, of a religion if one cares to consider it as such, and also of an essentially international power.

It is this point, which is of capital importance, which remains insufficiently realized by Western public opinion. And this fact is comprehensible, after all, since even the most advanced and modern public opinion remains, none the less, to some extent, conservative and unenterprising. It is difficult to desert long-established notions, and this is probably the reason why, for many years, the Western world has persisted in regarding the Government of the U.S.S.R. as a *Russian* Government, even though it may be rather peculiar and of doubtfully legitimate origin.

Nevertheless, such happiness, interpreted in any case as being a purely material happiness, must be obtained for humanity as a whole, and not for this or that nation. Moreover, the interests of existing nations and states present, according to the communist doctrine, the greatest obstacles to the transformation of the world as they visualize and desire it. All the states, nations and religions now in existence must be abolished and suppressed, and in this respect no compromise can be admitted.

VI

The Lenin-Marxist Communist Doctrine

Every government is inspired, in the exercise of its power, by certain political ideas. In those modern States which are under the parliamentary régime, political programmes are the cause of the rise and fall of this or that minister. However, in such States there is a limit set to the influence of political action; it may even be said that that policy is considered the best which seeks to limit as much as possible its own field of activity and succeeds in imposing only the indispensable minimum of its influence upon the spiritual and material life of its citizens.

In the U.S.S.R. the situation is exactly the contrary, in that the communist power has subordinated itself to a political conception which, by its very nature, aims at an absolute domination and desires to regulate, down to the most minute detail, every aspect of public and private life. Even then, this doctrine is not satisfied. It is not contented with the control of actions; it wishes to govern also the mind. The term "ideocracy" which has recently been applied to define such a State, is a fair description of this particularity.

Nothing is new under the sun : history affords us several examples of ideocracies of which the most complete was the theocratic State of the Middle Ages. Modern science came to regard a State of this type as irrevocably out of date and classified it in the archives of history ; it was considered that for several centuries past, only two other types of State remained in the field of possibility, namely, autocracy and democracy,¹ whose mutual rivalry must necessarily lead to the triumph of the latter. Yet our own times have seen the unexpected renaissance of ideocracy in the forms of communism and fascism, and these visitants from the past have shown themselves to be particularly pretentious and aggressive.

What, then, is the "idea" at the roots of communist "ideocracy" ?

It lies in the so-called "economic materialism" conceived and scientifically "boomed" by Karl Marx.

¹ In order clearly to define the fundamental difference between the three types of State which are here in question, we feel it may be useful to mention the point of view expressed by Professor Timashev, who, takes as a criterion of classification the relationships which come into being in a State between the Government on the one hand and the public opinion of the country on the other. Professor Timashev observes that autocracy neglects public opinion and frequently has recourse to reprisals with a view to hindering and even to stifling its manifestations ; a democratic government, on the contrary, is generally under the ægis of public opinion, which is precisely the element that determines ministries. As for ideocracy, this, following the example of democracy, recognizes the importance of public opinion, but, far from obeying it, seeks to dominate it. It undertakes the task of "organizing" public opinion and using it as its spokesman. This is what is taking place in fascist Italy and also, in an infinitely cruder form, in the land of the Soviets. There the Communist Government is much addicted to the use of the term "soviet public opinion." This is indeed a most convenient term, especially for foreign use, but it is none the less the purest nonsense, for such opinion is automatically faithful and obedient to the commands of the Party.

The marxist doctrine contains a singular alliance of philosophical, economical, historical, sociological and political theses ; nevertheless the economic element occupies the preponderating position and serves as the point of departure.

Substantially, Karl Marx asserts that, throughout the course of history, all those phenomena which have characterized human life—religions, beliefs, morality, customs, sciences, the arts, etc., etc., are the direct consequences of the manner in which, at different periods, economic production has been organized. The organization of productive activity, or, to put it otherwise, the distribution of the means of production, is interpreted as being the one and only factor which determines all the rest while itself remaining exempt from any external influence. This factor undeniably evolves, but its evolution is independent : it obeys only internal laws. As against this characteristic, all other manifestations of the life of the world are but the simple consequences of this evolution, which is regarded as inevitable, necessary and irresistible.

In his effort to schematize the evolution of the economic factor (in the sense which we have just now explained), Marx has established several stages or periods through which this evolution must pass, and to each stage corresponds, of immutable necessity, a certain structure of society with its own particular features.

Setting aside periods of transition, Marx has distinguished four fundamental stages :

(1) Primitive Communist economy, in which the means of production (primitive utensils) are in the collective possession of small societies.

(2) Feudal economy, in which there exists an entire lengthy hierarchy of proprietors of the means of pro-

duction, so that each link of this hierarchy may in itself be regarded as a means of production belonging to an overlord of a higher rank.

(3) Capitalist economy, in which all humanity is divided into two unequal classes: the bourgeoisie which annexes all the means of production while remaining exempt from all personal effort, and the proletariat which is compelled to supply the labour in order to actuate the means of production which do not belong to it; the proletariat is deprived of all the fruits of such labour with the exception of a minimum salary.

(4) Finally, Socialist economy, of which Marx prophesied the imminence and which effaces the age-old barrier between the exploiters and the exploited; as in the period of primitive communism, the means of production become the property of society as a whole, with the difference that there are no longer any small groups or isolated communes, but a universal society embracing all humanity.

In his analysis of economical, sociological and historical processes, Karl Marx made use of what is known as the "dialectical" method¹; according to him, each phenomenon passes through three phases, namely, the initial phase or "thesis," in which the characteristic features of the phenomenon are distinctly revealed but are countered by opposing influences, whose action reaches its apogee in the second phase or "antithesis," only to be later absorbed and to yield its place at the final phase which is the "synthesis" or corollary of the said phenomenon and which supervenes when this

¹ A method which Marx borrowed ready-made from Hegel, while, on the contrary, entirely changing the master idea of Hegel's philosophy. Hegel, of course, regards all the phenomena of life as a gradual revelation of an absolute Being.

latter emerges victoriously from those weaknesses and imperfections that are inherent in its earlier phases.

In applying the dialectical method to the study of the economic factor, Marx held that the succession of the four great periods in the economic organization of humanity results from a natural and quasi-automatic evolution. The first period in itself builds up the principles of the second ; these principles precipitate a struggle against the dominating elements and end by overcoming it, but at that moment the tentative shoots of the third period are already making their appearance. Thus each period prepares the way for that which succeeds it, until the final triumph of marxist socialism which is the supreme summit of all evolution, the earthly paradise.

The marxist doctrine therefore postulates the blossoming of each new period as a natural, almost spontaneous modification ; as soon as the one has ripened in the womb of the other, the necessary effort for its expulsion is hardly in excess of that whereby the chicken emerges from the egg.

It is precisely in this one respect that Lenin was compelled from the very first to amend the marxist theory. What were his reasons for so doing ?

His reasons may be found in the fact that in the course of the half-century that divides the world of Lenin from that of Marx the " inevitable contradictions " of the capitalist régime, instead of ceaselessly increasing as was postulated in the marxist doctrine, tended, on the contrary, markedly to decrease. Marx assumed that the poverty of the proletariat would augment proportionately and progressively with the prosperity of the bourgeoisie until the development of this process should bring about the fall of capitalism. Facts have given the lie to Marx's prognostics : in the course of

the nineteenth century (and particularly during its latter half) the average of net salaries (that is to say of salaries estimated in conjunction with the cost of living) has doubled.

Marx's disciples attempted in the first place to prop up the master's tottering theory by quoting the "dialectical" method. They had recourse to this celebrated "antithesis," as a means of explaining phenomena that did not square with Marx's provisions. By this expedient they contrived to delay to some extent the sunset of marxism. Marx's immediate successors, the theorists of contemporary socialism in the west, ended by deserting marxism in order to seek elsewhere for the foundations of modern socialism.

The Russian social-democrats, and more especially their maximalist left-hand section, or in other words, the bolshevists, alone remained faithful to Marx, but in order to do so, it was found necessary to introduce amendments into Marx's theories. This task was undertaken by Lenin.

Lenin has, as it may be termed, militarized the marxist conception. He has set in the foreground certain aspects of his doctrine, and left others in the shade in such a manner that the entire theory has undergone transformation. According to Lenin, the succession of "economic periods" does not occur spontaneously; it is in every case the result of the struggle between the classes, a struggle which Marx had mistakenly regarded as being a symptom of economic transformations rather than their motive power.

Thanks to this "adjustment" certain logical difficulties were overcome; the amelioration of the conditions of the proletariat under the capitalist régime could be interpreted as a notable example of the result of the struggle for freedom on the part of the working

classes ; as a partial victory on the road to eventual conquest.

The capital importance ascribed by Lenin to class warfare caused him to insist, much more than Karl Marx had ever done, upon the need for an international organization, solid and powerful, of the proletarian class. Undoubtedly Marx had already preached an international entente of the proletariat over the frontiers of those States whose structure, necessarily determined by the existing economic régime, used it solely as an ingenious instrument of bourgeois exploitation. Marx had also believed, as we have already stated, that the advent of the socialist era would bring with it the abolition of all those barriers which divide humanity ; first and foremost would disappear the barriers of nationalism, or in other words, all existing States, which were totally incompatible with the socialist concept as expounded by Marx. Lenin's amendment, however, gave a new aspect to the common aspect of the international proletariat. It became an imperious need, a thing absolutely indispensable for the triumph of marxist socialism. In these conditions, one single government and a severe discipline became essential, as did the privileged rôle of the controlling groups representing the Communist Party as the "vanguard of the proletariat" in all countries. The central direction was created in the form of the Communist International, the "Headquarters Staff of the World Revolution."

Such was the development which Lenin had already brought to bear upon the doctrines of Marx before the Revolution of 1917.

Revolutionary events soon imposed upon him new efforts if they were to be interpreted from the standpoint of the marxist doctrine.

According to Marx's theory, the fall of capitalism was bound to occur as a corollary of those inextricable antagonisms inherent in the "reign of the bourgeoisie" it was thus natural to seek for the immediate appearance of this phenomenon in those countries where capitalism had been long established and developed. And yet the Revolution had its beginnings in one of the countries in which capitalist expansion was most behindhand. A reason must be found to explain this fact.

With this end in view, Lenin made a simultaneous discovery of two excellent reasons.

He declared that in 1917 there had not been one revolution, but two distinct revolutions. The first, that which occurred in March, had marked the end of feudalism and the beginning of the capitalist-bourgeois régime. In normal conditions the capitalist period would have been enduring, but, in view of certain circumstances, events took a relatively rapid course which enabled the November Revolution, eight months later, to make an end of capitalism and initiate the era of socialism. An evolution so vertiginous, while being exceptional, is undeniably legitimate, since Marx's doctrine does not provide any fixed ratio of progression for the stages of economic evolution.

Let us now set forth the two reasons adduced as permitting the limitation of eight months' duration to the Capitalist phase in Russia :

(1) The presence of a leader of genius in the person of Lenin himself.

(2) The peculiarities of the Russian peasant economy which had, as it happened, formerly aroused the curiosity of Karl Marx.

Marx had heard of the Russian régime of peasant communities (the "mir") from the Russian revolutionaries.

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tionaries of his time, and notably from Bakunine,¹ and these informants were inclined to perceive in this phenomenon the proof of a very special disposition in the Russian people towards socialism. Marx was only partially impressed by this idea, but nevertheless, he does in some of his writings put forward the supposition, without insisting upon it, that the Russian "mir," which had been formed under the feudal régime, might possibly lead to the socialist régime without passing through the stage of capitalism.

Before the revolution, the Russian social democrats, both menshevik and bolshevik, carefully ignored this timid hypothesis, since it emphasized the position of their adversaries, the "populists."² On the other hand, after the bolshevik *coup d'état*, Lenin found in it precisely what he required for the "scientific" explanation of the upheaval which had overtaken Russia.

¹ M. Anatole de Mouzie mentions it in his work *Petit Manuel de la Russie Nouvelle*, and the study of those revolutionary Russian doctrines which preceded bolshevism and of their representatives is the most complete, useful and accurate part of that volume. As against this, the pages relating to the old régime on the one hand and to the soviet régime on the other contain many very sweeping statements. For instance, the author states that Russia had attained the summit of her power under Catherine II and her culminating apogee of culture under Alexander I. In order to be accurate, the word "decline" should be substituted for "summit" and "apogee."

As for accuracy of detail, it suffices to mention that, according to the author, Rasputin was killed "in the palace where Ivan the Terrible used to play chess." St. Petersburg, however, was founded in 1703, the ground upon which it was to be built, a hundred and twenty years after Ivan's death, being situated at a distance of about six hundred kilometres from Moscow, the capital in which Ivan the Terrible died in 1584.

² See the work by M. Anatole Mouzie already referred to, and for a more detailed study, the volume written by General Spiridovitch, *Histoire du Terrorisme Russe*, translated from the Russian by Vl. Lazarevski (Payot, Paris).

Obviously, the Russian Revolution must be regarded as the first act of the world revolution. There was no possible doubt that this latter must promptly follow. Any hesitation in this respect was qualified as the rankest heresy.

And yet months and then years elapsed without providing the hoped-for solution. Then, without lessening his efforts to hasten the advent of the universal revolution, Lenin found himself obliged to erect a new theory designed to support "scientifically" the possibility of a "revolution in one country." This was at the same time the "theory of the socialist state."

As we already know, the marxist doctrine did not foresee the eventuality of such a State. Existing States were in fact regarded as "the organizations of bourgeois domination." The era of socialism was to suppress them by means of the abolition of class divisions and of the frontiers which divided peoples.

But what was to be done if States persisted in surviving?

Lenin decided that in such conditions, the socialist State which, provisionally, occupies the territory of one given country, must be organized in such a manner as to combat, with all possible energy, the long-standing social armature which subsists beyond its frontiers. It must be the antithesis of a bourgeois State, and must therefore itself be a "class State," with the essential difference that it must attribute to the Communist Party all the power as "vanguard of the proletariat" and destroy not only the actual bourgeoisie but also the "bourgeois spirit" in all its manifestations: religions, laws, sciences, morals, arts, individual freedom, etc., etc.

This general concept of the socialist State was for Lenin the point of departure for his future work which

was designed to regulate, in conformity with the lenino-marxist dogma, all aspects of State life and of "socialized" private life. A characteristic trait of the "ideocratic" régime must here be noted: even those details which in "bourgeois countries" are the subject of administrative regulation, from the moment they had been considered by Lenin and "hooked on" to the doctrine, became in themselves a part of the dogma.

After Lenin's death, this dogmatic business ceased for a time, although the leaders of higher rank permitted themselves interpretations and commentaries on every occasion when the requirements of current policy caused them to make an obvious departure from leninist principles. It was, however, agreed that such zig-zagging in practice should not invalidate so much as a comma of the leninist-marxist doctrine; current policy was supposed to remain scrupulously faithful to that doctrine and any communists who contested it were accused of "digression" and ruthlessly banished without the slightest regard for their proven merits; such was the fate of Trotsky, of Rakovsky and of many others.

Of late, however, Stalin has not been content with the mere rôle of an undisputed dictator. He wishes to be recognized as the Mahomet of communism in imitation of Lenin and of Marx. The servility which has developed in the Party—a direct consequence of its arbitrary discipline—ensures his success, although his elementary education, devoid of all theoretic "luggage," in no way corresponds with his ambitions.

* * * * *

The leaders of the Party, as we have already stated, have banded themselves together in the service of the communist doctrine whose precepts they seek to impose upon all humanity. Such is the outstanding feature

of the "ideocratic" régime, of which we have found an historical example in the theocracy of the Middle Ages.

Does the brief study which we have just completed authorize us to maintain this comparison between modern communism and the theocratic State of the Middle Ages?

It would seem that the answer is in the affirmative.

The analogy appears under quite another aspect if one takes note of the manner in which communism militates against religion. It is not content to fight God; it claims to set itself in His place. And then, what, after all, is "sovietism"? It is not only a system of organisms with various administrative attributions, set in motion by the Party, just as a machine is set in motion by an electric motor. Sovietism, from a social standpoint, is a skilful organization of moral compulsion, a species of collective training. The Communists undergo this training in their "cells": these same Communists and almost the entire population in innumerable "committees." Each individual is compelled to participate in endless sittings and meetings; there is an appearance of free discussion, but in point of fact all decisions are dictated by the Party, or must in any case be in accordance with doctrine: everyone understands that nothing can be hidden from the vigilant and implacable eye. It was with justification that a journalist who escaped from the U.S.S.R. spoke of the "magic" of the soviet meetings: these are not mere discussions but "black masses" designed to propagate and confirm the faith of the "believers in godlessness" who take part in them.

The question therefore arises: is education by collective hypnosis efficacious? Do not the fear of reprisals and selfish considerations, particularly powerful there

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where, amid general poverty, the State is the only distributor of material goods, lead people to proclaim a faith which they do not possess? And, moreover, have not these same motives a secret eloquence and power for the members of the Party, even for its leaders?

We are here led to remark upon the considerable difference which exists between present-day communism and the theocracy of the past. This last, whatever may have been its political methods, was inspired by divine commands; it was founded upon Christian dogma, a dogma eternal and immutable. We need not even emphasize the fact that the dogma upon which theocracy was based corresponded to the best aspirations of the human soul and appealed to all those highest principles which communism has ridiculed and trampled underfoot. What concerns us here is to realize the unassailable stability of the dogma of theocracy.

Communism, on the other hand, possesses no solid ideological foundations. The Party may spend its breath asserting the continuity of its doctrine. We have seen that Lenin, in his efforts to prove that historical events conformed to Marx's theory, was compelled to begin by maiming that theory. The Red gospel is thus subject to pruning and addition, and these are applied daily. Is it possible, in such conditions, to affirm its infallibility, without giving proof of hypocrisy, hallucination or unintelligence?

We therefore feel ourselves justified in stigmatizing the communist ideocracy as a *false* ideocracy.

It is false because its "idea" is false.

It is doubly false, and its falsity is progressively increasing, because, since the death of Lenin, the consciousness of this falsity does not cease to develop even among the priests of the communist religion.

They persist fiercely in their efforts to impose their dogma upon the masses, both in Russia and elsewhere but this dogma is no longer even the lenino-marxist dogma, it is the "general aim of the Party." And let it be added—as an eloquent and very significant fact—that the modifications which are constantly being made in the Red dogma, as indeed the whole aim of Red proselytism, are no longer dictated by any true belief in the "idea," but exclusively by the desire, by the passion, to maintain the power of the Party and of its Dictator over a sixth of the globe, and to extend it over the entire world.

With this end in view three powerful weapons are constantly sharpened to a keen edge: the Red army, the G.P.U. and propaganda.

VII

The Red Army

About five years ago the arrest of the "Red general" Rutine caused a sensation in the U.S.S.R., although an arrest is there so common an event that it has generally ceased to provoke emotion! But Rutine was a communist authority, a "*chevalier sans reproche*" of the "general aims of the Party." In other words, he was a loyal slave of the Dictator.

What had occurred may be described as follows:

In the course of an intimate conversation with Comrade Blucher, another prominent "Red general" commanding a soviet army, Rutine had touched upon a delicate topic, confiding to his friend that "the situation must be saved and reflection must be given to the methods which should be adopted against the five-year madness."

Blucher, however, who had long felt himself to be the

victim of Stalin's animosity, made no reply to Rutine's effusions. He lost no time, however, in reporting them to Vorochilov, the people's commissar for war, so that this latter might bring his friend's subversive statements to the knowledge of the Dictator. The arrest followed promptly.

Did Blucher betray his friend? Undeniably, if one regards the situation from the standpoint of "bourgeois" morality; but in the U.S.S.R. the standards are entirely different, as is the logic. Treachery is but a natural consequence of provocation. It is, moreover, extremely likely that Rutine's frankness was in itself merely a trap set to invite his friend to compromise himself so that a denunciation might secure the goodwill of Stalin. Who can tell? The affair might even end in the informer obtaining the command vacated by his "lost" friend!

This episode is wonderfully characteristic of the daily life of the Red Army and demonstrates the extent to which it is governed by communist principles. How indeed should it be otherwise? Do not the masters of the U.S.S.R. strain every nerve to "condense" the communist elements in the army and to purge it of "doubtful" units?

The first article of the law with regard to military service states: the armed defence of the U.S.S.R. is exclusively entrusted to the working population. Consequently those citizens who do not vote in the soviet elections are not admitted to the army. Now, the number of adult citizens who have been deprived of their right to vote is officially estimated to be nearly two millions. To these must be added the population openly "suspect" in the eyes of the Party; that is to say, those imprisoned, deported or employed on hard labour, and in their case the unmerited statistics are

unfortunately lacking ; it must however be assumed judging from indirect information, that this category also includes some two million men. Equal and compulsory military service for all citizens, therefore, has no existence in the U.S.S.R.

Nor does this "legal elimination" suffice ; there must be added to it an "actual" elimination, the U.S.S.R. thus deliberately practising the "proletarianization" and the "communization" of the army. Both these aims, for that matter, are included in one and the same task : that of forming groups with a strong contingent of operatives.

For several years past, the obligatory minimum of operatives has been exceeded ; in 1931 their number constituted one quarter of the effective forces of the army and in February 1934 it had risen to 45·8 per cent. Naturally they also form the main part of the communist element in the troops. The communist percentage had constantly increased up to 1934. In 1925 it stood at 19 per cent, while on January 1st, 1934, Vorochilov, in his report to the XVIIth Congress of the Party, estimated it at 49·5 per cent (the *Red Star* of February 4th, 1934). The Soviet's having in 1934 made an appreciable increase of their effective forces, it may be that this percentage of operatives and Communists may be founded thereon, but it remains nevertheless very considerable.

The communist element is even stronger among the Red officers ; this is the result of the compulsory percentage of Communists among the youth of the country who are admitted to the military schools. On leaving these schools, these young men replace those officers who have not the label of the Party. Thanks to this method, three-quarters of the officers are now adherents of the Party or of the young Communists : this propor-

tion is increased to four-fifths in the case of the junior officers.

Nor does the solicitude of the Party for the Red Army end here. There exists an entire system of superintendence which guarantees the loyalty of the groups. To put it more accurately, there are several different systems which supplement one another.

The communist effectives of the army in themselves represent a system well arranged and well governed by the Political Directorate of the Army. This Political Directorate is subject on the one hand to the head of the Red Army, Vorochilov (who is at the same time one of the highest communist dignitaries in his capacity of a member of the Politbureau), and on the other hand it is subordinated to the Central Committee of the Communist Party. The Political Directorate in its turn crowns the pyramid of the communist organisms corresponding to all the units of the army—military circumscriptions, army corps, divisions, etc., down to the “communist cells” of the companies. A detailed instruction, elaborated by the leaders of the Party, defines the obligations of each of these organisms and lays down their duties.

About half the effective forces are thus grouped and supervised by means of the hierarchy of the Party, but the control is further effectuated by a special military hierarchy. These consist of the “political commissars” and “political instructors” of various ranks: these exercise authority over all the troops, whether or not adherents to the Party; the power of the leaders of units is thus considerably curtailed. The “political commissars” are trusted henchmen of the régime and are for the most part operatives. A vast system of special schools has been created in order to raise, so far as is possible, their level of general and military culture.

As the division of power between the commanders of units and these commissars has revealed itself as the source of numerous conflicts, an attempt has been in process for several years past to unite these two functions in the same individual, provided the individual in question inspires the entire confidence of the higher powers in the Party.

As a third means of control there exist the "procurers" of the war tribunals. These posts are also entrusted to old members of the Party; the question of legal instruction in their case does not even arise. They can therefore hardly be termed the servants of the law, but are more properly authorized spies, charged with collecting complaints and denunciations. These are certainly not lacking and their number augments with the development of the "communist morale"; at present they reach a total of over 2,000 a month.

The fourth method of supervision is represented by the Party's commissions of control and the fifth by the military sections of the G.P.U. Both of these are independent of the military hierarchy.

Thanks to this complicated combination, the Party and the Dictator hold the army under the vigilant supervision of thousands of eyes and ears.

Nevertheless, another final precaution is in force: "units for special purposes" have been created, which are directly subject to the G.P.U. (since 1934, to the Commissariat for Home Affairs), a privileged Red guard petted and cajoled by the Party and forming the true prætorians of the régime. In these troops the compulsory percentage of Communists and operatives is particularly high and the duration of service is of four years instead of two years. One division of these troops is stationed at Moscow and there are no other forces in the capital. The importance attached by the

Dictator to the perfect maintenance of these cohorts of prætorians is already demonstrated by the fact that in 1932, for example, the budget for the "units for special purposes" amounted to one-tenth of the total military budget, including that of the navy and air force.

Having condensed within it all the communist elements, the Red Army serves as a school of communism. During their term of service 26,000 citizens were admitted to the Party in 1926 and in 1930 this number had risen to 85,000. A large contingent of special organisms is enlisted with this educative duty: clubs of soldiers (more than 10,000), rural newspapers, "army houses," "Lenin corners," etc. There are also different "free associations," controlled by the Party, such as the "cells of the Godless," "the Naval and Military Literary Union," etc. Each of these organizations, hoping for favours from the Party, seeks to annex a preponderating importance. The legend of "capitalist aggression against the U.S.S.R." has, for example, served as a pretext for those writers who are attached to the "Military Literary Union" to declare, in a special manifesto (February 1932) that in the face of this danger, which is in any case purely imaginary, "every worker of the pen is a staff officer!"

Military instruction itself does not evade propaganda. Of the hours devoted to education "political study" engrosses more than 30 per cent during the first year and 52 per cent during the second year.

As a résumé of the particular features which make the Red Army so unlike those of other countries, we cannot do better than to quote Stalin's own words:

The primary and fundamental characteristic of the Red Army [says the Dictator of the U.S.S.R.] resides in the following fact . . . that it is the army of the October Revolution and of the dictatorship of the proletariat . . . Its second characteristic is

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that it is the army . . . of the deliverance of oppressed peoples. The third and final characteristic lies in the spirit and the sentiment of internationalism with which our Red Army is imbued.

These words were uttered in 1928, but the *Pravda* of the 23rd of February 1935 thought it worth while to bring them back to mind by reproducing them on the occasion of the 17th anniversary of the Red Army and thus bringing them to the attention of all those who desire to hear and to understand.

Those who desire to hear and to understand! Are we to seek among these the authors of the "Eastern Pact" and notably those leaders of French politics who believe it to be possible and expedient to acquire, in the shape of the Red Army, a powerful ally capable of guaranteeing safety for France?

We are here approaching one of the most burning problems of present-day high international policy. In order to form any fair and clean-cut ideas on the subject it is necessary to marshal those elements which will allow us to see clearly into the three following questions:

What is the actual power of the Red Army?

What services do the masters of its own country expect from it?

Do the views of these masters correspond with the aspirations of the army itself?

* * * * *

Effective forces; equipment and munitions; technical means; war material and transport; commanders, their science and their ability; the military spirit and morale of the troops—these would appear to us to be the capital points which must be examined before an answer can be given to the first question.

The effective strength of the army and its reserves are the outcome of a tremendous effort developed by the Party. We have seen that, during the war, the Russian

Army had shown itself in favour of bolshevism, not out of any desire to fight for it but on the contrary, owing to a thirst for peace. Among 6,500,000 combatants, not more than 35,000 could be found who were willing to put their lives and their arms at Lenin's disposal. These were in most cases sailors and the soldiers of the Lettish units. At the outset the armed forces of bolshevism consisted chiefly of revolutionary operatives formed into detachments of the "Red Guard." It was not until the summer of 1918 that Trotsky, commander-in-chief of the Red Army since the month of March of that year, started more or less regular recruiting. This was not an easy matter, and the same might be said of the task of organizing the troops into something resembling conventional units. And if, thanks to Trotsky's diabolical energy and to severe reprisals, the Red Army at the end of the civil war in October 1920 numbered some 5,500,000 soldiers, its military administration was so terribly defective that only one-tenth (581,000) of this enormous force was actively engaged at the front.

After the cessation of hostilities it became urgent to demobilize this immense armed crowd. By 1922, the troops numbered only 1,600,000 soldiers. But it was not until 1924 that Frounzé, who had just succeeded Trotsky as commander-in-chief of the army, proceeded to a serious and methodical organization of the Soviet's armed forces. Frounzé died in 1925 and his reforms were completed by his successor, Vorochilov, who holds his post to the present day.

After the reform the effective forces of the army were reduced, in time of peace, to 562,000 men, inclusive of the marines and the air force. The standing land forces were divided into two parts : the regular army, serving for two years, which consisted of two-fifths of the infantry and artillery, four-fifths of the cavalry and all the tech-

nical units (aviation, armoured cars, tanks, engineers, etc.), and the so-called territorials comprising three-fifths of the infantry and artillery and one-fifth of the cavalry. Recruits to the territorial units only spent eight to eleven months with the flag, and this time was divided into several annual periods. The reasons for this complicated organization are obvious ; they enable a greater number of young men to receive a military education without necessitating the upkeep of a too costly army. And, since every class of recruits consisted of from 800,000 to 900,000 individuals, this system kept 350,000 of them outside the army, despite the artifice of the "territorial troops." Their military preparation, which was in any case very superficial, was entrusted to the "Association for the Assistance of Aviation and Chemistry."

Not only the military education of the young men remaining outside the army, but even that of the soldiers forming the "territorial troops," is certainly very inadequate, especially taking into consideration the very low level of culture of Russian recruits, and this fact led the Soviets to make a considerable augmentation, during the year 1934, in the effective forces of their army, which now numbers approximately 940,000 men ; the percentage of operatives and of Communists in the troops is probably thereby diminished.

During the summer months, when the soldiers of the "territorial troops" are undergoing their annual manœuvres, the number of men under the flag is doubled.

To this augmentation of their active army corresponds an abrupt increase in the soviet war budget ; instead of 1·8 thousand millions of roubles in 1934, it amounts, for the year 1935, to 6·5 thousand millions. Some Western observers have been alarmed by this

effort ; others, who nourish a mistaken belief that help will be forthcoming from the Red Army in the event of Hitlerian aggression, have been highly delighted. But there is really no cause for emotion, seeing that these 6.5 thousand millions are primarily an indication of the real value of the rouble. If one reflects that a kilo of bread in the U.S.S.R. does not cost less than a rouble, one may easily perceive that these 6.5 thousand millions are at the most only equivalent to the 400 millions of the pre-war estimates. It may also well be that the budget for 1935 includes a part of the sums expended upon the " Association for the Assistance of Aviation and Chemistry." This association has acquired very large proportions ; anyone who desires to demonstrate loyalty to the Party is practically compelled to join it, and in 1935 the number of its members attained thirteen millions. The expenses of the association actually constitute a second military budget parallel with that of the Commissariat for Defence, which is exceedingly convenient : the Soviets can cheerfully call for general disarmament at Geneva ; so far as they themselves are concerned, they will always be able to keep their war budget going by means of " charitable subscriptions."

The correspondent of the Moscow paper, *Economic Life*, was on one occasion so imprudent as to furnish an example of the method whereby these " voluntary subscriptions " are collected. At the railway station of Stalingrad (formerly Tsaritsin) he saw a " comrade " (a Chekist, be it understood) entrusted with the duty of canvassing commercial travellers. He saw him pounce upon a victim, turn his pockets inside out, seize the money which they contained, and give him in exchange tickets for the lottery of the " Association for the Assistance of Aviation and Chemistry."

The recent decree (end of August 1935) obliges the

soviet trade unions to pay to the Association a part of the subscriptions they receive.

In any case, the war budget of the U.S.S.R., huge as it undeniably is for an exhausted country, is not on the other hand considerable for a State possessing such vast territory. France, for instance, spends much more proportionately upon her army than does the U.S.S.R.

Evidently the fact remains that from this standpoint the Soviets are making every possible effort. Already, in the celebrated Five Years Plan the lion's share belonged to the improvement of war material. Stalin himself has on many occasions spoken forcibly on this subject, notably in his speech published by the soviet press on the 7th January 1933, in which he stated that : " Finally, the task of the Five Years Plan has been to build technical and economic foundations with a view to improving to the utmost possible extent, the country's powers of defence. . . . "

Nevertheless, the original flaws of communist economy still play their part : the equipment of the troops, while considerable, is frequently of reflective quality, and in the matter of quantity does not correspond with the number of men to the extent that is usual in the armies of to-day.

This is clearly demonstrated in the arming of the units and consequently in their effective artillery capacity. An infantry regiment possesses only 90 machine guns, while a French regiment's complement is 156. A Red division has 10 light batteries of 3 guns apiece ; a French division has 15 batteries of 4 guns. A Red cavalry regiment has only 32 machine-guns, which is much beneath the number in other modern armies. The same criticism applies to the artillery attached to the divisions of Red cavalry. The Red Army is also visibly weak in the matters of victual-

ling and liaison, both of which are services of primary importance in modern warfare.

It is true that every month the Soviets complete these services and increase their artillery, but it is difficult to believe the latest communication received from Moscow (end of August 1935), according to which the light artillery to-day comprises 4,500 guns, the heavy artillery 700 guns, and the ironclad-autos reach the number of 3,500. These statements do not correspond, moreover, to those given by the Polish general, Sikorsky, a very reliable authority, who estimates the total number of the batteries possessed by the Soviets as 1,500 (see the *Morning Post* for 20th July, 1935).

The pitiable condition of the soviet fleet affords as yet another eloquent witness of the weakness of the soviet armaments production in conjunction with the place they should occupy in the general economy of the country and in view of the exigencies of our times. At the beginning of 1935 the military leaders of the U.S.S.R. were seized with a whim to undertake the reorganization of the fleet. Apart from the construction of a certain number of submarines, everything still remains to be done, for the U.S.S.R. possesses less than one-third of the tonnage of pre-war Russia (160,000 as against 550,000), and most of these vessels are too old to be employed in serious warfare.

We now approach the question of the air force. We know with what energy the Soviets had undertaken the development of their military aviation. In this respect, they acted with perfect judgment: this is an arm of which the units are not very costly, which has a wide range and which can afford to ignore the problem of communications, which for the Soviets is a particularly thorny one. It was certainly not without setbacks that the manufacture of an air force proceeded in the

U.S.S.R. They were compelled to summon foreign specialists to their aid, they had to seek abroad, especially in England and America, for the material necessary for the establishment of the factories which should construct both the machines and their engines. None the less is it a fact that by 1932 the Soviets were able to proceed, on a vast scale, with the fabrication of aeroplanes, at first observation machines, then bombing planes, and finally in 1934 they were building their own engines, not so perfect or so finished as those of the West, but nevertheless satisfactory. The number of planes now in the possession of the Soviets would appear to exceed 3,000, which certainly represents a considerable achievement. The number 4,300 mentioned in a soviet communication at the end of August 1935 seems to be obviously exaggerated.

And yet, the noisy publicity launched by the Soviets with regard to their aviation is quite unjustified. To begin with, even if the figures (3,000) are impressive, one must not forget the vast extent of the country; France, which possesses almost as many planes as the U.S.S.R., is infinitely stronger in aviation than the Soviets. Then—and this is a capital point—modern technique harbours a terrible germ of megalomania: it is perpetually striving to surpass itself. This tendency is encouraged by humanity in the domain of aviation more than in any other science. During 1935, France devoted very large sums to her air army. According to the recent statement of Lord Londonderry, the rhythm of construction of British planes has been doubled since 1934. New improvements in planes and engines follow each other in quick succession. Very soon the existing Red aeroplanes will be out of date, and for the U.S.S.R., where the aviation trade has had to be run by foreign specialists with foreign materials, and taking into con-

sideration also the dearth of skilled labour, adaptation is a much more difficult matter than for other Western countries.

There is also another respect in which the air forces of the Soviets will certainly be handicapped, a handicap which will apply equally to the rest of their military technique. We speak of the practical application of munitions of war. To be in possession of the technical means is not everything ; one must be able to use it ! In the hands of a savage a spear is a more dangerous weapon than the most perfectly constructed gun. In a modern army, who is it that handles the technical means ? Primarily the leaders, that is to say, the officers. And this brings us to the important question of the corps of Red officers.

The task of the "proletarianizing" of groups of officers ranks among the most brilliant of the soviet "conquests." The great majority of the Red officers in active employ have come from the soviet military schools ; at the present day they constitute 70 per cent of the total number of officers as against 7 per cent pre-war officers and 23 per cent of officers promoted during the civil war without any military instruction from the ranks and the operative classes. Of the first and the third groups (which thus include 93 per cent of the total number) not more than 15 per cent had ever attended secondary schools ; the remainder were possessed only of elementary education or of none at all. It must be understood that the military schools, when accepting candidates, attach more importance to their social origin than to their general culture. It is for this reason that among those admitted as pupils there are as many as 40 per cent whose only scientific "luggage" consists of being more or less able to read and write. In the army, 10 per cent of the senior officers and 20 per

cent of the junior officers have never received any military instruction, even in the soviet schools, and it is by no means an anecdote that a certain Red general persisted in confusing the terms "trajectory" and "directorates": the elements of "political instruction" having got mixed up in his head with his notions of artillery. To sum the matter up, from the social standpoint, the corps of officers differs very little from the general mass of those whom they command: it is more than half composed of operatives. Obviously there are in existence courses which are open to officers who have the desire and capacity to remedy the vast lacunæ of their knowledge, but alas, as the leaders themselves have confessed, this is not sufficient: the "directorates" and the "trajectories" remain inextricably and disastrously entangled. We shall certainly not find in any other modern army a corps of officers so ill-equipped for its mission.

But do these working-men leaders and their working-men soldiers at least possess a sound morale? Are they ready to play the part which has been assigned to them by the masters of their country? And what exactly is the nature of this part? The Statutes of the Red Army will at any rate answer this last question: "The U.S.S.R. is a proletarian State, the first and the only fatherland of those who work," the Statutes declare, and they add: "In defending the U.S.S.R., the Red Army, by the mere fact of its existence, contributes to the struggle of the oppressed masses of the entire world for freedom." The oft-repeated statements of the military leaders conform with this formula, as for example when, at the XVIIth Congress of the Party, in 1934, Vorochilov said: "We are military workers and our Commander-in-Chief is the Central Committee (of the Party)."

To defend their "communist country" and assist in

the world revolution ; such is, in a few words, the mission of the Red Army. Thanks to the procedure of recruiting, of control, of supervision and propaganda, the Red Army would appear to be a reliable prop for the régime and one able to play a decisive part in the event of civil troubles in any country adjoining the U.S.S.R., provided, that is to say, that their intervention required only a swift and sudden effort. The same applies to the defence of their own frontiers against aggression. In the event of such aggression, however, the masters of the country—and this is a very significant fact—no longer count upon “ Red patriotism,” but have appealed, for several months past, to patriotism in general without any qualification : “ We must defend our great country, our beloved country,” is now the cry of the military leaders, without the addition of the words “ Communist ” or “ Proletarian.”

But such artifices of propaganda are certainly powerless to operate any appreciable change. The U.S.S.R. army, which, very conceivably, might serve the Red dictatorship well in a brief attack or an equally brief resistance, is without the smallest doubt quite incapable of standing up to a protracted war.

Soviet production of armaments would be unable to accommodate itself to the rhythm of output which would be essential in wartime ; the service of communications would be even less adequate. We shall demonstrate later the catastrophic condition of transport : it is sufficient for our purpose here to mention that according to *Izvestia* of February 2nd, 1935, the delay in the loading of the trucks reached the figure of 450,000, while the entire rolling stock of the U.S.S.R. consisted of 530,000 trucks. Motor traction is much hampered by the bad condition of the roads ; the number of horses has dwindled by half in comparison with 1926 as a conse-

quence of the collectivization in the rural districts. The factories supplying the army are mostly situate in zones accessible to enemy aircraft ; the Soviets are trying to establish others, on the Volga or farther east, but these would involve an immense increase of work for the railways, which are already so weak a link in the chain. Moreover, the utterly inadequate training of the officers would admit of no assurance that the troops would be well commanded. And finally, the troops themselves would not be the same, since many soldier-operatives would be forced to go and work in the factories. The reservist classes, badly trained and difficult to handle, would give the army an entirely different, and peasant aspect, and since the régime of constraint and control would of necessity be relaxed, who can tell what aspirations might arise to influence these men !

It is therefore easy to understand why the Soviets are so alarmed at the mere idea of any armed conflict in which they would be compelled to participate. In the task of a world revolution their Red Army might undoubtedly serve as an instrument, but for that objective the Soviets possess another weapon, one infinitely more reliable and without attendant risks—the Red microbes of their foreign propaganda.

VIII

The G.P.U.

What is the G.P.U. ? G.P.U. are the initial letters of three Russian words which signify : Political State Office. Does this amount to the same thing as : political police ? Yes and no ! Secret police they certainly are ; that is to say, that their mission is to investigate and to spy, but they also pronounce sentences and execute them !

Such a situation abolishes by the very fact of its existence the principles of "bourgeois justice," and indeed the action of the G.P.U. is founded, not upon a few principles of jurisprudence but upon "class interests." The G.P.U. is "a precious weapon in the hands of the proletariat," if we quote the definition provided by one of the communist leaders.

This formula is in any case insincere: it is less a question of the proletariat than of the Party, or to be yet more exact, of the dictatorship of Stalin.

Certain foreign observers, who have taken a superficial view of the Soviet régime, recognize the deadly part played by the G.P.U., but believe that it exists as it were extraneously to the Party and that its action cannot be ascribed to the directors of the régime.

In this they make a fundamental error. The G.P.U. is the ewe lamb of communism; its creation was the work of Lenin and of Trotsky and its anniversaries are celebrated with amazing pomp.

The importance which the communist leaders attach to the work of the G.P.U. is indicated by a large number of statements. It suffices to recall among others a sentence of a speech made by one Goussev at the XVth Congress of the Party: "Lenin has taught us that every member of the party should be an agent of the Cheka, that is to say, he should spy and denounce."

This was a fundamental rule during the early years of the régime, and throughout the civil war the invariable practice, so soon as a locality was occupied by the Bolsheviks, was to organize the Cheka (extraordinary commission), which then proceeded to the "weeding" out of dangerous elements. Each Cheka was given a free hand, acting as it saw fit, and its credit with the superior authorities grew in proportion to the number of martyred victims. No cruelty of any description was

forbidden to it. For instance, the rat torture, much beloved of Chinese executioners (there were, among the Chekists, a certain number of Chinese and Letts), was practised, as were the torture of the white-hot iron glove and, for officers, that of the epaulets marked upon the shoulders with nails.

As for the number of the victims, even an approximate calculation is impossible. It is certain that the Bolsheviks aimed at the physical extermination of all their enemies. One knows that in the Crimea, after the departure of Wrangel's army, more than 70,000 persons were executed. There, as elsewhere, the most cowardly subterfuges were adopted. A general amnesty was proclaimed and the officials and officers of Wrangel's army were invited to attend it for a census. All those who presented themselves were shot. This tragic ambush was repeated upon two occasions. The "weeding" of the Crimea was organized by the notorious Hungarian communist Bela-Kun.

The melancholy renown acquired by the Cheka led to the Party deciding to change its name; then, since the fame of the G.P.U. did not appear to present an improvement, it was determined, in 1934, to dissimulate its existence, to the eyes of the outside world, behind the façade of a newly created Commission for Home Affairs. These changes of label, however, have not in any respect altered the material situation.

It is true that for several years past, mass executions have become rare. Two reasons would seem to explain this fact. Firstly, the outside world has become much more attentive to happenings in the U.S.S.R., and mass executions would be likely to provoke an undue reaction in foreign opinion. Secondly, the Party has found more opportune to employ its victims as slaves, using their labour to nourish the great commercial firm of the

U.S.S.R. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of prisoners are now in concentration camps, on the White Sea and the Arctic Ocean, in the Solovki Islands and in Siberia, labouring at the timber camps and in the mineral mines. Nor is this all : it is a current practice to arrest engineers in order to commandeer their unpaid labour in the factories.

However, the moment the communist dictatorship feels itself to be threatened, the Red terror breaks out with renewed fury, ceasing to pay the slightest attention to the world's opinion. This, for instance, is what occurred after the death of Kirov, the member of the Politbureau and the satrap of Leningrad who was assassinated on the 1st of December, 1934, by the former Chekist, Nikolaiev. In July 1934, when replacing the sections of the G.P.U. by the Bureau of the Commission for Home Affairs, the leaders of the U.S.S.R. announced that political offences would in future be exclusively tried by the tribunals ; credulous foreigners or those who were over-indulgent hailed this announcement as marking the end of the terror in the Soviets. Five months later, on the 8th of December, Litvinoff made a moving speech at Geneva, violently condemning the terror. Before leaving home in order to attend the meetings of the League where he was to speak he had probably studied the newspapers of December 5th which had just arrived from Moscow, and had found therein the decree concerning aggressions : " against the workers of the soviet government." This decree established for trials of such category the following procedure : (1) The inquiry must not last more than ten days. (2) The act of accusation is delivered to the accused twenty-four hours before the examination of their case by the tribunal. (3) The case is examined and tried in the absence of the parties. (4) No appeal

and no recommendations to mercy are entertained. (5) The judgment, which includes the supreme sanction (i.e. capital punishment), is put into execution as soon as it has been pronounced. As the investigation is entrusted to the Bureau of the Commission for Home Affairs, which is also charged with the execution of judgments, it is amply evident that the part played by the tribunal is purely fictitious. Moreover, among the thousands of victims who perished as a consequence of the assassination of Kirov, there were a great number whose dossiers—and be it observed that dossiers only were in question since “the case is tried in the absence of the parties!”—were not even accorded the honour of examination by the tribunal: the G.P.U. was in too great a hurry! . . . “The enemy must be exterminated without mercy and without pity,” observes Maxim Gorky in the *Pravda* of January 2nd, 1935, and Vorochilov, competing with him in zeal, formulated the promise that: “Before the close of the year 1935, every enemy of Stalin will be under the ground. . . .”

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The central G.P.U. of Moscow represents a complex organism which includes a score of different branches. Each local section admits of the same organization.

The power of the G.P.U. over the soviet citizen is practically unlimited. The Members of the Party alone are safe from arrest, unless, indeed, the G.P.U. obtains a special mandate from the Committee of the Party to which the person in view is attached. There is, however, good authority for believing that since the assassination of Kirov, this formality is no longer exacted, the G.P.U. having obtained absolute “freedom” of initiative.

All the work of the G.P.U. is secret and the officials

of this macabre body practise the utmost discretion under the fear of the most terrible reprisals.

In addition to its regular groups, the G.P.U. has at its disposal the assistance of the *sec-sots* (secret collaborators) who number tens of thousands. Thanks to these, the eye of the G.P.U. sees through every wall. Such services do not receive a salary but they can in no way be considered as voluntary.

The method of recruiting is simple. So soon as an individual is judged to be of potential use to the G.P.U., he finds himself abruptly dismissed by the administration which has employed him. His position will only be restored to him on condition that he consents to become an agent. Deprived of all means of existence, he sees himself compelled to accept. Another method consists purely and simply in the arrest of the desired recruit. He will only recover his freedom on agreeing to become a secret agent and informer. It would be naïve to believe that a mere promise would suffice! By no means: in every branch of its activities the G.P.U. has its connecting network of systems which are mutually controlled.

Thus life in the U.S.S.R. is even more unpleasant from the moral aspect than from the material point of view, for, even among those most closely united, each individual knows himself to be surrounded by spies. A very characteristic anecdote is current in the U.S.S.R. A citizen of impeccable loyalty, desiring to celebrate his birthday in his own house by inviting a number of his friends, asked the G.P.U. for the necessary permission to entertain some twenty persons. The G.P.U. decreed that among them must be an agent who must be presented to them as a fellow-guest. Upon the would-be host displaying some hesitation he was asked to submit a list of his proposed invitations. Where-

upon, after examining the list in question, the G.P.U. stated that, as the list already contained the names of three of their agents, the inclusion of a fourth would be unnecessary.

The situation of those officials who are attached in a regular capacity to the branches of the G.P.U. is scarcely more enviable, or rather, it has ceased to be so : the times are past when raids upon bourgeois households brought them in swiftly acquired and easily concealed profits. They now have to content themselves with relatively meagre compensation ; that is to say, with the exception of officials of the highest rank.

It can thus be easily understood that the dream of every agent of the G.P.U. is to slip into the foreign section and obtain employment beyond the frontiers of the U.S.S.R. Not only does life in the bourgeois States present an irresistible attraction in the eyes of the Chekist, but the remuneration is appreciably higher than that which they can hope to obtain in their socialist mother-country. Moreover, "professional expenses" are less easily verified and may account for very considerable perquisites.

It goes without saying that all Chekists working abroad also hold positions in political or commercial "representations." There exist in every country two systems of the G.P.U. The first, which is to some extent official, has as its chief the "resident" of the G.P.U., who generally holds some prominent position and who controls all soviet activities, even those of the ambassador. The second is a secret system which supervises the activities of the first and whose personnel is camouflaged as petty officials, clerks, etc. This method has been in force since 1928. While the collaborators of the first system travel with diplomatic passports and are received abroad as official personages, those of the second system,

on the contrary, meet with a thousand obstacles and frequently cross the frontier with difficulty and without regular passports.

This state of affairs does not fail to give rise to bitter jealousies.

The former resident of the G.P.U. for the Near East, Agabékov, who has since deserted from the régime, describes in his book a day in a resident's life :

In the morning he receives the reports of his agents in his office, at the door of which tins of petrol are kept handy so that all documents can be destroyed in case of need (such is the precaution decreed by Moscow as a consequence of the raid made upon "Arcos" in London and that on the embassy at Pekin). The resident then visits the ambassador in order to discuss any informations received and to sketch the main outlines of the report to be made to Moscow. He appends his signature to the list of secret documents to be destroyed, a measure which the ambassador is not entitled to take without his permission. After luncheon he visits the commercial agency and interviews the director of economic espionage, where it is again question of secret informations received and of placing agents of the G.P.U. as officials in various trade concerns. In the evening the resident receives, in some secret *pied à terre*, his most important collaborators.

Into the midst of this monotonous official routine orders will occasionally come from Moscow necessitating some special measures ; the theft of some document or an assassination. Then the resident is compelled to exert all his ingenuity. Agabékov quotes several examples drawn from his personal experience at Teheran : one day he succeeded in photographing important documents kept at the consul's house, after having ensured that official's absence for the night with the collaboration of a woman in the pay of the G.P.U.

For matters of exceptional importance it is customary to create on each occasion "mobile brigades" of the G.P.U. Their permanent headquarters staff was for a long time established in Berlin ; certain indications

would suggest that it has recently been transferred to France.

The "brigades" of the G.P.U., assisted when necessary by the local Communists, sometimes carry into execution terrorist enterprises of vast extent; we will quote, for example, the formidable explosion in the cathedral at Sofia which, a few years ago, accounted for a large number of victims. It was organized under the direction of Yaroslavsky and Elensky, who were attached to the "political representation" at Vienna. These two Chekists had at their disposal a band of Macedonian terrorists, members of that same association which, last year, took an active part in the assassination of King Alexander of Jugoslavia and of the French minister Louis Barthou.

The foreign communist Parties also possess more or less developed G.P.U.'s which operate under the high command of Moscow and furnish assistance for its emissaries. Undoubtedly the Communists avoid any mention of these in their press. Nevertheless, the official organ of the International Committee, the *Communist International* (No. 16, 1934), thought fit to inform its readers that: "The Central Committee of the Japanese Party has published a statement announcing the execution of Katano and Fouroukava, as a consequence of a decision made by the Central Committee." These two Communists had been accused of provocation; in announcing their execution the Central Committee of the Japanese Party invited its adherents to "unmask" the instigators and to execute summary justice upon them! The organ of the International Committee, while exposing these facts, adjured their Japanese comrades to be prudent.

The motion with regard to "summary justice" is not clear [they observed]. Japanese proletariat must profit by the experi-

ence of their Russian comrades at the time when these latter were working sub rosa. . . . The [Russian] Party contrived to unmask instigators without having recourse to explicitly formulated death sentences. . . .

A great terrorist activity was manifested by the German Communists. Doctor Ehrt (*Armed Revolt*, pp. 170-1, Berlin, 1933) quotes the following figures : from 1918 to 1933, the Communists killed 216 and wounded 1,976 regular police ; there were also among the members of Nazi detachments between 1923 and 1933, 200 men killed and 20,319 wounded by Communists.

Nor are the other countries of Western Europe any more immune from the terrorist action of the G.P.U. Without seeking to evoke events which have remained shrouded in mystery, such as the kidnapping of General Koutepov in Paris, it will suffice if we mention only the affair of the Sartrouville Cheka. On the 30th of October 1930, the Italian Communist Carti was discovered near a villa at Sartrouville, twenty-three kilometres from Versailles, seriously wounded. He related that he had been taken to the villa by his comrades and on arrival had been informed that he stood before a "Tribunal of the Cheka." The "president" had thereupon formulated against him an accusation of treachery and before he had been able to reply he had received a bullet in the head. While the members of the "tribunal" had gone to dig a grave for their victim, Carti had recovered consciousness and had managed to crawl away to safety. When the French police arrived on the scene of the outrage they found the villa deserted, but they also found a formula for the manufacture of mechanical bombs, a wireless station, a blood-stained post and one hundred and eighty-two dossiers of the "Tribunal of the Cheka" with regard

to eight hundred and eighty-nine accused whom the "tribunal" had tried in 1929 and 1930.

Terrorist action in China and in the colonies would furnish material for an entire volume.

Parallel with the systems of the G.P.U. there exists a special service of informations, attached to the International Committee.

The soviet officials abroad who are under the constant supervision of the G.P.U. live in the atmosphere of the terror. S. Gelesniak, who was formerly director of the financial service of the Paris commercial agency and who is now a deserter, has a curious story to tell in this connection. A soviet official in Paris, Chapiro, was receiving in his study an engineer from Moscow when the latter inquired: "Do you think there was any question of treachery in the celebrated trial of the 'trade party' in Moscow?" Chapiro, terrified, and believing that he was dealing with an "instigator," knocked violently upon the walls of the room to summon his colleagues and declared in their presence: "You are witnesses that this question has been put to me and that I have not even had time to reply to it!" Another deserter, Krukov-Angorsky, formerly an important official in the Paris Soviet Bank for Northern Europe, quotes the case of one of his friends, an agent in Berlin, who was haunted to such a degree by the thought of persecution that he broke the windows of a jeweller's shop in order to be arrested by the German police and thus to be sheltered from the Cheka.

Nor is it always a mental delusion that affects dismissed Chekists. Their apprehensions are frequently only too well justified. The fate of the Chekist Yaroslavsky, whose name has already been mentioned, affords us a striking example of this fact. We will quote in this connection the account given by the

former soviet diplomat, Bessedovsky. After the explosion in the cathedral of Sofia which was caused by infernal machines imported for that purpose by Yaroslavsky and Elensky from Vienna, the latter was summoned to Moscow to make his report. Yaroslavsky remained alone. The explosion in the cathedral had upset him ; he had lost flesh, appeared downhearted and had ceased to shave. One day he vanished from the embassy, leaving word that he felt worn out and that his conscience would no longer permit him to continue work of this description. Moscow became alarmed. The directing Committee of the Central G.P.U. decided, at a secret sitting, that it was essential to "suppress" Yaroslavsky, who was fully cognisant of all the Balkan activities of the G.P.U. ! Orders were sent to one of the Chekist detachments working in Germany. Yaroslavsky received a visit from one of his Chekist comrades, who invited him to a café, where he poisoned him by administering a drug supplied to him by the G.P.U. The photograph of the corpse was sent to Moscow and submitted to the two leaders of the G.P.U., Yagoda and Trilisser (the latter was director of the G.P.U.'s foreign activities).

In such conditions it is not difficult to understand that the number of "absentees" among soviet officials abroad is constantly on the increase, in spite of the measures taken by Moscow to prevent it : measures which include the confiscation of property, reprisals exercised against their families and the compulsion to bring up their children in the U.S.S.R. from the time of their reaching seven years of age.

The mechanism of the G.P.U., operating throughout a mutually controlled system, is a valuable support to the Red dictatorship and to the cause of world revolution. But its agents, even those of highest rank, feel them-

selves to be continuously at the mercy of the Dictator. He undoubtedly permits the G.P.U. to exercise every severity, but he is equally ready to turn upon its agents should it appear to him that he is inadequately protected. The assassination of Kirov was immediately succeeded by the trial and punishment of the head of the G.P.U. of Leningrad, Comrade Medved, his two assistants and nine collaborators: "for having given proof of criminal negligence with regard to duties essential for the security of the State." Needless to say, they were all eager to plead guilty, as the only possible means of tempering reprisals.

The G.P.U. is therefore an organism that is mainly actuated by fear, and it is the prerogative of slaves to hate their masters.

IX

Propaganda

It is not sufficient to say that propaganda constitutes one of the principal branches of the activities of the Party. It would be nearer the truth were we to say that its every activity is to some extent permeated by propaganda.

The direction of propaganda pertains to the principal organisms of the Party and chiefly to the General Secretariat and the Bureau of Organization. But in order to put into action the decisions arrived at, there exists a double chain of executive organs, one emanating from the Party and the other from the Soviet administrations.

We will begin by dealing with the first of these systems. At its head is the section for propaganda of the Central Committee of the Party. It consists of two offices, that for "cultural propaganda" and that for

“the campaign among the masses.” The first office controls communist education, general education, the work of propaganda of all the committees of the Party, of all trade groups and corporations and the propaganda of publishing, of the press, the theatre, the cinema, etc. The office for the “campaign among the masses” organizes the propaganda with regard to current events of the moment, as, for example: the Five Year Plan, collectivization, loans, anniversaries; it also controls the activities of “charitable societies” organized by the Party, such as the Union of Atheists and the Society for the Assistance of Aviation and Chemistry.

All the adherents of the Party are compelled to receive more or less intensive communist instruction. No member of the Party can enter into the enjoyment of his full privileges unless he possesses at least the certificate of primary communist studies. Above these are the schools of the first and second grades, then the communist universities and the summit of this edifice of political instruction is crowned by the courses of lectures on Marxism, the institute of Red professors and the communist academy. With regard to the propagandist character of these pseudo-scientific institutions, we can quote the words of Professor Adler, who was formerly director of an institute which formed part of a communist academy. He has written in a Berlin periodical: “The new establishments, founded by the Soviet Government, are not scientific institutions: the institute of Red professors and the communist academy itself are establishments created for purposes of communist propaganda.” After this confession the criminal was expelled from the Party “for cowardly and odious calumny” (Review, *For Communist Instruction*, No. 11, 1931).

The number of establishments for communist instruction is legion.¹

There are no published statistics with regard to the number of pupils in the Party schools, but we find in the almanac, *The Propagandist's Companion* (1929, No. 15), an indication according to which the system of communist education includes 45,000 schools and clubs with 820,000 members and pupils. One may assume that since that date there has been a measure of progress in this respect.

It must also be clearly understood that not only the special communist instruction but also education in general is now at bottom one vast field of political propaganda. The programming of the schools which are subject to inspection by the Commission of Public Instruction of the Soviet Republics is controlled by the propagandist section of the Party. We have here an example of the subjection of the gearing of the soviet organisms to the mechanism of the Party.

Not only are the Soviet Ministries of Public Instruction under the control of Party direction, but in the very heart of these ministries there exist "departments of political education" which have their ramifications.

¹ We will content ourselves with quoting those establishments of *higher* communist education which are in existence in Moscow, making use of the telephone directory :

Communist University of Moscow (2,000 students).

Communist University of Eastern National Minorities.

Communist University of Chinese Workers.

Academy of Communist Education, which venerates the name of Lenin's widow, Kroupskaia.

Evening Communist University.

University of the Young Communists.

Evening University of the Young Communists.

Communist University of Young Communists by Correspondence.

Communist Academy.

Institute of Red Teachers, consisting of seven faculties.

FOUNDATIONS OF BOLSHEVIK RÉGIME

The slogan is supplied by the Central Committee of the Party : " The principle of non-political instruction and the formula, ' culture for culture's sake,' must be banished from our cultural activity ! "

The same applies to the other ministries. As for the army, we have already dealt with its political direction.

Everything which leaves the printing presses is also subject to the severe censorship of the Party, which employs for this purpose a special organism : " The General Office for literature and publications. "

Here a characteristic detail may be noted : the head of this organism and his two assistants are nominated by the People's Commissar for Instruction, with the approval of the G.P.U.

The Party, having the monopoly of the daily and periodical press, still makes use of it constantly for propaganda. In any case, all the newspapers are merely subsidiary organs of the G.P.U.

It may be of interest to glance in passing at the curious manual for Red journalists entitled : " Technical instructions for the editing of a daily newspaper. " Of its ninety-two pages, sixty are devoted to a description of the activities of a singular " bureau for legal inquiries " which must be controlled by the editor in person. Here, for instance, quoted from the manual, is an example of a formula employed in this bureau :

The editor wishes to draw your attention to the article [title] which appeared in our issue of [date]. Kindly inform us of the steps taken by you in connection with this article. The editor wishes to remind you that in accordance with the deliberations of the Congresses of the Party and the decisions of the Commissariat of Justice, all offices, companies and private individuals mentioned in an article of this nature must submit their explanations within fifteen days, as dating from the receipt of the present warning. Enclosed : one cutting. Signed : The Bureau for Inquiries.

Another formula in the same manual, entitled "the call to order," stipulates that the editor "shall be compelled to have recourse to the competent authorities" (a delicate allusion to the G.P.U.)

* * * * *

Obviously, communist propaganda is not restricted to the territory of the U.S.S.R. ; the Comintern sees to it that it extends to every quarter of the globe. To begin with, the Communist Parties in every country follow a line of action which is directly inspired by examples and orders emanating from Moscow and are subsidized from that source. Moreover, there are numerous agents sent forth by the U.S.S.R., especially into the various colonies. Everywhere the agents of the G.P.U. are expected to assist the action of the Comintern.

In Europe, propaganda is primarily addressed to the proletariat, flashing before their eyes visions of a paradise in which they will be masters and stirring up their instincts of cupidity.

The Comintern, taking into consideration the international situation of the moment, formulates the slogan to be proclaimed to the masses and directs the principal lines of activity.

Nevertheless, there are certain points which remain immutable, such as, for example, the thesis which inspires propaganda in the armies of "bourgeois" countries. Among the numerous formulæ in use, we will quote one of the most explicit, adopted at the thirteenth plenary sitting of the Executive Committee of the Comintern (December 1933) : "In seeking from now onwards to prepare the transformation of future imperialist war into civil war, Communists must in every country concentrate their efforts on the essential portions of the imperialist military machine" (see

International Correspondence, 1934, Nos. 1-2). This idea was formerly developed by the Red "General" Ventsov, military attaché to the Soviets in Paris, who wrote, referring to the decisions of the VIth Congress of the Comintern :

The Communist Parties are at present compelled to subordinate all their activities to one central task which may be defined as follows : to prepare, conquer and organize the masses with a view to the struggle against imperialist war. According to Engels, mass militarization leads to civil destruction of all the bourgeois armies. For this reason Communists must not "boycott" the bourgeois armies ; they must enter their ranks and seize the revolutionary direction of the process of internecine decomposition of these armies. . . .

This task is always regarded as one of the most essential. *The Communist International* (1934, Nos. 7-8) stated, for example, on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Comintern : " Our French Communist Party has, in the matter of its activities in the army, achieved notable success, but its labours in this respect must be increased tenfold. . . ."

The resolutions voted by the VIIth Congress of the Third International (*Pravda*, August 29th, 1935) mention also the tasks imposed on the Communists who serve in the " bourgeois " armies, and repeat the thesis proclaimed in 1933 by the Executive Committee of the Comintern concerning " the duty of transforming the imperialist war into civil war."

It may reasonably be objected that communist propaganda is not necessarily propaganda of communism. For instance, soviet guides, detailed to receive foreign tourists, must, in the event of these being persons of education, abstain from lauding the doctrine and régime of communism as such and must concentrate upon praising the successes of " socialist edification " and upon pointing out " the enthusiasm of the masses,"

“ the benefits enjoyed by the workers,” “ the happiness of soviet children,” etc., etc. This duty is performed, on every occasion, with more or less blatancy and brazenness, according to whether the groups of tourists whom it is desired to “ work ” are more or less competent and knowledgeable. The soviet “ Intouristic ” bureau of travel devotes careful study on each individual occasion to the manner in which this or that group may best be received.¹

The same remarks apply to the propagandist literature which the Soviets continue to disseminate in foreign countries. This does not solely consist of tracts and broadsheets in praise of the world revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the abolition of the Imperialist yoke. Such stuff is good reading for the populace and for the natives of the colonies ; for the “ Western bourgeois ” something else is required, and we may note the appearance of pamphlets, almanacs, albums, all of them “ statistical ” and “ impartial ” in the highest degree, and in which there is no mention either of the G.P.U., or of the terror, or of famine, or of “ class war,” or of religious persecutions, but in which there invariably appear groups of women factory-hands, preferably naked, laughing heartily (health and happiness), a few cleanly dressed children (the miracle of communist education having transformed the erstwhile foundlings into infant prodigies !), a handful of exotic individuals, turkomen or tehouktchas, contemplating a book or a placard (the U.S.S.R. promoter of education in primitive lands !), flourishing fields of corn and distant seascapes (which were pre-

¹ The “ repentant ” communist, Rudolph, who had himself worked for three years in Moscow as a guide and had subsequently escaped abroad, has related many interesting details with regard to the “ bluff ” which he helped to impose upon foreign tourists.

sumably wild undergrowth and marsh until the coming of the Soviets), a stern-looking workman brandishing a hammer against a background of a partially erected building (the enthusiasm of construction). And there would appear to be no difficulty in finding "bourgeois" publishers, in no way connected with communism, who undertake to propagate such products expressly designed to mislead public opinion. Such, for instance, is the album, *Russia at Work*, made in Germany, with captions in English, French and German.

In their purely political propaganda the Soviets frequently employ the same artifice. Thus, in various colonial countries, the Comintern stirs up nationalist sentiment despite the fact that such sentiment is derided by the communist doctrine. In the Balkans also the communist International encourages revolutionary movements of a nationalist tendency; this fact has frequently been admitted in the communist press, and only recently the *International Correspondence*, one of the chief organs of the Comintern, stated in its issue of March 9th, 1935, that :

Communists have contributed to the creation and assisted the development in Yugoslavia of nationalist-revolutionary movements. In addition to the Macedonian nationalist-revolutionary organizations which were already in existence, there have been created and developed of recent years the nationalist-revolutionary movements of Croatia and the Slovenes. . . .

In Western countries the Comintern seeks to encourage the grievances of the lower middle classes against their governments. In this respect it follows the example of the pre-war Russian revolutionary parties. As was done in Russia, an attempt is made to find allies among progressive intellectuals. This last task has been greatly facilitated for the Comintern

since the creation in certain countries, and notably in France, of the celebrated "Common Front" between Communists and Socialists. This collaboration, in which the Communists are doughty leaders, has powerfully contributed to the formation, in Western countries, of numerous groups "against war and fascism" which are supported by many socialistic intellectuals who, outraged by the real excesses of contemporary capitalism and dazzled by the dream of glorious utopias, hope to find the solution of all ills in a remedy infinitely more pernicious than the disease. It is in this manner that the propaganda of the Soviets and of the Comintern succeeds in enlisting even the dreams of idealists, pacifist aspirations and constructive effort, in order to exploit them and use them to activate the most terrible engines of war and destruction.

This "moderate branch" of the propaganda will take a particular importance in the actual phase of communist activity all over the world, a phase inaugurated by Stalin more than a year ago and solemnly proclaimed during the VIIth Congress of the Comintern in August, 1935.

CHAPTER III
BOLSHEVIK ACTION IN THE
MORAL FIELD

I

The Anti-Religious Campaign

THE dogma of economic materialism excludes the notion of God. Permeated by this dogma, the communist régime is essentially refractory to all philosophical conceptions and, even more strongly so, to all religious ideas.

God is thus defined by Lenin : " A system of ideas [*sic* !] which has imposed itself upon man, who is tormented and stupefied by the powers of nature-forces and of class oppression." According to him, " The idea of God strengthens the yoke and maims class warfare ; from time immemorial such an idea has been synonymous with slavery and even worse conditions, since it leads nowhere."

Bolshevik writings present innumerable developments of this thesis. For example : " Religion, gods of any description : poison which puts to sleep or stupefies the reason, the understanding and the will power. Implacable war should be waged against them all " (Review, *Man Without God*).

* * * * *

And this war was declared with the accession of bolshevism to power. A series of decrees promulgated in December 1917 deprived the Church of all its lands

“ in favour of the nation ” and placed all educational establishments connected with the Church, not excepting Theological Academies, under the authority of the Commission for Public Instruction.

The Patriarch Tikhon, who had recently been elected by the pan-Russian Council, did not hesitate to rebuke the “ satanic action ” of the new masters. Numerous religious processions which were supported by enormous masses of believers so clearly revealed the spiritual reactions of the people that the bolshevik power refrained from any immediate violent measures.

However, further decrees soon made their appearance forbidding religious instruction in schools and suppressing all ecclesiastical administration ; the Government was henceforward to recognize only “ groups of believers.” These were permitted to lease churches and religious objects upon the basis of a contract with the local authorities. But they were denied any possibility of acquiring the rights of legal tenure. All activities of teaching, instruction, or even of charity were forbidden them.

The Council was just then completing its work. It refused to recognize the new laws and its closing proclamation was heroic : “ It is better to shed one’s blood and to earn the crown of martyrdom than to deliver over the orthodox faith to the sacrilege of its enemies. Be steadfast, Holy Russia, and prepare for your Calvary ! ”

And the path which opened before the faithful was indeed to be watered by their blood. For if those in power did not immediately risk a decisive action, the local soviet authorities lost no time in seeking to apply the new decrees. Everywhere they were met by the resistance of the people, and there ensued those armed charges against religious processions, those arrests of

priests and of their flocks, those summary executions. There were frequent instances of the profanation of ikons and of sacred objects.

On the 25th of January 1918, immediately after the taking of Kiev by the Red Army, three Bolsheviks, whose names were never revealed to the public, dragged the Metropolitan Vladimir from the Laura and killed him in the street ; the corpse was wounded in thirteen places by bayonets, sabres and bullets. During the summer of 1918 several bishops were killed. One of them, Andronicus, Archbishop of Perm, suffered a particularly terrible fate : his eyes were put out and his ears and nose cut off ; after which he was made to walk through the town and finally thrown into the river.¹

During four years, however, the Central Soviet Government hesitated to take action against the Patriarch Tikhon and the directing organisms of the Church. Hopes were entertained that anti-religious propaganda would soon undermine the people's faith and that the ship of the Church would founder of its own accord upon the reef of the indifference, or even the hostility of the masses.

When, at the end of the winter of 1921-2, the Party decided to launch its grand offensive, it was only after it had ensured the co-operation of a group of traitors who had been nourished in the very bosom of the Church. This group, which adopted the appellation of the "Living Church," was composed of a certain number of priests ("white clergy") who aspired to power and preached a variety of innovations chiefly

¹ We are unable in this volume to mention even the smallest number of these martyrs. Records which give a fair idea of the situation will be found in a publication entitled *Assault of Heaven* (English edition, 1924. Russian edition, 1925), and also in *La Terreur Rouge*, by S. Melgounov (Payot).

aimed at abolishing the rule whereby episcopal dignity was the exclusive appanage of monks ("black clergy").

An easy *casus belli* was furnished by the great famine of 1921. The patriarch having invited the clergy to subscribe to the public assistance fund all non-consecrated religious objects of value, the group of rebellious priests countered by an appeal which proclaimed the necessity of sacrificing to this end all and every religious valuable, thus seeking to underline the inadequacy of the help offered by the patriarch to the distressed people. Three days later an official decree ordered the confiscation of all religious objects of value "not indispensable" to the services of the Church. The patriarch replied by an energetic protest and forbade the clergy to execute the "sacrilegious decree."

War had been declared.

The clergy did their utmost to obey the patriarch's order. Official statistics record 1,414 cases of active resistance to the annexation of religious objects, all of which were punished by death or deportation.

Notably at Petrograd there were arrested and brought before a "revolutionary tribunal" an important group of priests and believers led by Benjamin, Metropolitan of Petrograd, a true saint, even by the accounts of accusing witnesses. The trial was an inconceivable comedy! The judgment was dictated by the central power and ordered the execution of several persons, including the metropolitan. But fear of a popular revolt gave rise to a rumour that the metropolitan would be sent to Moscow; meanwhile, he was secretly shot, together with the other condemned prisoners. All died courageously.

At Moscow another similar trial occurred in which thirteen persons were condemned to death. The leaders of the "Living Church" then decided that the situation

was propitious for their assumption of power. On the eve of the execution of the thirteen, they sought out the patriarch and, telling him that his uncompromising policy had caused the fate of the condemned, implored him to convoke a new Council with a view to electing his successor.

Tikhon allowed himself to be persuaded and chose a provisional successor. This concession once obtained from the patriarch, the Bolsheviks decided that the moment had come for his arrest; his successor, the Metropolitan Agafangel, met with the same fate.

By means of a series of machinations and skilfully contrived lies, the leaders of the "Living Church" then founded an organism entitled "The High Administration of the Church" and attempted to assign to it the function of central direction of the Orthodox Church.

They proceeded with the "weeding" of the clergy with the efficacious support of the Cheka. "The High Administration" sent forth fifty-six emissaries whose duty consisted in contacting with any priests who might be disposed to serve the "Living Church," and in entrusting to them the direction of bishoprics. Many bishops were banished and no fewer than sixty-six were deported. During the month of December alone, Moscow accomplished the arrest of seventy-four priests and prominent religious laymen, and parish councils hostile to the "Living Church" were dissolved.

To put it briefly, it was a new wave of terror. The Council of the "Living Church," at a meeting in May 1923, declared Tikhon to be deposed from his position as patriarch and deprived of his monastic dignity; he became merely "Citizen Biélavine."

And then, just as it was about to celebrate its decisive victory, the "Living Church" which, incidentally, lost no time in dividing itself into three rival groups, saw

an abrupt change of front manifested in the attitude of the Soviet Government.

Tikhon was suddenly restored to liberty and permitted to resume the exercise of his patriarchal functions !

Obviously it was not a case of bolshevik generosity. It could only be a scheme. But what scheme? We shall see.

The *vox populi* had discovered in "Living Church" priests the authentic servants of Antichrist. It was said in Petrograd that the Archpriest Vvedensky, one of the heads of the "Living Church," surnamed the "metropolitan of Sodom and Gomorrah," went about in his car bearing the satanic seal—the reversed numbers of the Antichrist: 999. By contrast the prestige of the imprisoned patriarch shone with increasing splendour.

In the face of this state of affairs the leaders of the Party decided upon a radical change of tactics. Was it not much wiser to free Tikhon and to place all his activities under rigorous Government control?

And lo and behold, on the eve of the day which was to see the opening of his trial, Tikhon signed a statement which created as great a sensation abroad as it did in the U.S.S.R. According to the terms of this document, the patriarch admitted the justice of the accusations against him, regretted his former "actions against State commands" and declared that he was in future not an enemy of the soviet power.

Many hypotheses have been advanced with regard to the motives which led the patriarch to sign this statement. Some have been found to raise doubts as to its authenticity, together with that of subsequent analogous documents. But the texts themselves clearly reveal the motive which influenced the patriarch's behaviour. Tikhon emphasizes that the most urgent and essential

duty of all others is the re-establishment of the unity of the Church. His first act after his release from prison was a severe reprimand addressed to the work of the "Living Church" (July 15th, 1923).

This was followed by a remarkable reaction. Many priests and bishops of the "Living Church" returned to place themselves under the patriarch's authority; even the leaders of those groups who formed the revolted Church abandoned their ideas of extremist reforms and evolved rapidly in an inverse sense: that is to say, toward orthodox principles. The compromised standard of the "Living Church" soon appeared to them to be inopportune and Tikhon's most recalcitrant adversaries mustered under the name of "Synodal or New Church." The leaders of this Church were excessively eager to display their willingness to be reconciled. Nevertheless, they demanded certain concessions to which the patriarch was unable to consent.

In October 1925, a few months subsequent to Tikhon's death, the Council of the "New Church" solemnly declared that it had nothing to do with the "dubious groups fallen away from the bosom of the Church," which allusion was directly aimed at the former and unrepentant leaders of the "Living Church."

The Council sought for a compromise which would reconcile them with the patriarch's substitute, the Metropolitan Peter Kroutitzky. The Government, on the other hand, demanded of the metropolitan guarantees of loyalty. Peter responded with unshakable firmness. He claimed absolute obedience to the legitimate hierarchy to be preceded by an *amende honorable*. On the other hand he utterly refused to sign the statement demanded by the Cheka. His arrest was naturally not delayed. It occurred in December 1925 and the Metropolitan Peter was deported to the depths of

Siberia, where he now drags out a suffering existence, tormented by sickness and privations.

After a series of intrigues engineered by the agents of the Cheka, Tikhon was succeeded by the Metropolitan Serge, who received the official title of Substitute for the Successor to the Patriarch.

The new Chief of the Church set out with the intention of following the trail blazed by Tikhon. But from the very first he went a great deal further. Serge, not content with proclaiming the loyalty of the Church to the Soviets, invited the entire populace (in July 1927) "to express its gratitude to the Government for the deferential attitude which they had displayed towards the Church." It would almost seem that biting sarcasm was intended! Later on, in February 1930, at the moment when various countries were raising their voices in protest against the anti-religious terror in the U.S.S.R., the metropolitan, in an interview accorded to the soviet press, stated that "there had never existed in the U.S.S.R. any persecution of the Church."

What were the results of this conciliatory policy adopted by the Metropolitan Serge?

He undoubtedly succeeded in re-establishing the unity of the Church. But he paid dearly for it. Not only was he compelled on several occasions to renew his assurances of loyalty, but all his activities were put under the rigorous control of the soviet authorities, and notably, in the nomination of bishops he was forced to conform to the desires of the Government.

Nor did any improvement result from his election; the situation of the Church is still precisely such as was so simply and vigorously denounced in the "message of the prisoner-bishops of Solovki" in 1926. In it they reproved the "renovated" Church and its "mendacious and scandalous" statements in denial of religious per-

secution. This remarkable document will always retain a great historical importance. It would seem to have foreseen and rebuked the tactics of the Metropolitan Serge, and events have merely confirmed the accuracy of its views.

The advent of the year 1929 witnessed a perceptible increase of persecution.

The Government modified the text of one of its constitutional laws. The words "liberty of religious and anti-religious propaganda" were replaced by these: "liberty of religious profession and of anti-religious propaganda," which bear a very different meaning. Moreover, the verbal amendment was accompanied by a savage application of former measures. The memorial addressed to the Government by the Metropolitan Serge in February 1930 clearly demonstrates the new state of affairs. Here are a few of the patriarch's grievances. The preparation of new members of the clergy is made impossible; priests are becoming an extinct species: among those officiating, 50 per cent are over fifty years of age and only 5 per cent are under thirty. Persons who are members of church choirs are banished from the trades unions and are thus condemned to starve; priests must submit to taxation entirely disproportionate to their means; their children are excluded from the schools; persons having priests as their tenants suffer supplementary taxation and the same applies to members of religious communities. Taxes for churches are calculated at the same rate as those for "lucrative enterprises" and the members of "groups of believers" must subsidize them with their entire means.

It is an interesting fact that this memoir was produced only four days after the celebrated interview in which the metropolitan denied the existence of any persecutions. This incident serves to illustrate the duplicity

of the tactics adopted by the Metropolitan Serge, a duplicity which is not without its parallels in the bosom of the clergy.

It is impossible to estimate, even roughly, how great a proportion of the clergy holds that the metropolitan was mistaken in adopting a loyalist policy; the more so as most of those opposed to such tactics held their peace in order to avoid any further internecine strife. Nevertheless, a score of bishops openly repudiated Serge, considering him to have failed in his duty. All these bishops were arrested and one of them whom the peasants attempted to protect at the time of his arrest was killed on the spot by the agents of the Cheka.

From the spring of 1929, while steadily tightening the net of its prohibitions round the Church, the Government applied itself ever more strenuously to the developing of the activities of the "Union of the Godless." The second world congress of atheists decided to lower the age of admission to fourteen years for a member and six years for a "pioneer." It deliberated on certain measures and lines of action such as conferences, publications, etc. etc.¹

¹ With regard to the methods of the anti-religious struggle in the U.S.S.R., see two lectures by Mgr. d'Herbigny which are of the greatest interest (Editions Spes). It must be noted that already in 1923, *Pravda*, the principal organ of the Party, published a long article: "Why is the Pope not brought to Trial?" "We are convinced," says the author of this article, "that sooner or later bourgeois Italy will become sovietic and that the Pope will then find himself in a situation as awkward as that of his colleague, the Patriarch Tikhon . . . etc. etc." The Young Communists of Moscow seized upon this idea and the "trial" was held in the former premises of a large restaurant. "The Pope was accused of counter-revolutionism and of anti-communist activities. The charges were proven and the accused judged worthy of the death penalty. The sentence was greeted with thunderous applause." It was decided to organize similar trials in all workmen's clubs. At that same period the propagandist section of the Party organized

More and more churches are being closed or disaffected. In this connection the Bolsheviki are always careful to vote a special resolution at some meeting in order to base their action upon the so-called "will of the people." It is easy enough to obtain the required expression of "will": a communist proposes the vote and is applauded by several others while the rest of those present hold their tongues for fear of reprisals. The motion is then "unanimously" adopted.

Every campaign undertaken by the Soviet Government hits the clergy in one manner or another. An interesting example is related by the engineer Tchernavine in an article of his which appeared in the Paris Russian newspaper, *Latest News*, and which throws a valuable light upon life in the U.S.S.R. and notably upon the tortures endured by those intellectuals who are regarded as "enemies of the régime." In the autumn of 1930, says M. Tchernavine, when there was a scarcity of small change, the Government declared war upon speculators. Anyone retaining more than three roubles of small coin was liable to punishment: the possession of a few score roubles of silver money might easily entail the death sentence or deportation to the north. This "campaign" against "speculators" was freely used to strike at the clergy. The Chekists would make their appearance in churches immediately after services; naturally they would find the small cash which had just been given by parishioners to the church offertories. The priests and sidesmen were promptly arrested, and since there could be no doubt of their "speculation," priests would frequently find themselves condemned to the "supreme degree of punishment,"

trials in which the accused was God Himself. One of these took place in the Garrison Club at Moscow in the presence of Trotsky, Lounatcharsky and five thousand soldiers.

that is to say, to being shot. "One priest," says M. Tchernavine, "who shared with me a cell in a prison where newspapers were permitted to circulate, read his own name among the lists of those who had been executed. There had not been time to separate him from us, and he was very shortly afterwards led away to his fate" (*Latest News*, October 1st, 1933).

A multitude of churches and convents are "liquidated." For instance, a noteworthy destruction was that of the largest church in Russia, the Cathedral of the Redemption at Moscow, which had been built with the contributions of the entire Russian people. In it perished many inestimable works of art.

* * * * *

One may therefore, as has been explained, discern four periods in bolshevik anti-religious action:

- (1) The war of partisans (1918-21).
- (2) Provocation of a revolt in the very heart of the Church by means of the "Living Church" (1921-3).
- (3) Attempts made to "tame" the Church in order to dominate, compromise and discredit it (1923-9).
- (4) Direct attack with systematic application of every measure of reprisal and destruction (since 1929).

Each period is marked by a redoubling of anti-religious propaganda. The daily press, the special anti-religious press, workmen's meetings and wireless lectures in communist "cells," in the armies and in the schools, are among the most powerful agents. Particularly in the schools, where a ruse was employed which achieved fame: its invention was attributed to Comrade Kroupskaia, the wife of Lenin. At any rate it pleased her to practise it. Entering a classroom, she

would invite the children to pray to God to send them sweets.

“Kneel down and pray earnestly ! . . . No results ? Now pray to the Soviet authorities. Remain on your knees. Say : ‘ Soviet power, send us sweets.’ That is right. Here they are ! ”

And she would throw handfuls of sweets to the children.

If this measure did not become general it was doubtless because the sweets were too costly an answer to prayer.

And what was the result of all this play-acting, of all this propaganda upon the mentality of the masses ? On seeing the principles of their venerated and age-old faith ridiculed, their churches profaned, their priests insulted and martyred, the souls of the people were shaken in their very foundations, and there soon arose symptoms of the development in their midst of processes similar to those which followed the “ intelligentsia ” of the nineteenth century ; there was a “ revision of values.” That which had been simple, clear and unquestionable became the subject of heated argument. Everywhere, in inns, in markets, in trains, one could hear the working people discussing the existence of God in passionate accents as a vital problem.

What were the results of this anxious effervescence ? We can only rely upon indirect indications, upon chance evidence, but the general impression received emerges quite clearly that faith is not dead among the Russian people ; their religious instincts are once more seeking for a moral foundation. We can offer the following recent proofs of this assertion. During the closing days of December 1934, the newspaper *For Communist Instruction* related that in a school in the Oufa region, “ among 254 scholars, only 118 attended the classes, the others

assisting at a religious service. Even some of the Red pioneers go to church," the paper complained.

The reports of the office for public instruction of the Moguilev-Podolski region [we are told by the same newspaper on the 24th of March 1935] lay stress upon the organization of a great number of anti-religious clubs and cells of the "Union of the God-less"; whereas all these clubs exist only upon paper. . . . During the celebrations of Christmas scores of pupils did not attend schools and went to church. Even in the model-schools, anti-religious education has been practically abandoned.

According to *Izvestia* (March 23rd, 1935), the communist committee of the town of Engels (Middle Volga) discovered a revolting fact: "A group of nuns has for a long period occupied school No. 3; on the actual premises of the school attended by 700 children, religious rites, benediction, marriages and baptisms, etc., are being performed . . . and religious anti-soviet propaganda is rife." More than this, the Soviet press supplies the information from time to time (and with what ire!) that such and such a member of the Young Communists has confessed religious beliefs and has even, in certain instances, entered a monastery. Occasionally incredible "scandals" occur, such as a collection taken up by the workmen of a factory (the Red Vanguard!) for the erection of a church! Frequently an operative majority will be formed in the very bosom of a "parish Council," and this phenomenon is alluded to by the organs of atheistic associations as the "democratic camouflage of the Church."

And thus the Church, persecuted, shorn of all her former splendour, finds powerful support among the masses of the people, while militant atheism is not often served out of genuine conviction, but rather by a curious "atheistic hypocrisy" actuated by a desire to capture the favour of the powers that be.

In the summer of 1935 it was rumoured several times that the Soviets were disposed to "legalize" the situation of the Church. It seems that M. Laval had discussed this subject with Moscow's masters, instigated to this purpose by the Saint-Siège. Certain communications assure us that the year 1936 will witness the convocation of a Council to elect a patriarch. But until to-day (September 1935) all this has been mere rumour. Not one of the restrictions which hit the clergy has been abolished; religious instruction remains forbidden; the Metropolitan Peter Kroutitzky, legal successor of Patriarch Tikhon, continues to suffer in exile; not one disaffected church has returned to its old worship. Only the anti-religious propaganda has become less aggressive, as we may see from the facts alluded to above: the results obtained by it have not justified the effort and expense. In this domain the resistance of the people triumphed over the communist action. But one cannot but be astonished by the attitude of the Bolsheviki's western friends who are eager to close their eyes both to the past as well as to the present and announce tolerance in the future, a tolerance non-existent and impossible.

What is possible, is a new, a fifth, phase of the underhand war, carried on under the sign of a fallacious tolerance, but otherwise similar to the preceding phases.

II

Art and Literature

In a soviet review, *The New World*, there appeared a little while ago a short story by a young writer named Rikatchov, entitled "The Greatness and Fall of Andrew Polozov." It dealt with the vicissitudes of a youthful "modernist" of the "climber" species under the new

régime. A provincial journalist, warmly encouraged and protected by the Party, he arrives in Moscow, where he achieves a dizzy career thanks to the zeal which he brings to the cause of communism. But an unexpected hazard suddenly reveals the fact that, contrary to all appearances, his zeal has been fictitious, and his only real motive has been a shameless desire for self-advancement.

The publication of this story had an immense repercussion among soviet literary circles. The author found himself violently attacked and was accused of having odiously misrepresented his colleagues.

He had touched a weak spot and everyone felt himself to be the target of his accusations.

How are we to explain so universal and so excessive a susceptibility?

When stepping on to the stage of history, bolshevism was anxious to play the part of a Mæcenas, a protector of literature and of the arts and, above all, of every audacity of thought and speech. It goes without saying that every encouragement was given to the various sections of the vanguard. Very soon, however, these last, who were supposed to be the apostles of an unlimited freedom, showed themselves to be devoid of all spirit of tolerance, each one claiming to be the most worthy spokesman of the new régime, and demanding a monopoly of prerogatives and favours.

Such an excess of zeal encouraged the Party to lose no time in exacting absolute obedience.

The accusation of counter-revolutionary sympathies must thereafter be immediately levelled at any individual who should display any signs of independence; as for those who were "tepid," they were promptly relieved of any means of publication.

Under the threat of such thunderbolts many writers

have thrown down their pens ; many others, and these among the best, have happily contrived to leave Russia. They continue the publication of their works abroad and already inspire the coming generation.

As for those who have remained, they find themselves compelled to respect that communist dictum that literature exists only for the needs of the Party. This truth has been proclaimed by the most powerful soviet authorities, foremost among whom is Maxim Gorky. Formerly as exalted as the haughty sea-gull presaging the tempest that would sweep away tyranny, Gorky has now accepted the office of the gaoler of literary inspiration. Some of his present slogans are worthy of being quoted :

The man of letters appears to protest against the right of the Revolution to dispose of individual creative energy, and this at an epoch when the individuals of the working classes, without pausing to pity themselves, are expending their entire strength in the creation of almost fabulous events [*sic* !]. At this time, when the youth of the working classes are performing miracles, the writer dares to claim that literature is his personal prerogative ! It is impossible to conceive a more pernicious absurdity !

This point of view of Gorky's, which has been adopted by the entire régime, reduces literature merely to the status of any other productive effort.

This state of affairs found its complete expression in the "Statutes of the Union of Soviet Writers of the U.S.S.R.," of which the full text is published in *Pravda* of May 6th, 1934. The first chapter of the Statutes lays down the following principle :

The decisive condition of the development of literature, of its artistic perfection, of its ideological value and of its practical efficacy is the close and intimate liaison of the literary movement with the existing political problems of the Party and of the Soviet Government, or, in other words, the active participation of writers in the building of the socialist edifice. . . .

Nor is this the expression of a mere platonic wish. For the second chapter, printed in heavy type, declares that :

The Union of Soviet Writers proposes to accomplish the essential task of creating works of a high artistic value which will express the heroic struggle of the international proletariat ; works penetrated by the pathos of the victory of socialism, works which will reflect the great wisdom and heroism of the Communist Party. . . .

Nor can anyone shirk this "essential task," for in such event the necessary "measures" are easily taken : paragraph four of the third chapter specifies that the expulsion of members is accomplished on the simple decision of the secretariat of the Union in all cases where "the activities of any given number should seem to be incompatible with the interests of the socialist edifice" and should in a general way prove themselves to be "anti-sovietic."

The "Union of Soviet Writers" is, of course, a "free association," but it is the only one that is authorized, and those writers who do not join it or who are excluded can only write for their personal pleasure (with a cautious eye upon the G.P.U.). Nobody will publish the products of their pens. Nor will they be able to obtain any other employment, lodging, living-ration or means of habitation ; they will retain only one privilege : that of dying, of hunger.

The first Congress of Soviet Writers organized by the "Union" (at the end of August 1934) offered a striking example of the condition of servitude to which literature has been reduced in the U.S.S.R. An assembly of five hundred and twenty-seven delegates met in that same hall in which Dostoievski had given his celebrated lecture on Poushkin, an assembly which was not divided into sections or commissions, and was certainly incapable of any useful work. But it was not a question of taking

any action but of yet again receiving the Party's commands. Several orators had been selected to formulate them : first of all Gorky, who ordered the members of the Congress to "blazon forth our victories with rejoicing" ; then Comrade Jdanov, who, in the name of the Central Committee of the Party, defined the essential duty of literature : that it should be a loyal and energetic support to the Soviet Government in its action against enemies at home and abroad. At the same time a leader of *Pravda* (August 21st, 1934) declared that the duty of every writer was to help the Government "with the pen, and if need be with the rifle." After which, the members of the Congress entered the tribune in turn, and without uttering one word about literature, swore one by one fidelity to the Government and expressed their enthusiastic devotion to Stalin, "that generous protector of letters" and "best friend of writers." The oath of submission to the régime was again renewed lately on the occasion of the plenary sessions of the Committee of the Union of Writers which took place from the 2nd to the 7th of March 1935.

When considered necessary, what can only be described as "Literary Patrols" are organized and sent to the "fronts" of collectivization or of factory construction with instructions to puff the task of the moment. The same, moreover, applies to small daily matters, as will be gathered from two instances borrowed from the *Pravda* of Moscow (April 4th, 1935).

"I do not know how I am going to work to-morrow, my hands are all swollen!" said a working delegate of a regional Congress [the scene is described by the correspondent of a local paper, the *Pravda* of Taganrog].

"But why are your hands swollen?"

"You try to applaud for five whole days and you'll feel the results. . . ."

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Another local journal, *The Communist of Tadjikistan*, describes in the following words the "prodigious results" of an "heroic ski raid" achieved by soviet sportsmen: "Each one of these sportsmen has augmented the capacity of his lungs by an average of 265 cubic metres, with, be it understood, a corresponding enlargement of his thorax."

"Operative and peasant correspondents" are not only employed as propagandists but also as Chekists: their duties include spying and informing, as has been seen already in the *Manual of the Technique of Editing*.

Wherein lies the interest of such newspapers for their readers? Whence come the huge figures of their circulation? Figures which are quoted by the Soviets as affording shattering proof of their flourishing culture. The fact is that in the U.S.S.R. there are no newspapers save those of the Communists; the number of these is very limited (fewer periodicals are published in the U.S.S.R. than in Austria), and above all—one is compelled to read them! Anyone who is dependent, in one way or another, upon the State—and such dependence is universal—must, in order to avoid blunders, keep abreast with the "general aim of the Party" as well as with the views and intentions of local authorities. For these purposes, the reading of a Moscow newspaper and of a local journal is essential. Should such inducement prove insufficient, the local communist committee intervenes. Here is a resolution, passed by the communist committee of the Petrovski district (region of Saratov), which is reported in *Pravda* of April 3rd, 1935:

Regarding the unsatisfactory state of the subscription to the local paper (*Leninist Edification*) as a lack of recognition of the part played by the press in the struggle for the sowing of the fields, the committee decide that: (1) Political sub-directors of traction stations

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must obtain subscriptions to the paper at a rate of at least three per section of tractors and at least three per field-brigade. (2) All members of the Party and of the Young Communists of the district must compulsorily subscribe to the paper. . . .

It cannot be said that only mercenary authors and journalists conform to the demands of the times; occasionally one meets with an accent of sincerity, but in such cases the inspiration frequently savours of sadism. Here is a fragment of a poem in which the orator speaks of "ancient and Holy Russia":

I trample . . .
I drive my knife in to the hilt . . .
Of your bell turrets with their shining chimes.
I bind your unclean hands . . .
I dedicate myself body and soul,
To the legion of the Chekists, the sweepers away of filth. . . .
I unmask you to your very entrails,
Heroine with the face of a whore . . .

Further on the poet, who, incidentally, is of German descent and whose origins are far removed from the proletariat, dreams of being some day able to crush emigration, and with it all Western civilization: "Come what may, our fists shall dispel the darkness of Europe."

"The horrors of the accursed past," in any case, frequently nourish the inspirations of soviet poets; probably they lend themselves better than the present splendours to that romantic interpretation which is dear to the heart of all poets. The retrospective reproaches addressed to Tzarism are not always unjustified. We are reminded of a poet who is to-day a shining light of the literature of a tribe of Turkestan, and who once exclaimed: "Do you see this stone? Listen, then, and it will tell you of the luxury which surrounded our Tzars, and of how they bathed their bodies in water." The imagination of this son of the desert could not conceive of a more criminal debauch than

that of the senseless waste—for the purpose of washing—of the precious liquid.

Nevertheless, both sadism and naïveté must yield first place to obsequiousness which reaches its high-water mark whenever any unusual event offers a propitious subject to the lackeys of literature. Thus, between the 2nd and the 10th of December 1934, that is to say in the space of less than ten days following upon the assassination of Kirov, *Izvestia* received eight hundred and eighty-seven pieces of poetry inspired by that “cataclysm” (*Izvestia*, 12th December 1934). Towards the 10th of January the number of works in verse and in prose addressed to Kirov numbered more than fifteen hundred (*Literary Gazette*, January 1935).

Foreign writers in the pay of Moscow outrivalled their Russian colleagues in their obsequiousness. We may quote a prose poem by the Italian, Germanetto, published in *The Land of the Soviets*, and which begins as follows :

The unforgettable day has dawned. It has beheld his Countenance, his large eyes, his powerful and peerless brow. The master has appeared to it like a ray of summer sunshine. The day has dawned, the incomparable day. It has beheld Stalin. . . .

Another example : the Hungarian poet, Guidach, settled at Moscow and was baptized by Lounatcharsky with the title of “proletarian light of the world.” He recently announced that, having in preparation a cycle of bolshevik poems on love, it was necessary for him to preface his literary efforts by an exhaustive study of Engel’s theories, of Lenin’s conversations with Clara Tsetkin and of Kaganovitch’s speech upon the communist edification. He could, it must be admitted, hardly fail to drink of this third spring of wisdom, in view of the fact that Kaganovitch was at that particular moment Stalin’s most adhesive acolyte.

Behold now a new and important communist champion who appears on the horizon of the VIIth Congress of the Comintern in the person of Dimitrov. Already the Bulgar Comrade is declared to be a star of Russian literature. This is what we read of him in the soviet press (end of August 1935) :

The young masters of language must study the speeches of the Comrade Dimitrov, which are perfect specimens of literary creation. Dimitrov's style is a beautifully carved sword. . . . We must all imitate his pitiless force and perfect precision.

Terrible are the maledictions heaped upon any foreign writer who, after having adhered to the Soviets, secedes from their midst ! Such as the case of Panaït Istrati, who was formerly so renowned, but whose death quite recently went almost unnoticed. This "Balkan Gorky," as Romain Rolland calls him, imagining himself to be a Communist, sought shelter in 1928 in the earthly Paradise. Moscow hailed him with fife and drum : he was fêted and honoured. But the Roumanian novelist was an honest man of sincere character and, moreover, a genuine poet, to whom freedom in his private life was as indispensable as air. He very soon realized that the alleged earthly paradise "was nothing but a stifling prison for all freedom of thought," and after remaining eighteen months in the U.S.S.R. he fled from Russia and related in his book, *Towards another Flame*, the reasons for his flight and the story of his bolshevist experiences. Soviet writers then hastened to overwhelm him with abuse, to tax him as a renegade and a Judas.

How is a soviet author to behave when he has to pronounce judgment upon a great writer of the past whose genius is undeniably delicate ? Lounatcharsky, speaking of Poushkin, reproaches him with having shown weakness in his treatment of the character of

Eugene, in his *Knight of Steel*, who represents the element of protest against the despotism of Peter the Great. But immediately afterwards, fearing that he may, by this assertion, have exposed himself to the accusation of criticizing the Party, who might see in it a desire to laud individualist reaction, he hastens to add: "The power of the Soviets, like that of Peter the Great, is absolute with this difference, that the power of the former is justified. It is, in any case, impossible to make any comparison between the miserable efforts of Peter and the vast communist achievement." Lounatcharsky's embarrassment is equally manifest when he deals with Goethe, since the entire philosophical conception of that great poet is in flagrant contradiction to that of the régime. After much patient searching Lounatcharsky ended by discovering among Goethe's utterances the following expression of hope for the future: "That the day may come when a number of wise men will unite and lead the Universe!" He clings to this idea and sets out to show that it has been realized in "that prodigious headquarters staff which in the U.S.S.R. is formed by the representatives of the true vanguard of the human race!"

In any case, the problem to which we have briefly alluded has a general aspect: it does not concern only isolated geniuses of past generations, but affects the entire vast literary heritage of many centuries. How is this to be dealt with and what is to be said of contemporary Western literature? In this respect the "general aim of the Party" is not so easily conformed to. Two scarcely compatible principles come into play: on the one hand, the doctrine appears to condemn root and branch all literary emanations from the out-of-date old world, but, on the other hand, the authorized bolshevist leaders have many times declared

that communism must "annex bourgeois culture, digest it and make its highest realizations her own." This last conception is particularly prominent since the end of 1934 when Stalin decided to concede certain rather indefinite and, in most cases, purely imaginary relaxations of discipline, with a view to encouraging the so-called blossoming of human personality within the collectivist régime. This obscure modification, which involves an insoluble contradiction, has completed the rout of the writers and, incidentally, of all intellectual workers in the U.S.S.R. They no longer know which foot to put forward in the macabre measure which they are stepping to the glory of the Red dictatorship. We may even, nowadays, occasionally observe signs of daring; *Izvestia* (March 9th, 1935) publishes a protest which, not many months ago, would have been regarded as presumption, and in which a number of the leading soviet writers complained that the head of the Schoumiatzky Film Company had not invited them to the "Cinema-Festival" at which recent "bourgeois films" were shown. To quote another incident of the same nature: the author Besymensky, in the *Literary Gazette* of February 15th, 1935, violently accuses the producers of the soviet film *Happy Boys* (it was shown abroad) of having neglected the political element to the extent of "imitating bourgeois ciné-revues." The offended producers appealed to the commission of soviet control, who supported them, and their too hasty accuser was compelled to "acknowledge his error" in *Pravda* of March 15th. The same fate befell another "purist," Kirchon, who, on the occasion of the last plenary session of the Union of Writers (early March 1935), protested against a series of "foreign phenomena with soviet trimmings," such as that same film *Happy Boys*, the setting of *La Dame aux Camélias*,

by Meyerhold, etc. No attention was paid to Kirchon's warnings and his zeal was thrown away.

Is the era of communist rigour coming to a close? By no means. One of the most recent novels published in the U.S.S.R., *Pride*, by Amoursky, has been pronounced "counter-revolutionary." *Izvestia* (April 2nd, 1935), announcing that its author is expelled from the Party and the director of the journal in which the novel appeared dismissed from his post, adds: "Nor is this an isolated instance. . . ." Just as heretofore, now this writer, now that, is expelled from the Union or the Party "because of their bourgeois degeneration." (One of the most recent examples was Lebedenko, an eminent writer who was expelled from the Party in February 1935.) And the works which are hailed by the régime are still those which are designed for its glorification, as for instance a new play by Pogodine, *The Aristocrats*, of which the *Literary Gazette* saw fit to write (February 1935): "The drama shows us the Chekists at work, at their labours. After the opening scenes the Chekists become the friends of the audience and each succeeding episode serves only to intensify that friendship."

Thus it may be seen that if nowadays an excess of zeal may prove futile, a lack of it is none the less dangerous. Moreover, it is seldom that a writer can enjoy any feeling of certainty that his work will be viewed with favour, for it is too difficult to steer successfully through all the ramifications of the "general aim of the Party." This is why one so frequently observes in the various soviet publications apologies made by writers who thus advertise their repentance by means of the public press, beating their breasts, accusing themselves of "gross errors" and protesting their abject submission to the tribunal of the communist index.

The rivalry existing between authors thus finds its outlet in reciprocal criticism. Comrade Chenguélé, author of a poem of which the theme was acknowledged to be purely and impeccably communist, was denounced by a rival for having joined "Comintern" with "Skverno" (bad) and "Stalin" with "razvalin" (ruins), thus affording superabundant evidence of a treachery which was adequate grounds for classifying him as a mercenary who had sold himself to the "White Guards" !

Nevertheless, the accusations brought by fellow-writers are not always without foundation, nor are the apologies made by authors invariably superfluous. Undoubtedly no direct criticism of the régime is possible ; it would be absurd to attempt it : there is censorship, there is the Union of Writers, there are the editors of newspapers and periodicals, and behind all this barbed wire a host of further obstacles. How can all these be ignored ? If an author writes it is in order to be published and thus increase his reputation. Not only this but there is the question of remuneration, and such remuneration—shades of a bourgeois era !—is in proportion to sales. In this conjunction we can learn something from a writer, by name Michael Golodny :

Certain of our writers [he tells us in *The Young Guard* (March 1935)] still retain the illusion that it is possible to shine in our literary fields by the means of creating a disturbance. They mistakenly reason as follows : " If I am criticized by the opinion of the Party, I am thereby the gainer in publicity. . . . "

If we drop the inverted commas, we shall see clearly what is meant. A new work is published ; soviet criticism accepts it as completely conforming to the ideology of the Party ; the author is acknowledged to be a good Communist . . . but his book does not sell ! Conversely, the critics scent a " suspect element " : it is

certainly not obvious, but there are hints of disaffection ; the author explains, defends himself, makes excuses or apologies if need be. In the meantime his work is in demand and is reprinted . . . he has achieved fame and made money ! The proceeding is delicate, risky, but alluring and lucrative ! Moreover, it sometimes happens that an author may arrange with a friendly critic beforehand that this latter shall denounce the " disaffection " in his forthcoming work . . . in consideration of a share of the royalties due to the author on the second impression. Thus the critic who purports to lay lance in rest for communist purism, actually contributes to the success of a suspect publication. It is in such circumstances hardly surprising that at the plenary session of the Committee of the Union of Writers which took place in early March 1935 under the presidency of Gorky, the problem of Soviet criticism was acknowledged to be " painfully involved ! " . . .

In any case, we can the more readily understand the recantations of authors and also a statement which appeared recently in a leading article in *Literary Leningrad* (February 1935) to the effect that : " We are quite unable to believe anybody's word of honour . . . "

The more prudent among the soviet writers are therefore, and for good reason, careful to steer clear of all hazardous ventures, finding it much wiser, when all is said and done, to stick to the thesis that " real " literature, and indeed " real " culture in general, had their origins in the womb of communism. These " purists " are already seeking to compose a history of proletarian literature. But in the course of their talk they occasionally meet with unpleasant surprises : we may instance the discovery made by a soviet writer that a certain Andrew Diki was one of the first creators of the " proletarian epic." In his pride at this dis-

covery he published it in the periodical *Literature and Marxism*. Unfortunately for him, the newspaper *Moscow Evening* supplied a curious comment upon his statement, to the effect that prior to 1917 this same Diki had been a spy in the employ of the Tzarist police! It is easy to imagine the thunderbolts which fell upon the unfortunate historian of proletarian literature.

Among the acknowledged duties of soviet writers is that of representing to Western eyes "public opinion in the U.S.S.R." It was with this end in view that an open letter was addressed, not long ago, by a group of the more prominent among them to their Western colleagues, Romain Rolland, Stephan Zweig and Bernard Shaw, asking them to condemn the war in the Far East against the Soviet Union. It is interesting to record that one of the signatories of this letter, Faddeiev, had written of Bernard Shaw only a few days earlier as "a decrepit fox, indifferent to everything except self-advertisement," and of Zweig as "an acknowledged mystic engulfed to the neck in a bog of idealism." But at the word of command the fox and the engulfed idealist become "our old comrades and friends."

So far as the international relationships of the U.S.S.R. permit, the soviet writers are obliged to "work on exportation" so as to strengthen the sympathy with the Soviets felt by the Western intellectuals. This was the special purpose of the "Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture" organized in Paris in June 1935 under the patronage of Moscow, a gathering in which several well-known foreigners, such as Andrew Gide, took part.

In view of these revelations it might well be thought that real literature is extinct in the U.S.S.R. Such, however, is not the case or Stalin might well lay claim

to the Omnipotence of God. Literature exists, and proof of the fact is afforded by the tragic and premature decease of so many writers. Some, frankly considered dangerous, have been shot, like Goumilov. To others, such as Block, death has come, slowly but surely gradually undermining the constitution by intense mental distress, by tragedy built up of a bitter disappointment regarding all that the poet had hailed with enthusiasm as the dawn of strength and freedom. For others, finally, as in the cases of Essenin and Mayakovsky, suicide became the only solution to the intolerable tyranny imposed upon their talent and their literary consciences.

And what of those who are still living? Do they really feel that they create by lying to themselves and to others? And is there any genuine talent among them?

Yes. Russia still possesses a number of writers of undeniable merit. Their work is undoubtedly deeply vitiated by the communist stranglehold, but they do in spite of that handicap sometimes contrive, with the aid of painful subterfuges, to express those human truths, which are the very essence of all artistic creation.

Those who really occupy a privileged position are the humorous writers. A Zostchenko, an Ilf or a Petrov are at liberty to display the absurdities of current life, the meanness, the ineptitude of daily existence under the Soviets. But it would be a great mistake to perceive in this fact any indication of a dawning tolerance, just as it would be ridiculous to apply the explanation of political tolerance to the proceeding of "self-criticism" which is rife among the Soviets. It must be borne in mind that in both literature and politics only the faults and imperfections of application are attacked;

the bad servants of the régime are denounced but never the principles of government. Never are the régime or its leaders subjected to the mildest rebuke.

Such criticism therefore only buttresses the régime, or at any rate is intended to do so.

However, there still exists in Russia an entire literature which is not destined for State publication and which will never be offered to soviet publishers. . . . Trees will sometimes grow from among rocks ; a little earth will afford them the necessary nourishment for their roots and despite a hundred obstacles they will contrive to rear their heads towards the sun. The same may be said of the clandestine literature which is transmitted from hand to hand in typescript, thus escaping all censorship.

* * * * *

It seemed in the early days after the Revolution that the U.S.S.R. had really accomplished wonders for the theatre and the films. At an epoch when, throughout the entire world, an irresistible urge towards a new expression of life was apparent, the soviet theatre of all others seemed to have the finest opportunities for becoming the vanguard of the new movement ; its public, with the spontaneous reactions of simple minds, were of all others best adapted for the acceptance of any new and audacious formula of art . . . guided by a few great actors, a theatre full of power and imagination produced ingenious settings and impressed even foreigners. It must also be borne in mind that in this branch of activity as elsewhere, the promoters of the movement, individuals of powerful and original mentality, possessed all the culture of pre-war Russia. It was thanks to this solid foundation that they were enabled to understand the psychology of the people who were in future going to fill the theatres and places

of amusement, and were able to provide them with the nourishment best suited to their appetites.

Masterpieces of stage setting were born of that clarity of vision with which a chosen few beheld the present—a present which they linked to the past by that invisible chain which is a feature of all sound evolution. Material assistance freely granted by the State assured the subsistence of these spokesmen of the Idea, these dispensers of popular enjoyment. The personal favours lavished upon the servants of dramatic art were such that all those who could do so assumed the title of actor as a species of loyalist passport and a source of very considerable alimentary advantages.

However, very soon, a progressive pressure began to be applied to all freedom with a view to bringing art into line with communist propaganda. Control was acquired by means of an Association of the actors themselves which was established and placed upon the same footing as any other trades union. It is interesting to note the formula by which the local Leningrad Committee contrived to define the obligations of actors :

The soviet actor, while participating in the task of production, must bear in mind his responsibility with regard to the political trend of his theatre. He must continually regulate his methods with a view to bringing them into harmony with the fundamental duties of art in an epoch of socialist reconstruction.

And quite recently, in order to seal the fidelity of dramatic art to the Party, one of Russia's leading actors, Monakhov, declared "in the name of his profession as a whole" that "every stage worker in Leningrad would henceforth create scenic images under the inspiration of the memory of the blood shed by our unforgettable Mirovitch (Kirov)."

In no domain does art now escape from interference. A few months ago we were able to read the demands

made by an individual named Dankman regarding the militarization "of equestrian numbers" at the circus; this fervent Communist insisted that the clown, Augustus, should be made up in a manner definitely suggestive of his soviet duties and that his jokes should be inspired by current political topics. Even the circus must no longer amuse: it must preach!

It is for these reasons that we are now beholding the collapse of what appeared to be so splendid an effort. The great producers see their creations, formerly so highly praised, hacked to pieces by the censor. Bound hand and foot they are condemned to silence. Yesterday's elect are now in disgrace and the wheel of fortune, in the hands of Stalin, turns in delirious jerks regulated by the pulsations of insanity.

It is seldom, nowadays, that the producer's imagination runs in accord with the views of the Party. In most instances, drastic censorship leads to productions so colourless that the public prefers foreign films, as is testified by the Soviet press.

The censorship of the theatre and the films is even more severe than that exercised over the novel, since on the stage any camouflage becomes impossible. The types created by the author must be seen in their nakedness, and he is no longer there to modify them by his critical commentary. In this case there is "objective counter-revolutionism" (the term has been coined for use in this connection), and what might be tolerated in a novel is not permitted in the theatre. Sometimes the axe falls upon plays and films which have already been produced. Such was the case recently, in April 1935, of the film "*Little Red Demons*," which incurred the disapproval of the communist commission of control, who, incidentally, served injunctions upon a number of Soviet film producers. The Comrades Orlov, political

director of the repertory, and Rochal, second in command of the Film Trust, were both deprived of their posts, while the president of the Union of Cinematograph Workers, Bliakhin (a member of the Party since 1903) and other persons were severely reprimanded.

Art enslaved, however, does not prove quite as satisfactory as the régime had hoped, and the Communists are compelled to confess their failure in this domain. Recently there appeared in the *Red Gazette* of Leningrad the report of the great fête of the World-Proletariat on the 1st of May ; in it appeared the following statement : " Art was silent, yesterday, or spoke in uncertain accents and in a language which was false and dull ; in view of yesterday's experience we feel that it is time that we took careful stock of the current activities among the army of artistic workers." The expression is well chosen : uncertain, false and dull ; such must inevitably be the language of art that has been deprived of its freedom of inspiration.

Painting, sculpture, and music are subject to the same restrictions and are thus shorn of their wings ; it is possible to form an estimate of the artistic conceptions advanced by the masters of to-day, in the light of the following tirade which is borrowed from a work by the soviet critic Gronsky, *The Masters of our Museums*.

The impetuosity of the Persian romantic [*sic* ?] Delacroix and the academic torpor of the classical Ingres both clearly express the pulse [*sic* ?] of the French industrial who sold rotten herrings or rotten string while he patted his paunch with his podgy hand ; the hand which was later to strangle the Commune which arose solely with a view to preventing the infection of free socialist pictorial art by the rotteness which has invaded string and herrings. . . .

In the U.S.S.R. there are commissions for the preservation of monuments, but their chief object is to seek out every kind of valuable material such as lead or

marble, etc., with a view to selling them or to making use of them in the construction of socialist monuments.

The same fate befalls those works of the great masters which were formerly in the State Museums: Rembrandts, Titians, Raphaels; they are sold to rich foreign experts (the purchases of Messrs. Morgan & Mellon already amount to millions of francs), or put up to auction through the medium of the great European dealers.

And indeed, in this respect, the Soviets are wise, since, as we are informed by *The Truth of the Comsomol* (10th March 1935):

The roof of the Hermitage is leaking badly. . . . The principal rooms of the museum have a dilapidated appearance. . . . The windows have not been cleaned for twelve years and lately, in the large Italian room, an immense pane of glass has fallen from the skylight. In the room devoted to the exhibition of French absolutism the paintings of the ceiling are damaged by damp. . . . The mouldings of the ceiling and cornices threaten to fall. . . . In the Russian Museum (formerly the Museum of Alexander III) an accident has occurred similar to that which happened in the Tretiakoff Gallery (at Moscow). In the XVIIth room, which contains Brullov's pictures, the hot water is spouting from the radiators and recently three rooms in the historical section have been flooded. . . .

At the present time the Soviet Treasury is in very low water and even objects of minor value, frequently taken from libraries and private collections, are turned into cash. . . .

III

Science, the Schools and Education

From the time of its first accession to power the Soviet Government found itself faced by a singular dilemma: it wished to give to the national social economy that indispensable scientific character de-

manded by Marxism, but in order to do so it must have recourse to that social class that its principles repudiated.

There was only one possible solution : pitiless severity towards those who were recognized or suspected to be hostile to the régime ; solicitude towards such as gave evidence of their loyalty to the Party. Consequently a great number of scholars were put to death by the Cheka while others received the title of " indispensable specialists " and were in addition granted a large alimentary ration.

In addition to this, the régime determined to form groups of those scholars who could be trusted, and with this end in view it established the " Institutes of Red Professors."

But very soon mere loyalty in those scholars who had rallied to the régime no longer sufficed ; they must in addition give active proofs of their sentiments. As a preliminary measure the personnel of the " proletarianized " Higher Schools were put in the crucible, being subjected to a close supervision by the bolshevik commissars, by their students and even by members of the communist cells of the universities.

The Academy of Sciences alone, as incontestable head of the entire scientific movement, retained a measure of freedom until the day when, at length, the Party attacked its curriculum and compelled it to admit prominent Communists who became more and more numerous ; election practically ceased to be free, and was by order of the Dictator, who gradually made of it a mere honorary title for his acolytes. The senior academicians who protested against this imposition, or displayed any undue independence in their scientific researches, were arrested and deported. Thus the historian Tarlé, long known abroad as the soviet am-

bassador of science, was imprisoned shortly after his return from Paris, where he had in November 1930 delivered a lecture at the Sorbonne under the presidency of the Head of the University of Paris. An urgent protest addressed to the U.S.S.R. Government produced no effect.¹

What is the method of reprisals commonly employed against professors who fail in the expression of their zeal? We will quote an instance:

About two years ago a "debate" was organized at Tiflis. Officially, it was patronized by the Chair of sociology of the Transcaucasian Communist University. The principal lecture was given by a prominent Georgian Communist, Guéguénava. It was in reality not a lecture at all, but an accusation brought against four professors of the "Institute of Socialist Edification." Taking up the dual position of judge and aggressor, Guéguénava accused them of "idealism" incompatible with the marxian concept; above all, he accused one of them of having, in the course of his lectures, uttered

¹ The failure of the attempt at a *rapprochement* initiated by French scholars with their Russian colleagues who were crushed under the heel of the régime, did at any rate open the eyes of French science to the conditions of scientific research in Russia. We may quote in this connection Professor Albert Mathiez, whom no one would care to accuse of narrow-mindedness or of reactionary sympathies, and who, in his remarkable article "Choses de Russie Soviétique" (*Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, March-April 1931), arrives at the following conclusion: "In the Russia of Stalin, there is no longer any room for free, disinterested science, or for any true science. History has become merely a branch of propaganda."

Alas! In the troubled times we live in everything is quickly forgotten, especially when forgetfulness is opportune. And we are now seeking to inaugurate a new era of collaboration between French and Russian scientists. Such a collaboration may, it is true, prove of use to certain political aims (which we believe to be mistaken and disastrous) but never to science!

the following incredible outrage : “ that Karl Marx, in proving that socialist economy must succeed capitalist economy, had nevertheless never affirmed that humanity would become stagnant before this formula and would cease to seek for a better road to development. . . . ”

The accused defended themselves to the best of their ability, but at the closing debate, Guéguénava and his myrmidons voted that the teaching of these four professors was entirely inadmissible and that they should be replaced by true leninist-marxists, unless they agreed decisively and absolutely to renounce in all their future scientific manifestations their reactionary opinions, and to adopt in their stead “ the only and complete marxist and leninist concept. ” Shortly afterwards the “ Institute of Socialist Edification ” received two letters of apology. In one of them, one of the professors repudiated the opinions he had expressed in his own works, while in the other his colleague recognized his error in having so far neglected to write a treatise upon the marxist theory of Law. He also promised to repair this oversight in the course of the ensuing year !

Another more recent case may also be quoted. The students of an operative faculty formed themselves into a tribunal in order to bring to trial Professor Kazansky, who was accused of an extremely grave crime : in one of his entomological explanations, Kazansky had said that the word *revolution* proceeded from the Latin word *revolvere*, which may be literally translated as *inverse development*. It was in vain that the professor explained that he had had no intention of using the term in its political sense, but had only referred to its astronomical and geometrical meaning. He was savagely accused of having attempted to mislead his pupils with regard to the “ luminously clear ” signification of the word “ Revolution. ”

In 1931 there occurred with much pomp and circumstance the first congress, "the first in the history of the human race," on "the Conception of a Plan of Scientific Research." This congress, presided over by Boukharine, a Red academician and reputed the foremost marxian theorist, was designed to set the seal upon the final subordination of science to the Party. In the course of the congress Boukharine stated unequivocally that: "Everything in the cause of socialist edification; everything for the defence of the proletarian country against its enemies—such must be the major and essential aim of all activities in scientific research."

Another thoroughly up-to-date comrade expressed himself in yet more explicit terms: "Only those are orthodox in leninist-marxist philosophy who are able vigorously to defend and actively to assist the general aims of the Party."

One of the soviet officials, Molotov, thinking it probable that among those attending the congress there might be members whose convictions were lukewarm, took care to remind his hearers that the Soviet Government "applied and would always apply pitiless measures against traitors of the operative classes."

In the face of this pleasant reminder, genuine scholars had nothing to offer, save remarks of the following description: that the time was at hand when scientific research would be undertaken by operatives and not by scholars.

The announcement of the closing of the congress says among other things that: "Capitalism cajoles science with a view to the destruction of humanity, with a view to the standardized production of corpses." . . . "Under the socialist régime, entire peoples are imbued with science, which is thus raised to heights which it has never before attained."

This brief quotation suffices to illustrate the depths to which science has sunk in the U.S.S.R.

* * * * *

Public instruction, like science, must lend its support to the "socialist edifice."

It was therefore necessary for the régime to create groups of specialists who would combine competence with docility. A complete reform of the system of education of the programmes and of the methods of recruiting pupils were essential.

To remain within the boundaries of technical instruction, to cut down any humanistic teaching, leaving any remaining vestiges under the protection of the marxist-leninist doctrine, such was the programme of the soviet reforms.

As for the recruiting of pupils, the aim at first was to reconcile two qualities : devotion to the régime and an adequate general culture, but very soon the second element found itself sacrificed to the first. Indeed, nowadays, only the two following methods are in force : either the communist cells in response to a direct order send a selection of their young men to the university (nor are those selected necessarily the intellectuals), or else the recruiting is done from the "operative faculties" whose pupils are no better grounded for higher education.

On the other hand, access to the higher education is practically barred to young men of cultured families, since most of them fall under the axe of the law which strikes citizens in their civilian rights. Nevertheless, nearly all of them try to obtain admission, but because of the espionage which is everywhere the rule, they are quickly unmasked, tried and punished. Sometimes students find themselves dismissed from the faculties for having corresponded with "bourgeois

residents abroad," that is to say with refugee friends or relations.

In an open letter addressed to Gorky by a group of youths thus debarred from education we can read their cry of despair : " It is impossible to live in such circumstances, it is unendurable, sadistic torture. . . . Children such as we are would be better killed ! Accursed be the hour that saw our birth ! . . . "

Let us now study the results of the reforms applied to higher education.

Before the Revolution the total number of students in the Higher Schools was estimated at approximately 125,000, and thirty thousand completed their studies each year.

The present teachers jeer at these figures which they stigmatize as inadequate, and the " Five Year Plan for Culture " specifies that in future " the total number of young men completing their higher education should reach the figure of 207,000 annually " (*Journal for Communist Education*, 1931, No. 77). The annual sums earmarked for this purpose were supposed to amount in 1932 to nine thousand millions of soviet roubles. These figures, stipulated by the Plan and given great publicity, aroused a wave of enthusiasm among foreign admirers of the Soviets abroad. The writer Victor Margueritte expressed, in a letter written *ad hoc*, his feelings of admiration for the effort made by an entire people towards a splendid goal and towards the freedom of humanity ; an effort which he contrasted with the degeneration of an old world that was succumbing to rottenness.

If, however, we refer to the official publications of the Commission for Public Instruction and the Communist Academy, we can ascertain that there the total number of students is estimated as 162,000. At the same time

the periodical *For Communist Instruction* (1930, No. 77), in setting forth the results of the first two years of the Five Year Plan, stated definitely :

It must be admitted that as regards finishing studies in the High Schools the situation has become intolerable ; during the past nine years the annual percentage of scholars completing their studies has not exceeded 5 per cent of the total numbers.

In other words, it could be said that in 1931-2 and the ensuing years not more than 8,500 High School diplomas were granted.

We may well be astonished nowadays at so low a percentage representing 25 per cent of that obtaining before the Revolution and therefore far removed from the fabulous figures which were to be the outcome of the Five Year Plan.

It cannot be denied that many soviet students make strenuous and meritorious efforts, but they cannot cover in one sudden sprint the vast territory that separates them from the cultured classes of former days. Moreover, we must take into consideration the many obstacles which interfere with the lives and the studies of scholars.

The student's moral life is perpetually under the obsession of fear ; he is at the mercy of various soviet authorities who can deprive him of his scholarship and visit him with every kind of reprisal. Suicides are of frequent occurrence. Among others we may mention the case of the student Bogouchevski. Falsely accused of plagiarism by a communist newspaper, he was persecuted in such a manner that suicide became his only alternative.

Living is pitiably hard ; the scholarships do not suffice to provide the barest needs of existence, and relations cannot supplement these pittances in a country of universal poverty. The students live in homes which are ruled by penury, promiscuity and hunger. As

evidence of these facts we may quote from the journal *For Industrialization* of March 25th, 1935 :

The school-house of the Orsk mines which harbours 100 scholars possesses only four iron beds, seventy counterpanes, twenty-five sheets and one blanket. Dirt and cold are in full possession. In twenty-five bedrooms there are only six tables and twelve bedside tables, three stools, three benches and two chairs. There is a frequent dearth of water and the scholars are unable to wash daily. There is never any boiling water for tea and at night-time there is often no light. Potatoes have been stored in the cellar and these are rotting and pervading the building with a nauseating odour. . . . There is no trace of educational activity among the scholars ; there is one mandoline for the use of 260 pupils. These conditions lead to unhealthy phenomena : drunkenness, brawls, etc. . . .

But if only a scholar could at least feel safe in his hovel ! The director of a Moscow Institution, as related in *Pravda* (April 19th, 1935), is urgently summoned to the students' quarters ; there his hand is seized by a distracted housekeeper who drags him into the courtyard. " Students' shirts and trousers, pillows, sheets, exercise books, diplomas and books are lying there trampled into the mud." And the housekeeper explains tearfully : a detachment of about fifty individuals had made its appearance in the quarters while the students were attending the Institute. The visitors had begun throwing all the students' belongings into the courtyard. " Don't you worry, little mother," had been the explanation afforded by a presumably important personage who carried a portfolio and was in command of operations ; " These measures are hygienic ; we are the health officers." Then a lorry loaded with furniture had made its appearance and this furniture had been placed in the various rooms by the orders of another " important personage " who had informed the housekeeper that the building was in future to be occupied by the Direction of Transports for the Sokolniki quarter.

The lack of books is also a prominent factor among the numerous difficulties that besiege the student. But what is infinitely more serious is the fact that the entire budget for public instruction is fictitious. In this connection we discover in the review *Revolution and Culture* (1930, No. 3) an amazing admission :

The State Plan Office has allotted to the operations of the first year of the Five Year Plan for Culture the sum of one billion two thousand million roubles. We have completed the first year's operation and have started on the second without receiving so much as a single kopek. . . .

We have not since discovered in the soviet press any further testimony quite so absolute and categorical, but such information as reaches us daily leaves us in no doubt as to the dire situation in which education finds itself.

One of the surest indications is afforded by the deplorable standard of knowledge evidenced by the soviet diplomas. The review *The Red Student* (1931, No. 16) informs us that: "Our future specialists, after having completed their education, should begin it all over again, a proceeding which might possibly be achieved by means of correspondence courses. Their knowledge is nil ; we are rearing deficient ! . . ."

This general statement is corroborated by a host of others which may be found in the soviet papers, among which the following are of most recent date. In the course of examinations in a High School at Saratov in January 1935, a record was made, if we are to believe *Pravda* (March 22nd, 1935), of the following dialogues :

The female student Plastinkina ; twenty-two years of age.

"Why did the U.S.S.R. join the League of Nations ?"

"I do not know."

"In what part of the country lies the coal valley of Kouznetzki ?"

"I do not know."

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The female student Goloubeva, a member of the Young Communists.

"What are the countries whose frontiers adjoin those of the U.S.S.R.?"

"Norway, Lithuania, China and I think Sweden. . . ."

The Student Belokleitzev, a member of the Young Communists.

"Do you know the whereabouts of Magnitogorsk?"

"Yes, I have heard it mentioned."

"Can you tell me exactly what it is?"

"A building which is a foundry."

"Then where is it?"

"Near the Kouznetzk valley."

"And where is that?"

"Near the Donetz valley."

"And where is the Donetz valley?"

"In the Ural Mountains."

"But where are they?"

"I have not studied geography." . . .

Before closing the recital of the lamentable conditions of the scholars in the High Schools we will quote a story which appeared in April 1935 in the Dniepropetrovsk (formerly Ekaterinoslav) paper, *Dawn*. In order to obtain their diplomas the students of that town who are completing their studies must design a plan for a building. But the reference books required for this are unobtainable. The professors advise them to go to Kiev, and a party of students set out for the Ukrainian capital. Their journey proves fruitless, and they are unable to obtain the desired volumes. They are advised to go to Moscow, but they have no money, either for the journey thither or with which to pay their homeward railway fares . . . therefore it is on foot that they at length return home, a distance of some hundreds of kilometres, thus evoking a memory of the wandering students of the Middle Ages.

And what of the secondary schools? The same principle obtains in the recruiting of pupils; the same poverty in their manner of life. The same deficiencies

in the quarters and equipment of the schools. For example, we may quote the evidence of a teacher with regard to the secondary schools of the Kiev region :

In the senior classes, in nearly all subjects, there is only one manual per class ; only one exercise book is supplied to each pupil and the quality of the paper is such that it is only possible to write upon it in pencil. There is a complete dearth of pens and of pencils and not one school is provided with wood for fuel (*For Communist Instruction*, December 15th, 1934).

Not only is there a scarcity in books for teaching, but those that exist are full of big errors. Quite recently (August 1935), the Press announced the appearance of a geographical atlas in which, on the map of Europe, Switzerland and Norway do not exist, while several unknown islands appear quite near to England ; in the same atlas Abyssinia is prominently described as an Italian possession.

Finally, as regards the educational standard the secondary schools are in no way better than the High Schools and the ignorance of their teachers is even more amazing than that of their students. A woman teacher who had long reflected upon the advantages to be drawn from a study of classical literature (a recent suggestion from the powers in authority) announces to her pupils : " We must study classical literature as a means of nourishing within us the hatred of class." Another teacher tells the children : " You will read in your lesson books that Moscow is the capital of the U.S.S.R. This is inaccurate. Kiev is the capital ; note that down carefully : Kiev." He had read in the papers that the capital was to be moved to Kiev, but had not observed that the capital in question was that of Soviet Ukraine and not that of the U.S.S.R. The headmistress of a secondary school at Moscow, Siedova, when questioned by a pupil as to the meaning of the word

“patrician” replied after reflection : “It must be a printer’s error ; you should read it as ‘partisan’ (member of the Party) !” (*Izvestia*, March 21st, 1935).

Can we say that the task of primary education is any more successfully tackled by the Soviets ?

Confronted by this lamentable situation, the Soviets decided to come back to their former positions. After the first concessions granted in 1934, after a series of deliberations and gropings, a decree was published on the 4th of September, 1935, which announced a radical change in the teaching organization of the secondary school. Roughly, it marks the return to the pre-revolutionary times. The place allotted to propaganda is considerably reduced ; the teaching programme, the rules concerning time for study, examinations, etc., are similar to previous regulations ; those regarding the right of admission now make no mention of restrictions in connection with the social origins of the pupils ; from 1936, the scholars will don a uniform.

Does this reform mean a sudden esteem on the part of the Bolsheviki for pure science ? Not at all : we shall understand the motive of this reform when we see later on that in the new generation—undisciplined and ignorant youth—the Bolsheviki found, to their great surprise, a fierce enemy ready for anything. On the other hand, they have understood that such a new generation, even if devoted to the régime, is not able, being ignorant and undisciplined, to be useful defenders of the “Soviet Native Country.”

It is certainly not easy to raise the level of culture in conditions of general distress and of administrative arbitrariness, with a scarcity of qualified teachers ; but one can hope that, thanks to the thirst for knowledge shown by the Russian youth, the population will be

able to profit in future by this victory wrenched from the Soviet Government.

During the ten closing years of the old régime primary education was developing with great rapidity: the number of scholars rose from 4,882,000 to 8,040,000.¹ The most pessimistic reckonings predicted for 1928 the possible advent of compulsory education.

Such remarkable progress accomplished under the old régime in no way deterred the Bolsheviks, on their advent to power, from stating that Tzarism had aimed at keeping the people in ignorance. Out of deliberate demagoguery they decreed the immediate introduction of compulsory education for all. It must of course be clearly understood that they were always compelled to postpone the realization of this project, and at the present day any such information as may reach us with regard to instruction in the U.S.S.R. emphasizes the total ruin of primary education.

We will not dwell here upon the moral atmosphere which surrounds the small scholars who are receiving a "communist education"; this will be dealt with in a later chapter. The devastating examples of the ignorance of the teachers in the secondary schools which have been quoted make it unnecessary to expatiate upon the quality of the education bestowed upon the disciples of the elementary schools.

We shall therefore confine ourselves for the moment to a brief survey of the material conditions of the establishments devoted to elementary education. To begin with, they suffer from the consequences of the housing crisis. Almost everywhere the children are obliged to

¹ During the same period, the total number of scholars in all educational establishments rises from 5.5 millions to 9.5 millions; that is from 388 to 545 per 10,000 inhabitants (24 to 36 for the secondary schools, 3.5 to 7.5 for the high schools).

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work in two or sometimes three relays, sometimes until midnight. This may easily be understood if one realizes that at the beginning of the school year 1933-4 government offices and officials in Leningrad alone took possession of 111,904 square metres of school buildings, while at Moscow the same fate befell edifices capable of containing 40,000 scholars (*For Communist Education*, 1933, Nos. 141, 142). Nor is the situation any better at the present time. Here, for instance, is an extract from the journal *For Industrialization* of March 11th, 1935 :

At Magnitogorsk, among forty-one schools with 27,000 pupils, only one is normally housed ; among the others which occupy temporary premises, thirty-one are installed in sheds ; twenty-three of these sheds have become entirely uninhabitable ; their temperature is arctic despite the consumption of five times the amount of fuel that would normally be required. . . .

The dearth of materials such as paper, books and pencils, and this not only in the provinces but even in Moscow, does not serve to encourage school attendance. According to *Pravda* (December 22nd, 1934), during the eleven months of the school year the schools were deprived of seventy million exercise books which they were entitled to receive from the paper trade (and it must be borne in mind that already the "normal provision" is pitiable). Blotting-paper they do not possess at all.

Instruction suffers severely by reason of the extreme poverty of the population. In 1933, in Northern Caucasus, 700,000 scholars out of a million were either killed or dispersed by famine (*For Communist Education*, 1933, No. 128). Moreover, leaving aside such catastrophes, it must be pointed out that an enormous number of children are unable to attend school in winter for lack of shoes or warm clothing ; or because—both in

winter and in summer—their services have become indispensable in a household where they replace a mother who is working elsewhere.

The situation is rendered yet more serious by reason of the deplorable conditions to which the teaching personnel have been reduced. To begin with, there is the extreme scarcity of teachers ; young people only adopt this profession under the pressure of extreme necessity. Indeed, the salaries of teachers are ludicrously inadequate even when compared with the remuneration received by other soviet officials, and in addition to this, as is testified by the press, the local authorities seldom trouble themselves to pay them. Thus in Soviet Ukraine alone, at the end of 1934, the sum of unpaid teachers' salaries amounted to ten million roubles (*Labour*, January 1st, 1935).

Even where the teaching staff exists, and where it is able and willing to work, the Government prevents it from fulfilling its duty. The fact is that the Party looks upon teachers as its general servants. Comrade Choumsky stated in a report upon education : “ Among the personnel of the elementary schools 71·8 per cent are employed in dealing with bonds and shares, 53·4 per cent are working in the agricultural districts and 41 per cent are engaged in the struggle against the Koulaks, etc. etc. . . . ” A multiplication of duties, as many reports to furnish, as many grievances to voice and as many eventual reprisals to be endured ! The situation of the women teachers is particularly abominable, since they are without any protection against the inspectors or any other authorities. The papers relate the story of a certain Ivanova, a teacher nineteen years of age, who was sent from one region to another as though she were a parcel (eight changes in one month !). She had the unfortunate temerity to make a complaint

and was immediately accused of counter-revolutionary dealings with the Koulaks. In order to obtain evidence against her two of her small pupils were locked up until they supplied the desired testimony. The young girl was expelled from the Young Communists and brought to trial. Small wonder in these circumstances that every day sees a lengthening list of unhappy folk who take their own lives! One of these unfortunate cases was that of the young woman teacher Ermak, the daughter of a "Red partisan," who poisoned herself because she was worn out by "the systematic persecutions of the directors of the *Sovkhoze* in conjunction with the workers in the political section; the young girl had attempted to denounce the incapacity, negligence and drunkenness of the chiefs of the *Sovkhoze*" (*The Truth of the Comsomol*, March 25th, 1935).

In an attempt to bring some consolation to the unhappy, the soviet press publishes for the benefit of teachers, extracts from imaginary letters written to them by their colleagues abroad. Here are two phrases gathered from these letters. A teacher writes from Orleans: "This year one half of our teachers have been dismissed. Schools are closing one after the other. Even the best teachers are often driven to suicide." A Paris teacher: "My salary is thirty-four francs monthly; it is impossible for me to pay my lodging, laundry and food." These quotations are taken from *For Communist Instruction* (1933, No. 176). The paper emphasizes that these letters are read aloud at teachers' meetings and also at meetings of operatives.

* * * * *

Persistently haunted by the idea of a new humanity, the bolshevik authorities are seeking to rear a race that shall be physically robust while remaining morally supple and malleable in the hands of the Party.

Physical culture is, in the matter of education, the only thing of which the régime has some right to boast ; it does correct, to a small extent, the pernicious effects of those scourges to youth, insufficient nourishment, defective hygiene and immorality. Sport is to an increasing degree a precious outlet for nervous tension, although even in that domain communism seeks to introduce an element of propaganda. What are we to think, for instance, of the punching-ball which is disguised as the head of Chamberlain !

As for the essential principles of education, these have been defined by Lenin himself :

Children must be inoculated with the largest possible dose of the triumphant marxist philosophy [*sic*]. . . . The Soviet teacher is not, properly speaking, merely a professor ; he is an organizer of that youth which he must lead to participate in the building of socialism and in class warfare, under the command of the International proletariat.

Communist teaching boasts of its ability to develop the activity of children in both the moral and material sense.

Their " material activity " is frequently employed to the profit of factories and of the *Kolkhozes*. Special contracts exist for this purpose which compel youthful scholars to work in factories and in the fields. The practical result of this measure is a shameful exploitation of child labour. Of this fact we were able to learn some eloquent details when, in September 1934, even some of the Soviet newspapers suddenly became indignant at the conditions of the small labourers of the *Sovkhozes* and the *Kolkhozes*. We were then able to read that everywhere, in White Russia as in the Ukraine, in the Tartar Republic as in the Saratov region and those of Stalingrad, of the Black Sea and elsewhere, could be found agricultural labourers of both sexes of thirteen

and sometimes twelve years of age. We have been able to see that if the soviet law permitted the employment of minors aged from fourteen to sixteen years, on condition that their working day should not exceed four hours, practically all the directors of the *sovkhoses* and of "political sections" made these twelve- and thirteen-year-old children work throughout the "sun's day," in other words, from dawn to nightfall. In the Saratov *sovkhoses* it was customary to employ children on night labour. Little girls of thirteen were expected to accomplish "the task of a baba," and in order to achieve it these unhappy children must toil throughout two successive shifts. It is true that these small labourers enjoyed the "privileges" of their age, but only in so much as concerned their salaries, their days of rest and their rations. Thus children (under eighteen years of age) only receive half-rations; minors of from sixteen to eighteen years old are given half the normal salary, and to the little workers under sixteen years of age the "children's tariff" is applied.

The only thing that surprises us in this painful exposé is that it should apparently have perturbed the soviet press. However, their anxiety was purely of a platonic nature and in no way altered the situation. And this is easily understood since Comrade Yaroslavsky, President of the Party's Central Commission of Control and one of Stalin's most obsequious lackeys, found words of touching eloquence with which to justify this exploitation of children: "Shall we then reject the tiny hand and the warm little heart that offer themselves in the service of the grand building up of a new life? No! This would be a grave injustice, for these little ones may be of great assistance in the execution of the Five Year Plan."

In fact, much use continues to be made of "the assist-

ance of the little ones." Thus in North Caucasus, according to the *Truth of the Comsomol* (4th of August 1935), the presidents of the *kolkhozes* and the organizations of the Party "mobilized" this summer the little scholars, in spite of the protestations of their parents, and exacted work in the fields from children from 12 to 14 years for 12 to 16 hours a day and sometimes in the night. When, in a *kolkhoze* ("Politotdeletz"), a boy of 12 years, worn out after working for three days without interruption and without night rest, fell down from fatigue and went to sleep on the road, he was pronounced "in the general meeting" an idler and deprived of food.

The "moral activity" of the children is directed towards "campaigns" of every description: the campaign for collectivization, the anti-religious campaign, etc. There has even been an instance in one school of a "campaign against prostitution" conducted by children of twelve to fifteen years of age, in order to correct certain of their small schoolfellows.

At present, throughout the territory of the U.S.S.R. the duty of the education of children is chiefly entrusted to the "political sections" created in villages (subsequently replaced by the political services of tractor stations), or in other words, the communist police who have in any case taken possession of most of the school buildings. The children, enrolled in detachments of pioneers, are employed as little policemen and spies in the service of the Party. They contribute notably to the "defence of the harvest," that is to say, to the struggle waged by the Party against those peasants who seek to retain a part of the harvest for their own use.

For Communist Instruction (August 28th, 1933) undertakes to prove the superiority of this method over that popularly accepted.

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The political sections [says this newspaper] are progressively enlisting the assistance of larger numbers of schoolchildren and of the children of the *kolkhozes* in the campaign for the defence of the socialist harvest. The children learn communism from the "look-outs"¹ of the *kolkhozes*, they absorb the communist morality while participating in the noble labour of millions of workers. . . .

The soviet press exalts "the exploits of the pioneers enrolled in these detachments." Thus *Socialist Agriculture* (March 12th, 1934) praises the splendid initiative of little Olga Balandina, a member of these groups of Red pioneers. This child of communism made a report to the authorities in which "she revealed the criminal activities of the administration of the Otrada Kolkhoze (in the Spassky district of the Tartar republic)." The directors of this *kolkhoze* were systematically stealing public goods, mutilating horses and forging documents. Prominent among the criminals mentioned in this report was little Olga's own father.

Very frequently arrests are made by the pioneers themselves, sometimes by small girls of twelve years old, as we may read in *For Communist Instruction* (1933, No. 182). In that same issue we find the statement of Comrade Steinholtz, head of the political section of Northern Caucasus, who affirms that the arrest of criminals by schoolchildren is "a practice both sound and indispensable from the educational point of view." We learn also, from the same paper (August 9th, 1933), that in the Central Region, 127 brigades of storm troops are composed of schoolchildren of all ages; that is to say, of eight years old and upward.

It is worth mentioning that it was a congress of these pioneers that M. Edouard Herriot attended at Rostov during his visit to the U.S.S.R. in the autumn of 1933.

¹ Posts erected in the fields which serve as look-outs for the discovery of those who steal the corn.

We know that the French traveller waxed enthusiastic over the spectacle of four thousand child spies.

It may indeed be said that the essential aim of soviet education is to inculcate into the hearts of children that hardness and hatred which are such precious and necessary qualities in those who are to be the future "builders" of communism. The seeds sown by bolshevism in the minds of children have already shown signs of vigorous growth, but the plant is far from fulfilling the expectations of the sowers who, as will be seen in a later chapter, are beginning to quail before the spirit which they have themselves developed.

IV

Family Life

For the citizen of the U.S.S.R., afflicted by so much moral and material suffering, his home should at least be a refuge in which to recover his balance and enjoy repose. But ever since its inauguration communism has waged persevering and merciless warfare against family life.

Immediately after the advent of bolshevism the doctrine of licence in the relations between the two sexes was noisily proclaimed. It found many adherents, both male and female; some were seen to parade the streets clad only in a riband bearing the inscription "Down with Shame"! In certain places the "socialization of women" was decreed by local authorities, and this decree was followed by a wave of individual and collective rapes. The severe punishments inflicted upon the culprits proved entirely inefficacious. Rape is still a common offence, and in a general way, conditions of life under the Soviets continue

to exercise a disastrous influence upon public morals. Among the Young Communists there is a universal tendency to apply what may be termed "the glass of water theory"; an elegant metaphor launched by a soviet author as a simile to denote "the unimportance of the sexual act."

For some time past a spontaneous and salutary reaction has occurred in this connection among the youth of the country. At least, we are assured of this fact by persons who have recently visited the U.S.S.R. and by certain statements gleaned from the soviet press. But even so, this reaction, in the conditions of life engendered by bolshevism, assumes brutal and barbarous aspects. *The Truth of the Comsomol* (September 12th, 1934) quoted the case of the young Communist woman, Nesterova, the best emergency operative of the Zelenodolsk factory and leader of a detachment of Red pioneers. The story in itself is commonplace. This factory hand had formed a union with a young electrician who shortly afterwards left her; about to give birth to a child the young girl flung herself in front of a train and was killed. What is interesting is the fact that the idea of suicide was not only suggested but actually forced upon Nesterova by her comrades and by her own sister, also a Young Communist, who had united to track her down pitilessly, overwhelming the unhappy girl with obscene jests and abuse and convincing her that death was for her the only means of escape from "shame."

Marriage, in the eyes of the law, is equivalent to concubinage, since the mere wish of either party is sufficient to dissolve it. Is it surprising that it should not be of long duration? From three to six months is the average disclosed by investigations made at various factories. Popular terminology, moreover, does not

fail to emphasize the difference : people do not speak of "marriage" but of "registration."

Here are numbers corresponding to the aggregate population of Moscow : according to the *Izvestia* of the 4th of July, 1935, among ten thousand inhabitants of the city there were, in 1934, one hundred and twenty-five marriages (of which 0.3 per cent were sanctified by religious rites) ; 100 marriages produced, in 1934, 37 divorces. The percentage is higher this year, for in March 1935, from 100 marriages ensued 44.3 divorces.

The conditions of soviet life engender many conjugal tragedies, but perhaps the most tragic factor of these lies in that they have lost their poignancy in the eyes even of those whom they concern. We may instance a member of the Young Communists who, having killed his wife, quietly explained to the court that she had wormed her way into the Comsomol and denounced him as the "son of a *koulak*." Was he not therefore justified in defending his honour as a Communist ?

Obviously in the majority of cases it is the woman who is the chief sufferer. In this connection there is much of interest in the rather incoherent statement, which is however remarkable in its sincerity, made by a woman operative to the Party Committee.

I have cohabited with a member of the Party. I truly loved him. But he would put me in a clinic when I was about to have a child and during that time he would sleep with other women. Having already three women, he has now found a fourth. How can I do my work in such circumstances ? I have been a member of the Party for eleven years. I am always employed on political work, my health is not robust, and now the misfortunes of my life bid fair to destroy my constitution while I am still young.

I am relating all this because mine is not an unusual case. It occurs constantly. Communist husbands behave in a revolting manner ; they keep several women and wish to incur no obligations with regard to any of them.

This appeal was quoted in a statement by Comrade

Yaroslavsky, who severely criticized the complaints made by this woman : " It is no part of a true Communist's principles to regard private life as an essential matter while the Party has to consider such problems and undertakings as industrialization, collectivization and the socialist structure of the country. Let her take herself off and attend to her health ! "

Here again, from among hundreds, is another instance in the shape of a letter addressed to the Editor of *The Truth of the Comsomol* by a young Communist woman hand at the " Electrostal " factory in the Moscow region (*The Truth of the Comsomol*, September 12th, 1934) :

I am twenty years of age ; I have been married for over a year. I had a child who died a month ago. I do not live on good terms with my husband. . . . I do not see him for days together . . . sometimes he goes off for the entire night. When I tell him that his family is entitled to some measure of his attention he replies that it is impossible. . . . I then ask myself whether a member of the Young Communists should marry at all ? The life we lead is only designed to maim us morally and is in no way calculated to develop in us the active spirit of builders of socialism. Our child was ill for a long time and is now dead because I was compelled to leave him alone in the house. . . . All these circumstances will probably end in divorce.

The Press informs us of the following facts : 40 per cent of the workwomen with children belonging to the factory Dedovsky do not live with their husbands ; " the husbands abandon their children and desert their wives," we are told (*Pravda*, 11th of August 1935) : it is not surprising, therefore, to learn that in May 1935 of 150 workwomen of the same factory who were pregnant, 30 came to the hospital to become mothers and 120 to abort.

In a general way the ideologues of the Party were always bitterly opposed to woman, who in spite of every obstacle always represents the ideal of the home. *The Anti-Religious Review* declared recently : " We behold in

the persons of mothers, grandmothers and children's nurses the most bitter enemies of atheism."

On the other hand, as soon as the woman, as the more timid vessel, bends her back beneath the burden of underpaid labour, while the man curses it and rejects it, communism promptly flatters the woman worker, and praises her to the skies: "The woman operative both in farm labour and in the factories has given abundant proof of the foolishness of current statements as to the physiological peculiarities which must limit the field of female employment. . . ."

Verbal flattery, however, coexists with the worst abuses in act, witness incidents mentioned almost daily in the Press; the heads of the *kolkhozes* impose on the pregnant peasant-women the most difficult work whereupon they bring their children to life in the fields (*Izvestia* of 15th of July 1935); the same newspaper relates that a president of a *kolkhoze* obliged two young girls wishing to belong to the *kolkhoze* to undergo a "medical examination" to prove that they were not "*dechauched*."

Nor are family quarrels confined to those between married people. They also set children and parents in conflict. The Party did its utmost to wean children from the influence of the family, which was regarded as "the seat of putrefaction." How far have their efforts been successful?

We are here faced with the moving problem of childhood, moving from the human standpoint but serious also for the Soviet Government, which is anxious to educate its pupils.

We have already studied the precepts that actuate communist education. It remains for us to glance at the effects of their application.

Much has been written with regard to the deserted

children in the U.S.S.R., and this phenomenon is indeed one so atrocious that the unemployment and poverty in Western countries pale before it. In 1923, Comrade Kroupskaia estimated their number as two millions, and the evil persists to this day! Of course, we are not taking into consideration the views of certain among the courtiers of the régime who, on the contrary, use their gaudiest colours with which to paint and disguise this terrible blemish and present it as another glorious subject for propaganda. In what manner? Let us listen to Gorky in his review *Our Victories* :

I have for the first time [he tells us] beheld the deserted children in the Moscow dispensary. Brought there by the militia, clad in sordid rags, their faces bedaubed with mud, listless, nervy. They appeared ill, tortured, trampled down by a pitiless existence. . . . It was strange to see them again an hour or two later, washed, clean, strong and as though cast in bronze . . . nearly all the youngsters appeared to be in excellent health, sturdy and upright. Such a transformation, accomplished be it noted in an hour's time, may well be termed a "victory" !¹

There has been published in the U.S.S.R. an "Almanac of Deserted Children" where, in prose and verse, we may read of the helpful collaboration afforded by these little ones to the execution of the various "plans." Nor has the object of the publication been left in doubt: "Our Almanac is the best reply to those meddling bourgeois of the Western countries who revel in the horrors of criminology and in the sufferings of deserted children. Such an Almanac is only possible in our epoch and in our soviet country."

¹ Gorky having assumed the part of lackey to Stalin, exalts his régime with so much exaggeration that Stalin himself ordered him to moderate his transports and to insert a few criticisms among the "conquests." It is perhaps of interest to note that thirty years ago, when Gorky was arrested at Nijni-Novgorod, for provocation to revolt among the workmen, the Tzar sent his own aide-de-camp to obtain from the judicial authorities the liberation of the writer.

Such is the language of these sinister soviet clowns, headed by Gorky. Let us now study the reality as it is described in the *Red Evening Gazette* of April 28th, 1935 :

From every part of Leningrad, homeless persons, and among them children, make their way nightly towards the railway stations. They find shelter there in railway trucks standing on sidings. There they spend the night drinking and dividing the fruits of pillage and theft. The adult malefactors spare those places that have sheltered them but the children act very differently. These young hooligans light bonfires, break windows and steal and destroy all that they can lay their hands on. The railway officials go the rounds, arresting prostitutes and their clients, people without papers, vagrants and wastrels, but above all and in far greater numbers, homeless children. . . .

But there arises a yet graver problem. The morals of these deserted children are daily tending to become those of the entire younger generation. It is significant from this standpoint that for several months past, side by side with the term "homeless children" the soviet press has adopted another, "children not under any supervision."

We shall quote, chosen from among many others, a series of statements which characterize the situation of childhood and particularly of schoolchildren ; that is to say, of that category of children which it would seem is in the most favourable position in the matter of supervision. Here, to begin with, are a few extracts which demonstrate the arbitrary cruelty of the uneducated people to whom is entrusted the education of the child in a country that prides itself particularly upon the care given to the young generation. *For Communist Instruction* (March 20th, 1935) gives the names of four male teachers in a school at Briansk who systematically thrashed their pupils, loading them with abuse and calling them "scum, vipers, filth." *For Communist Instruction* in April 1935 gives the case of a schoolmistress

who thrashed a little girl of eight years old so cruelly that the child died three days later. The same paper, on April 22nd, relates the story of a schoolmaster who beats his pupils daily and who has literally tortured a girl pupil in the fifth class. Another schoolmaster, according to this same paper's issue of March 20th, bolted a pupil into a cold-storage room, causing the child to fall dangerously ill. On March the 18th we read, still in the same columns, the story of a school in White Russia where the masters organized "banquets" with their female pupils; one of the masters at this school, with the friendly assistance of a colleague, raped a girl pupil aged fifteen. *Labour*, in its issue of April 25th, 1935, describes the following case: "In a model school at Taschkent the masters, particularly those teaching physical culture, were in the habit of debauching young girls; when a group of these organized a complaint they met with such brutal treatment that one of them committed suicide."

Even more numerous are the incidents of the same nature in which the actors are the scholars! Thefts, brawls, serious quarrels, drunkenness and attempts to corrupt modesty are daily reported in the soviet press. We will give one single quotation from *Izvestia* (March 26th). After having reported the accidental death of a child of thirteen, killed by a schoolfellow, *Izvestia* goes on to say:

Several pupils have been arrested in this same school, small "apaches," habitual thieves. Found in their possession were pistols and knives of their own manufacture. These children drank, smoked and practised the worst licence without meeting with the slightest interference. They manufactured pistols and used them, not only in the courtyard but also in class during lesson hours.

We may also note the matter of collective brawls which are increasing in frequency. Thus *The Truth of*

the Comsomol tells us, on April 23rd, 1935, of a battle at Yalta in which one hundred and fifty scholars took part and which lasted from ten o'clock in the morning until five o'clock in the afternoon. The children were armed with knives and pistols and fought with such ardour that passers-by were injured. Many of the scholars were seriously wounded.

There is one very curious fact which must be noted in this spirit of indiscipline which has developed among the children as a result of the morale inculcated by a soviet education, is necessarily levelled against the existing authority, and one may perceive with amazement that it is strongly tinged with a counter-revolutionary element. The soviet press, via the *Pravda* of February 25th, 1935, notes the fact that children are to be heard singing in unison counter-revolutionary verses while they remain in ignorance of songs composed to the glory of the régime. From time to time very strange incidents occur: *For Communist Instruction* related in April of this year that at Petrozavodsk a group of children were discovered stealing money in order to buy blessed candles to burn before the icons! The Moscow papers are showing ever-increasing anxiety with regard to "anti-soviet influences" which are gaining ground among the children. The point to which this anxiety has developed not only in the press but among the masters of the country, is demonstrated by the bizarre fact that the people's commissary, Boubnov, has approved the motion passed at a parents' meeting which took place at Serpoukhov in the Moscow region which recommended family supervision of children as a remedy.

After Boubnov, Stalin himself approved this point of view so favourable to the family; at once the press hurried to change face, and it was openly declared that only the "soviet family" was healthy and strong while

the "bourgeois family" of the West "has been long rotten." If so, why should there be at the same time (August and September, 1935) question of measures in support of a "normal and healthy soviet family"? The principal projected measures concern divorce by the wish of one party only. In this matter the administration will be obliged to advise that the consent of both parties must be obtained, and will invite them both to the Registration bureau so as to try to guarantee the payment of the alimony. It is also proposed to imprison those who do not pay alimony; this last decision arose from the fact that in 1934 there were two hundred thousand alimony claims (communicated from Moscow on August 11th, 1935). The court of Justice will be relieved, but will the prisons be able to hold those condemned under the new measure?

The soviet régime thus bestows its approval of the cultivation of the family spirit in the hopes of winning over the children to communism; surely a paradoxical hope? Bolshevism has succeeded in destroying the foundations of family life; it must surely be unable to depend upon it as a prop for the support of its aims!

And, indeed, the masters at Moscow appear to look to a much more radical remedy. On the 8th of April, 1935, the soviet papers published a decree which, "with a view to the immediate suppression of crime among minors," prescribed the application to all youthful criminals from the age of twelve years and upwards, of all clauses of the penal code, including the death sentence. The Moscow *Pravda* was cynical enough to applaud this decision in its editorial as "the law which will contribute to the better education and the protection of youth!" Where, then, are the powerful "Young Communists" with their "rhythm of labour," with

their innumerable "cultural initiatives"? Where are the "model children's homes," the "colonies" installed in former convents of which soviet propaganda had so persistently boasted abroad?

Many could answer this question. During the year 1931-2 nine thousand pupils escaped from the soviet "children's home" (*Izvestia*, July 23rd, 1935). It is true that this number is not new as the Commission for Public Instruction does not possess more recent ones. But here is an example which illustrates the situation to-day: at the end of the month of July 1935, the *Communist Instruction* relates the following case: 140 children escaped together from the "colony" Leushinsky, which was installed in a former convent (500 km from Petrograd); so that 140 pupils out of 250 preferred forest life to the "cares" of the soviet homes. The superintendents opened a real chase against the fugitives and many were wounded. A commission of inquiry sent down from Leningrad after this incident approved the criminal conduct of the administration; the commission decided, probably, that it was just the case to which to apply the decree of the 7th of April.

Not long ago the Western countries were able to see a soviet film entitled *The Road of Life*, which displayed the benefits said to accrue to the younger generation under the soviet régime. We are now able to see that bolshevism in reality sets children's feet on the road of death by inculcating in them a moral depravity that is to end in capital punishment.

v

A Discussion on Happiness

On the 15th of October 1934, one of the chief organs of the French Radical Party, the *Toulouse Telegram*

published as an editorial under the heading, "Reflections upon a Visit to Russia," an article by Professor Raoul Labry, who had just returned from a stay in Petrograd. The subject of his article and the manner of its treatment are very material to the problem which we are now about to discuss. But we will allow Monsieur Labry to introduce this problem in his own words.

I wished [says he], within one of the strongholds of bolshevism, there where its action enjoyed the utmost security, to study some of the characteristics of the new life which it has desired to create . . . I hoped to be able to judge by certain manners of thinking, of feeling and of judging, what might be the interior construction of socialism which corresponded to its exterior structure, not among the apostles and the élite of its followers, but among the masses of its servants. This psychological problem is, in point of fact, the only one that arises in connection with Soviet Russia. Upon its solution depends not only the reply which must settle the question as to whether the dictatorship of the proletariat is generally acceptable to the masses or is only the subject of a temporary resignation on the part of the majority, but also what must be our judgment with regard to the gospel of humanity which it proclaims. For it is undeniable that any powerful government can hack and slice at the national body, rationalizing, planing and trimming it. And afterwards? What will be the outcome of such manipulation, however perfected, unless it brings to the individual a freedom of his entire being, an increase of all his powers or at any rate a sure hope of such attainment? I therefore found the people of the U.S.S.R. very much more interesting than any other study. I did not go there to observe the scenery of the drama, but in order to listen to the actors and to follow their performance without the intervention of any official guide. I may as well say at once that I was quite unable to succeed in this aim—I was not permitted to approach persons but only to see their settings.

After telling us that he had spent his childhood and youth in Petrograd, and that during his stay in Leningrad he was able to move about without difficulty, the writer proceeds with his "reflections":

How did it come to pass that being familiar with the Russian language and my movements in no way interfered with, I was yet quite unable to obtain any contact with the lives of those who

surrounded me? The fact is that I was not able to speak to anyone or to make my way into any household. I exchanged only a few very casual remarks with the servants of my hotel, the employees on the trams and in the libraries. Not one of them exhibited the slightest desire to engage in conversation. I should never have conversed at all, during the entire course of my visit, if my work had not led to my questioning a few Russian professors and scholars. But even then our discussions were strictly confined to such purely scientific topics as are outside time and space. It was not given me to hear a single word spoken which could throw any light upon present-day existence. Not one of my interlocutors invited me to visit him in his home, not one of them came to visit me in my hotel. We met only between two doors and never without a witness. Perhaps the greatest difference that I remarked lay in the University as it used to be and as it now is. Their willingness to assist me was however quite unaltered. In the streets I was always completely alone among the throngs of people, who passed to and fro. Every morning I read the newspapers surrounded by some thirty companions. Never did I hear one of them say a word to any of his neighbours. Mouths and faces alike remained closed. . . . Never, in any country, have I lived in such a stifling atmosphere of mistrust, of suspicion and of terror. Russia to-day has at any rate lost some of her former characteristics ; her hospitable kindness, her simplicity which so easily made you her friend ; her trustfulness which so easily led to personal confidences ; this sociability has vanished in an age of iron.

Monsieur Labry concludes by saying :

It may thus be seen that no searching or decisive investigation into the inner life of Russia can be accomplished. . . . This country, whose language I have spent my life in studying together with its literature, its history and its ideas, has become a closed book to me by reason of revolutionary upheavals. We can know of it only so much as its masters choose to tell us.

Are not these very significant conclusions, as coming from the pen of a profound student of Russia and a member of the left-hand party ? They certainly present a contrast to the statements of Monsieur Herriot, the leader of that same political party. But it must be remembered that Monsieur Herriot had never known Russia before the Revolution, he is ignorant of the

Russian language and spent only a few days in the U.S.S.R., where he was continuously fêted, surrounded, accompanied and guided.

The testimony given by Monsieur Labry, in which we can perceive the frank and conscientious spirit of the true scholar, clearly shows us how little credence can be given to the "impressions" of foreign travellers under the auspices of the soviet touristic enterprises.

But the scope of his "reflections" far exceeds this aspect. Prudent, scrupulous, he does not pretend to solve the problem which is engaging our attention and which, to use Monsieur Labry's words once more, may thus be summarized, whether or no the soviet régime "brings to the individual a freedom of his entire being, an increase of all his powers, or, at any rate, a sure hope of such attainment." We may put it more briefly and say that it is a question of happiness. Monsieur Labry refuses to constitute himself a judge, but it would seem that he offers us, unintentionally, the key of the problem when he enunciates this eloquent paradox: the compulsory "collectivization" of life as practised by the Communist Government has killed spontaneous sociability which was a natural characteristic of the Russian people. It therefore only remains for us to develop his judgment, confirming it and explaining it by concrete facts.

Such facts are not far to seek. Monsieur Labry writes: "We can know of this country only so much as its masters choose to tell us." But to these words should be added the following: or that which they see themselves compelled to reveal so long as they hold to the utility of the method of "self-criticism" which is among them the reciprocal means of control of administrations or persons.

Let us now study these concrete facts. We have

already quoted a certain number in our attempt to demonstrate the conditions in present-day Russia of human thought, religious belief, science, literature and the arts ; we have also tried to outline a picture of family relations. It will therefore be sufficient for our present purpose if we evoke a few aspects of daily life of those details of existence which play so large a part in the "moral climate" of a country.

To begin with the housing conditions. Rare are the instances where a family can hope to occupy an entire apartment ; 90 per cent, at the lowest estimate, of the population of the towns occupy "soviet apartments." In these the law assigns to each occupant a strictly limited superficial area. In Moscow this area is technically seven square metres, but in practice is reduced to five square metres per person. Several families, frequently of very dissentient views, are thus compelled to share the same apartment, sometimes the same room.

In pursuance of the policy of the "communization of life," the Government forbids the construction in new buildings of more than one kitchen on each storey. This is one means of establishing the "collectivization of domestic economy" by delivering it from the conditions of "bourgeois slavery."

Here is an anecdote which will demonstrate the charm of this cohabitation. We found it in the *Evening Review Gazette*, April 1935 :

The apartment No. Seventy-three in Ligovka Street is occupied by fourteen tenants. The rooms are independent but the tenants are in the habit of settling their personal grievances in the communal kitchen. . . . In order to be revenged upon a neighbour the kitchen can be flooded when it is her day for cleaning it or the water-closet can be blocked with the aid of broken bottles. . . . Free fights occur on the territory of the apartment, in which children take part, repeating the invectives vociferated by the grown

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up people ; these children frequently have the opportunity of beholding a certain " Aunt Nura " throwing cigarette ends into a neighbour's kettle, but these cigarette ends are a mere trifle. One tenant affirmed that a neighbour had thrown naphthaline into her boiled water.

These habitations are generally rendered even more horrible by reason of jerry-building. At a local soviet congress, the Comrade Egorov, member for the soviet commission of control, furnished some curious details in this connection.

At Nijni-Novgorod [he declared] a house has been built in which the floors rock and the walls sway at a push of the hand. . . . The tractor factory at Stalingrad has established its hands in a house devoid of water-closets or of electricity. In many districts the condemnation of houses built during the last five years amounts to fifteen and even thirty per cent. At Kizel there is a house from which all the doors have been removed and burnt.

This same Egorov has supplied an example of the costliness of public services. " At Perm, the cost price of water is twenty-five kopeks the cubic metre ; it is sold to the population at sixty-one kopeks the cubic metre, but consumers are charged sixty kopeks " (*Izvestia*, January 22nd, 1935).

But dear water is by no means the worst evil. *Pravda* relates on January 4th, 1935, that in the town of Karatchev, in consequence of the lack of water in the houses, queues were formed every morning before the street taps . . . and even there the water did not always make its appearance. But why go so far as Karatchev ? If we remain in Moscow, as we can learn from *Izvestia* (March 1st, 1935), out of one thousand and eleven lifts existing in the houses of the capital, five hundred and eighty-four are out of working order, and of this number, five hundred and thirty-three are in houses of five or more storeys.

To the delights of living *à la Soviet* must be added

the general poverty. The American journalist, Knickerbocker, estimates the average salary of the operative at one hundred and seventy roubles (subsequent to the rise granted early in 1935 after the suppression of bread cards). But for the inferior categories of operatives, salaries begin at eighty roubles. A foreman earns three hundred and fifty roubles ; an assistant engineer the same amount, and during the spring of 1935 the remuneration of doctors who prior to that time had rarely earned more than two hundred roubles, was raised to the same level. Since the suppression of the bread cards and since this basic product is sold in the "commercial shops," it is easier to estimate the real value of salaries. If, for instance, we know that the average cost of bread in the U.S.S.R. is one rouble twenty the kilo and that a kilo of bread in France costs one franc seventy, we are able to conclude, without undue inaccuracy, that the buying power of a rouble in the interior of the country is about equivalent to one franc fifty. Not always, however ! For, according to *Moscow Evening* (April 26th, 1935), a "private" hairdresser, after shaving a client and spraying his face with eau de Cologne, demanded of him in exchange for these delights the sum of thirteen roubles and eighty kopeks !

But the price of meals confirms our calculations : in small Moscow restaurants the normal meal costs three roubles ; the "select" public can feed in the "Intourist" restaurants, which undertake, at a cost of twelve roubles per head, to cater for "congresses, conferences, etc." This we learnt in February 1935 from an announcement made by the Grand Hotel in Moscow. There are also pot-houses which supply workers with two courses, excluding meat or fish, for the sum of sixty-five kopeks, but this pittance is only equivalent to

the Paris "soup kitchen." We can thus see that the great majority of operatives, engineers, doctors and officials in the U.S.S.R. are in by no means any better situation than those workless men in France who have no resources beyond unemployment relief. And we may add that twenty-nine medical professors, addressing themselves to Stalin by order, "expressed their enthusiasm for" and actually described as "historical" the decree of the Central Committee of the Party on March 4th, 1935, which raised their fees. Since this decree the country doctor's salary amounts to from three hundred and sixty to four hundred roubles a month, the equivalent of twenty measures of corn, while before the war this same doctor with a salary of one hundred roubles was able to buy one hundred measures of corn.

The domain of health also affords us an eloquent illustration of the quality of the "public services" which the Government provides for the fortunate population. Soviet propaganda proclaims brilliant success in this domain: the number of its doctors, it avers, has risen from thirteen thousand, in 1913, to fifty-three thousand in 1934, while the number of clinics and of dispensaries is now two and a half times greater than it was before the war, etc. etc. We have no means of verifying these figures, but we do know from the soviet press itself that the doctors are without clothing, the hospitals without doctors or beds, the beds without linen and the dispensaries without drugs.

The hospital at Stavropolis accommodates four times its correct complement of patients. At Vologda five hundred patients are being attended by one doctor (*Pravda*, March 23rd, 1935).

In the chemists' shops at Samara, it is impossible to obtain drugs; there is neither aspirin, castor oil nor zinc ointment (*Pravda*, February 13th, 1935).

The sanatoria in the Crimea are in the utmost difficulties. For

lack of money they are in debt to the provisioning centre which refuses to supply them. Yesterday, in the largest sanatorium at Yalta, there was nothing wherewith to provide dinner. To-day they are unable to prepare any luncheon (*Pravda*, March 14th, 1935).

Negligence, disorder, despotism are rife at every moment and in every direction. Two employees of a Moscow railway station, we are told by a telegram originating from Havas on January 30th, 1935, have been condemned to ten years' imprisonment; they had received orders to poison rats, but by inadvertence had poisoned several railway officials. In December 1934 *Moscow Evening* published a letter which is worthy of quotation:

On the 4th of October I had ordered an overcoat at the No. 4 workshop of the tailors' co-operative. The receipt mentioned October 16th as the date for the fitting and November 6th as the date for delivery. Since October 16th I have been ten times for the fitting which was always postponed until the following day. On the nineteenth day, November 4th, I was finally told: "Sit down, and the overcoat will be brought to you."

I remained there three hours and was then informed that a mistake had been made and that the overcoat was not ready. On November 30th I was delighted to learn that only the collar remained to be attached, but on December 16th I was told that the collar had been lost. Since the day upon which I gave the order, two months and sixteen days have elapsed and my overcoat is still unfinished.

But we can add yet more picturesque incidents: In January 1935 an Archangel operative, lunching in a workmen's restaurant, discovered a cockroach in his soup. He complained to the secretary of the local Committee of the Party, who devised an ingenious punishment for the personnel of the restaurant: the preparation and administration of cockroach soup. This was duly concocted and duly swallowed by these unfortunates under threat of dismissal. The president of a *kolkhoze* in the Ekaterinburg district ordered a

kolkhozian woman, Votnova, to suckle newly-born piglets at her own breast ; she obeyed, and in recognition of her zeal received the title of emergency operative (*Pravda*, April 15th, 1935).

These last two incidents which might credibly be anecdotes invented by humorists, bring us right into the atmosphere of present-day life in the Soviets. It is indeed an essential characteristic of this life to deny any rights to the individual. It may even be said that they deny all rights of every kind. This is logical. From the moment that the communist State sets out to regulate all human relationships, law has no place in the business, administrative action suffices. This is what has occurred. The G.P.U. has suppressed justice, the penal code and legal procedure ; collectivization has made the Territorial Code superfluous, while the abolition of private trade and enterprise has ousted the Civil Code. The administrations of the Trades Unions have replaced the Workers' Code.

Now the disappearance of legal principles could not possibly be accomplished without serious repercussions upon public morals : with the assistance of poverty the worst instincts broke loose. Ever since (early in 1935) the soviet newspapers have been permitted to open their columns to current events, a painful panorama has passed before our eyes. Dangerous hooligans are everywhere, both in town and country, stealing and raping on trains, in the streets, in the houses and in the schools. They frequently commit burglaries, even the very poor, and ruthlessly murder any who attempt to defend themselves. We are able to see that misguided childhood only follows the general trend.

In every country, of course, abominable crimes occur, but nowhere else do they appear in such mass production, nowhere else do they partake of that aspect of

“current events” which characterizes them in the U.S.S.R. And this in spite of the very severe punishments inflicted upon thieves and hooligans.

If, moreover, one recollects the shadow of the omnipresent G.P.U. which broods over all the countries, one may easily and completely realize that “stifling atmosphere of mistrust, of suspicion and terror” which pervades all Russia and so offended Monsieur Labry.

But we are told that the era of dreary melancholy is past and that nowadays there is much diversion in the U.S.S.R., that there is dancing to the strains of the jazz band, and that the soviet press is even beginning to accuse certain sections of the Young Communists of obeying too literally and too zealously the command of the powers that be to live merrily.

Yes, there are indeed diversions in the U.S.S.R., but who are those that enjoy them? A small group of privileged individuals in the Government, the immediate entourage of the leaders of the Party, those “responsible workers” who earn from three to five thousand roubles monthly. As a consequence of the perfected and systematic pillage of the agricultural districts, the socialist city dwellers have found themselves well provided with cash, even to the point of creating an opulence, an excess of riches in relation to the small number of those privileged to enjoy them. And the permission to do so only serves to emphasize the terrible inequality which, in the U.S.S.R., separates the governors from the governed, the masters from their slaves.

There exists of course there, as everywhere, a section of youth which desires to obtain pleasure at any cost. But not all the younger generation! Some articles which appeared recently in the soviet press throw a revealing ray of light upon this point, especially in the case of one, “A Frank Conversation,” which was

published by *Pravda* in two issues at the end of December 1934 under the sub-title "Of a Happy Life." The phrase added as a corollary, "The people of our country," shows that the article purports to deal with tendencies that are generally current; moreover, were this not so, *Pravda* would doubtless not have cared to publish the article in question.

From this "Frank Conversation" we learn that soviet youth recognizes within its ranks the existence of two distinct and opposing types: those whom it terms "mechanized" and those whom it refers to as "sensitives." The writer of the articles displays a thousand reticences and endless caution, but his meaning is nevertheless clear enough: the "sensitives," who undoubtedly represent the sounder portion of the young generation, are deeply unhappy and feel themselves oppressed by the stifling atmosphere of life under the Soviets. It is only the "mechanized" who enjoy themselves—when their meagre purses will permit of their doing so.

Imaginary joy and enthusiasm are for the Bolsheviks material for exportation. Soviet propaganda introduces a strong dose of them into all its products: reviews, almanacs, films (*Happy Boys*, for instance), even the electoral placards of foreign Communists (as could be noted in those of the French municipal elections in May 1935). But the over-exuberance, the importunate exaggeration of this manufactured happiness reveals the sham.

It is obvious that man cannot live without smiling. But the smile, among soviet citizens, is almost always a nervous grimace, or perhaps that laugh of which a German professor, the hero of one of Tourguenev's novels remarked, shrugging his shoulders: "The Russians so often laugh when they ought to weep."

CHAPTER IV
SOVIET ACTION IN THE MATERIAL
FIELD

I

The Magic of the Plans

THE primary principle of socialism being the centralization of production, the first aim of the soviet authorities was to apply it. The control of economic life was therefore placed bodily in the hands of the Superior Economic Council, which had under its command various different offices entitled "Glavki," each of which corresponded to a different branch of production.

Later on, a special office, known as the State Plan and created in 1920, was entrusted with the elaboration of the plans which were designed to regulate the working of the economic organisms. The State Plan, however, did not succeed in retaining that exclusiveness which was its *raison d'être*. Since the liquidation of the New Political Economy (N.P.E.) the trend of fashion brought back into favour, in a very special manner, plans of a very varied description. Even at the present day they continue to pour forth in a continuous stream—such and such a Congress of Inventors decide to draw up a "plan" for future discoveries; they calculate that the net profit to be expected will be a billion roubles per annum, and not only this, but they proceed to divide these profits, which are as hypothetical as the

inventions themselves, into predetermined shares for each district. Such and such an office, by means of a premature census, foresees and registers the number of future births and immediately begins to shuffle the food-cards upon a foundation of these calculations which are without any confirmation. Such and such an "Institute," having doubtless learned the secret of how to harness the elements, decides upon the future climate and, as *Moscow Evening* terms it, "prepares to govern the clouds, to organize the rain and the fogs with a view to establishing a central direction of rainfall in the Soviet States."

But without lingering over these exaggerations, which would appear to be jests were they not in fact the sober truth, let us examine the reasons which cannot fail to defeat the arrogant presumption of even the least fantastical of their plans. Here is the chief and the most decisive of these reasons.

All economic processes are closely bound together, and a central direction only serves to accentuate their interdependence. It is therefore indispensable to the success of the plans, that each industry, each branch of that industry, each factory should possess raw material in good time and in sufficient quantity, together with available labour and means of transport, etc. In "capitalist bourgeois" economy it is private initiative which undertakes the supplying of industries, whereas, under the soviet régime, there is a worse factor to be considered than even the absence of initiative: there is the fear of action: the managing personnel, incompetent and dominated by the apprehension of incessant fault-finding, feels itself to be the object of constant suspicion and carefully avoids all responsibility. The outcome of these circumstances is a disorder in which plans cannot fail to come to grief.

On every side and at every moment one meets with complete indifference. It is a common sight to see a costly machine imported from abroad, put out of action for want of the replacement of some simple part, or a high combustion furnace idle for lack of fuel. Nor must we be surprised at the cry of triumph uttered by the *Red Evening Gazette* of Moscow when making the announcement that: "yesterday all the trains arrived on time!" Less pleasing were the results of an inquiry made by the *Operative and Peasant Inspection* into the working discipline in a soviet office, revealing that among two hundred and two officials only fifty-five were present in the office, and of these twenty-five had arrived late. Moreover, such derelictions frequently pass unnoticed owing to the fact that the management and boards of control are themselves conniving. Such was the case, quite lately, in the "Electroless" factory at Stalingrad, where all the ledgers had been passed as correct by the local commission of control, but where a million roubles had quite simply vanished into thin air, as stated by *Pravda*, which exposed the incident.

Accidents of this description are referred to in current soviet parlance as "gaps" (in the Plan). An effort is made to obviate them by means of "campaigns." For instance, the campaign for rearing rabbits at the time when the meat famine had increased to such an extent that the predetermined ration on the food-cards had become purely theoretical. A Red professor was commanded to preach to the operatives upon the nutritious qualities of rabbit flesh, as well as the marvellous profits to be obtained from the by-products: skin, bones, etc. In a factory where this apologia gained credence, the operatives placed an order for five hundred breeding rabbits, and constructed the cages required for their reception. Alas! Only eight rabbits made

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their appearance, and these quickly died owing to the defective conditions in which they were kept. The experiment was not repeated ; the project was abandoned owing to the fact that the food suggested as being most suitable for these animals, cabbages, beetroots and carrots, was precisely that preferred by the operatives, or in any case the only diet they were able to afford !

Nor do we foresee any better outcome of the " Plan for the Development of Stock Breeding in 1935," which orders the cows in the U.S.S.R. to produce, by January 1st, 1936, at latest, 11,288,000 calves, while mares must give birth to 2,055,000 foals, sows to 16,965,000 piglets, and goats and ewes must provide exactly 16,212,200 offspring. Moreover, this progeny must be produced in various districts in numbers strictly decreed by order of the Soviet Government.

One sees that the innumerable " plans " with their various " landmarks " and " co-efficients of execution " really consist only of a war of words which panders to communist mysticism. In reality, the State, making use of its monopolist situation, is merely a wasteful master who sacrifices the economic life of the country and human lives to the phantasmagoria of its doctrine.

The " plans " and " campaigns " which cross and inter-cross one another lead finally to a confusion only comparable to that of the Tower of Babel, a comparison which has frequently been made by the priests in their pulpits, and which has been mentioned with vexation by the soviet author of the book entitled *The Religion and Edification of the Kolkhozes*.

Moreover, it is not alone the priests, those " declared enemies of the régime, who criticize " : the entire population has made up its mind with regard to the value of communist economics and " plans." Here is an anecdote much in vogue in the U.S.S.R. and which

is quoted by the review *The Struggle*, edited in Paris by the former Red diplomat, Bessedovsky.

The president Kalinine was one day talking to the peasants of a village, who were complaining that they were being ruined by collectivization, to the extent of no longer being able to clothe themselves decently. He thereupon explained to them that in distant countries the unfortunate negroes possessed no clothes of any kind. Whereupon the peasants exclaimed :

“ Without a doubt, those countries must have reached the end of their second Five Year Plan ! ”

II

The War against the Peasant

When Lenin, in 1918, approached the task of the building of socialism, he fully realized that it could not be accomplished without commandeering the activities of the peasants. He therefore opened his campaign by the promulgation of the decree which claimed as State property all “ superfluous ” products of the land. This was practically equivalent to the establishment of a heavy tax in kind.

In order, on the one hand, to master the opposition which it foresaw would arise among the peasants, and on the other hand to create an element loyal to the régime in the agricultural districts, the Party threw the apple of discord among the rural population. It fomented the hatred of the poor man against the landed proprietor known as a *Koulak* and declared to be an enemy of the régime. Committees of the “ poor ” were formed and invested with powers of supervision over the *Koulaki*. These committees were firmly supported by the Chekas and by the special “ victualling detachments.”

From that moment, as a logical reaction, the peasant

proceeded to reduce in every manner and place the sowing of the land. He ceased to attempt to make it produce anything beyond the amount strictly necessary for his personal needs. The year happened, in any case, to be a very bad one, and the peasant's calculations were frustrated by a wretched harvest; even the indispensable mean was not obtained, and the terrible famine of 1921 hurled itself on to the entire country, slaying several millions of human beings.

Struck by these results, Lenin decreed the N.E.P. (New Economic Policy), which was characterized by a diminution of taxes in kind and the freedom of barter—although the authorized concessions were strictly limited and the political persecution of the *Koulaki* remained in force.

A swift improvement in rural economics was immediately apparent among the sound and anti-communist population of the villages, an improvement consolidated by the feeling of strength and economic power to which it tended. The Party, not without reason, viewed it with apprehension as a counter-revolutionary danger, and Stalin, on his accession to authority, hastened to suppress the N.E.P. He proceeded to a progressive tightening of the screws of the machinery of taxation in kind, especially from 1928 onwards, when he began urgently to require large quantities of agricultural produce with which to feed the Five Year Plan, nourish the largely increased personnel of the trades and obtain the foreign relations necessary for the covering of some part, at any rate, of the orders placed abroad for machinery. And thus the ruin of the peasant became an accomplished fact.

But in spite of every possible device, the requisitions of the produce of the land did not proceed without great difficulties; they were only obtained by an

incessant struggle. Moreover, the *sovkhoses*, formed with a view to their being to some extent the State granaries (its "wheat factories," as they have been sometimes called), did not justify the hopes of the Party. It was at this juncture that Stalin conceived what he believed to be a perfected method of draining the wheat, and that the collectivization of the rural districts came into existence. It was decided permanently to abolish individual peasant economies, and to place the harvest and their distribution under the strict control of State officials. This plan was at first conceived on a modest scale, but from December 1929 onwards the Central Committee of the Party resolved to advance energetically in this direction and Stalin himself gave the word of command at the Congress of Marxist Agriculturists.

These decisions caused a great upheaval in the rural districts, where they met with a desperate resistance from the sane and healthy elements. The *Koulaki* then found themselves deported by tens of thousands. They went to populate the concentration camps where they are employed on hard labour (especially in the timber trade); as for the rest, they flung themselves in crowds into the *Kolkhoses*. These were for them the only harbour of refuge, for there, at any rate, they were sure of certain privileges and of receiving their daily bread without having to wage an incessant warfare to protect the fruits of their labours. Nevertheless, they permitted themselves beforehand the sinister consolation of holding immense "funeral feasts," for which they slaughtered a number of their cattle in order that they should not fall into the hands of the oppressors. The figures quoted are remarkable. In addition to several million horses, eighteen million head of large cattle and sixty million sheep and pigs.

Be it as it might, success appeared to be assured to the cause of collectivization, and the Government hastened to sing a pæan of victory ; but it soon became apparent that only a new phase had been reached of the gigantic struggle which was being waged between the Party and the peasant masses. Within the *Kolkhozes*, labour, being unstimulated by any personal interest, became continuously less productive, and the soviet records themselves estimate that in 1931 one thousand million " poods " (1 pood = 16 kg.), that is to say, more than a fifth part of the harvest, remained on the ground and was lost (we shall presently learn of a further reason for this enormous waste) ; the sowing of the rural districts in October 1931 was estimated at 30 per cent under the figure forecast in the Plan.¹

Confronted by this situation, Stalin resorted to new tactics.

On the one hand he introduced a new method of compulsion in the form of individual rations, the amount of which would in future depend upon the labour contributed by each member of a *Kolkhoze*. At the same time, direct control was reinforced : a special service of " brigadiers " for purposes of supervision was created in this connection. On the other hand Stalin dangled before the eyes of the peasants the dazzling promise that after the harvest of 1932, once the State

¹ There are of course in existence a few model *Kolkhozes* used for purposes of propaganda. These are those which are shown to foreigners. Lady Astor, after a trip which she made with Bernard Shaw to the U.S.S.R., drew up an enthusiastic report of the *Kolkhoze* which she visited, and was justly impressed by the fact that she was able to converse with the peasants, since, as by miracle, the cowherd, Maric, spoke perfectly intelligible American-English. What Lady Astor did not know was that there exist model *Kolkhozes* imported straight from America with managers and personnel composed of former Slav emigrants who have returned to live on Russian soil under specially favourable terms !

taxes had been paid, the *Kolkhozes* should be entitled to sell the remainder of the harvest. Later it was decided to grant this "concession" immediately. Finally, in face of the peasants' incredulity, an appreciable reduction was made in the taxes in kind.

However, the peasants paid no attention to the benefits of the "liberal" decree concerning the excess portions of the harvest, and that for an excellent reason—such excess was non-existent. It was indeed so entirely non-existent that, with the spring of 1933, the spectre of a great famine which had long been looming over the country became a terrible reality. It was an exact repetition of the black year of 1921, with hundreds of thousands of dead and all the horrors of anthropophagy. Just as in 1921, the most fertile regions were the most severely assailed, and this because the Soviet Government had worked with particular energy to deprive them of their harvests. It may thus be held as wholly responsible for their ruin.

There is no lack of first-hand evidence to corroborate the fact of the terrible famine of which Russia was the victim in 1933. We may mention, for example, the official report on the subject which was made to his government, in May 1933, by Monsieur Schiller, adviser to the German Embassy in Moscow. To this may be added the impressions of his tour in the U.S.S.R., during the autumn of 1933, which were recorded by the American journalist, Mr. Lang, correspondent to *Vorwaerts* of New York (the most important Jewish newspaper in the world). He was literally terrified by the ghastly spectacles which he witnessed in the course of his stay in Russia.

The soviet papers were very careful to ignore the fact of the famine. Nevertheless, the special press acknowledged its existence among the cattle. Let us

listen to the cry of despair uttered by the review *Provisioning Co-operation and Trade* (September 10th, 1933, No. 209). The review mentions the case of a milk "co-operative" whose yield only reached 76 per cent of the "Plan" during the first quarter of 1933, and fell during the second quarter to 37 per cent! If a certain improvement was noted during the month of July it was because, abandoning the methods of "scientific feeding," it was decided to allow the cows to crop the common grass. Nor was this an isolated instance: in another "co-operative" fifty-five cows had to be slaughtered owing to starvation.

Let us mention in passing that of all the fields of rural economics, that of breeding suffered most cruelly from the dire effects of the collectivization in the rural districts. In 1928 the Russian villages possessed 33·5 million horses, 70·5 million head of large cattle, 146·7 million goats and sheep, and 26 million pigs. In 1932, at the end of the first Five Year Plan, the statistics of the *cheptel* indicated 19·6 million horses, 40·7 million head of large cattle, 52·1 million goats and sheep, and 11·6 million pigs. That is to say, a total reduction of 55 per cent. Since then every effort to increase the *cheptel* has remained without result.

Nor is the lot of human beings any better than that of the beasts. In order to form an idea of the level of peasant life, it will be profitable to trace the following parallel which may be established from the soviet statistics. In 1913, in exchange for a quintal of wheat, the peasant could obtain: 25 metres of cotton materials; 13 kg. of sugar; 17 kg. of soap. In 1927, the same quantity of wheat would procure him 10·5 metres of materials; 7 kg. of sugar; 8 kg. of soap. In 1932-3, the equivalent of a quintal of wheat was: 3·3 metres of materials; 2 kg. of sugar; 1·5 kg. of soap.

In the autumn of 1934, the struggle for the harvest between the peasants and the Soviet Government was not less bitter than in the previous years, but a very important and significant new factor made its appearance : it frequently happened that the local authorities in the persons of the "political sections" of the rural districts, and the subordinate committees of the Party, found themselves accused of having acted in connivance with the malcontents. Thus, the editorial of *Pravda* (September 25th, 1934) vehemently blamed the local authorities for the deficiencies in the plans of delivery and in the monthly plan (example : in the Odessa district 24 per cent to the 20th September, in Western Siberia 14 per cent on the same date) as well as in the annual plan (8.9 per cent in Western Siberia). This was as much as to say that the local administrative personnel, bound to the population by the thousand ties which are created by daily life, frequently finds itself compelled, willy-nilly, to make common cause with the people against a parasitical Government.

After inflicting severe punishments upon a long series of workers in the "political sections" of the rural districts, the Party determined in the end upon a radical measure : the suppression of these same "political sections" at the end of November 1934. Henceforward their duties are entrusted to other subordinate organisms of the Party. In May 1935 the newspapers announced that these organisms were preparing actively for their task, notably by the establishment of "radio-liaison." But they encounter to-day the same difficulties as their predecessors and yield to the same contagion.

The harvest of 1933, exceptionally favoured by natural conditions, spared Russia, during the year 1934, any recurrence of the terrible trials she had suffered during the preceding year ; in 1934 the

peasants enjoyed only that semi-starvation which may nowadays be considered "normal."

The harvest of 1934, while being relatively abundant, was inferior to that of 1933,¹ and since the advent of the spring of 1935, distressing news has begun to reach us from the South of Russia. In order to avoid a repetition of the famine, the Government have been compelled to grant the *Kolkhozes*, in a decree of December 27th, 1934, a "loan without interest of cereals for food and sowing" which amounted to 70 million poods (rather more than a million tons). Later on, on March 4th, 1935, the "norms of delivery of wheat" owed to the State in 1935 were diminished for certain districts as compared with the "norms" of 1934. Nevertheless, the year 1935 is being much harder for the Russian countryside than the preceding year.

What will be the harvest of 1935 which is to determine the life of the country in 1936?

The first results known in September indicate a harvest superior to the former year; but already the Government counts upon that and, seeking its own advantage first of all, is selling a considerable quantity of corn to Italy. It seems that the prices asked are much lower than those of the world market. The reason is obvious: the corn which the Soviets dispose of is a product of plunder.

It is evident that the harvest is not being gathered without severe hindrances. In particular there is a menacing discrepancy between the cut and the threshed corn; so that, according to *Izvestia* (August 4th), the

¹ Here are the estimates made by impartial specialists as regards the harvest: 57 million tons in 1932, 75 millions in 1933, 70 millions in 1934 (in 1913, 85.8 million tons). The soviet statistics give entirely different figures which have no connection with fact and which are constantly refuted by their own reports: 69.9 million tons in 1932; 89.6 millions in 1933; 89.3 in 1934.

Kolkhozes of the regions of Kiev, Tchernigov, Kharkoff and others have threshed for the end of July only 2 to 8 per cent of the crops. In short, the situation is accurately summed up by the chief of the agricultural section of the Central Committee of the Party, Yakovlev, who remarked at a congress of emergency workers of the *Kolkhozes* in February 1935 : " We must confess that our progress in agriculture is not yet satisfactory. . . . The most elementary order in our fields is still lacking. . . . "

The congress of " emergency *Kolkhozians* " in February 1935, at which these words were spoken, marked a new stage in the war between the peasants and the Party. In conformity with Stalin's instructions, the congress adopted the new " *Kolkhoze* statutes " which inaugurated the ruling of " individual plots " which each peasant family is now authorized to keep in its possession. This ruling does not by any means confer any proprietary right over these scraps of territory, it merely permits their personal enjoyment. But it does afford an outlet to the peasant's individualistic instincts.

Undeniably, this concession is a blemish on the purity of the soviet principles of agricultural policy, but this drawback must surely be compensated by the fact that collectivization must be more easily accepted by individual proprietors ? For it must not be forgotten that in August 1935 there remained 73.5 million families as against 18 million who had joined the *Kolkhozes*.

But the Soviets will also reap a material benefit. It is true that the " individual plots " are exceedingly small ; they vary between one-half and three-quarters of a hectare per family, according to the districts, and therefore their surface will never total even one-tenth part of the areas under cultivation (129.8 million hectares in 1934). Nevertheless, there is every reason to believe that after the legalization of the " plots " the peasant

will do his best to increase the harvest upon the ground accorded to him, and this in itself is not a negligible factor. It is even less negligible in the domain of breeding. The new statutes of the *Kolkhoze* have also increased the number of beasts which the peasant will in future be allowed to possess for his own profit (two and three cows instead of one, etc.), and this measure permits us to foresee a speedy increase of the *cheptel*, which up to the present day has suffered from chronic shrinkage.

Against this individual production under a *Kolkhozian* label, the Party aims the pitiless catapults of taxation.

Two or three figures will suffice to indicate the income of a collectivized peasant family and its obligations towards the State. In a speech made during the spring of 1935 Comrade Molotov, President of the Council of the Peoples' Commissars, was so imprudent as to give in detail the amount of the remuneration in cereals granted to members of the *Kolkhozes*; he quoted an average estimated upon 83,000 *Kolkhozes*: 1.1 quintal in 1932 (a bad year); 2.2 quintals in 1934 (a good year) per family. We may remark that before the war the personal consumption of cereals by the Russian peasants (quite apart from the wheat sold) amounted to 4.3 quintals per family, of which 3.1 quintals represented human consumption and 1.2 quintal food for beasts. In addition to the wheat the members of the *Kolkhozes* also receive a salary. Its amount? It is variable, but at the congress of "emergency *Kolkhozians*" a reporter, speaking of the fertile district of Ekaterinoslav and of the good year, 1933, put it at 1 rouble and 40 kopeks per working day (*Pravda*, February 11th, 1935). We have reckoned, in one of our preceding chapters, basing our calculations upon the price of bread, that the purchasing capacity of a

rouble in the U.S.S.R. may be compared to that of 1 franc 50 centimes in French money. If therefore we make a parallel between the prices of a series of products of primary necessity in the Soviet State commerce and the cost of these same products before the war, we perceive that a soviet rouble is equivalent to 4.4 kopeks of the old currency. The American journalist, Knickerbocker, comparing the cost of living in the U.S.S.R. and that in the United States, estimates the daily wage of a *Kolkhozian* at 8 cents in American money.

Moreover, this pitiful income is loaded with formidable taxes. *For Communist Instruction* (November 18th, 1934) quotes the case of the family of a *Kolkhozian* who, out of his annual cereal remuneration, amounting to 24 poods and 15 pounds, had to pay 173 roubles of different taxes ; this same family was, in addition, compelled to give the State, in return for the possession of one single cow, 130 litres of milk and 29 kilos of meat, etc. etc. "If one reckons the total of the taxes and tribute in kind demanded of the *Kolkhozian*," comments the paper quoted, "this total appears to exceed the income of the family. . . ." Moreover, this year certain taxes have been increased, as have the payments in kind (for example, 39 kilos of meat instead of 29, etc.).

Thus we are once more able to plumb the depths of the poverty into which the Russian peasants have been plunged by the communist régime.

It is true that the peasant contrives to keep from the Government a part of the fruits of the earth. Dissatisfied with his miserable "ration," weighed down, moreover, by intolerable taxation, he seeks to amass a small clandestine "supply" ; often he cuts the corn with scissors, on the field that was formerly his own property ("hairdressers" is the term employed by the soviet press to describe this category of criminals). If

he succeeds in amassing a more or less considerable quantity of wheat, he buries it in the ground ("black barns" is the common expression). Such illicit "savings" must be sought for in the rubric of the "losses of the harvest."

We have seen that soviet sources estimated these losses in the harvest of 1931 at a figure of 20 per cent. In 1933, Comrade Ossinsky, in a lengthy article published in *Izvestia* (September 21st, 1933), estimated the average yield of a hectare of land ("biological harvest") at 11.8 quintals and estimated the losses in the course of harvesting and threshing as having risen to 5.6 quintals. Thus, according to Ossinsky, the losses in 1933 amounted to one-half of the harvest. Of course, Ossinsky's calculations are purely imaginary: he immensely exaggerated the losses, since he was exaggerating the figures of the "biological harvest," wishing to emphasize the increased yield of the land under soviet rule! Moreover, quite recently, prominent soviet officials, and notably Kalinine, mentioned 10 quintals as a yield which it was necessary to attain *in the near future*! Actually, in the bad years, the average harvest sinks below 5 quintals per hectare and rises with difficulty in the good years to 6.

Nevertheless, the losses are enormous. In addition to cereals which are ruined by carelessness, they include the corn pilfered by the peasants and also a proportion which the cultivators prefer to destroy rather than hand it over to the bandit-State.

At the present time, having brought into play the motive of personal interest with a view to stimulating production in the rural districts, the Party is leading a new assault upon the peasants. The war is to continue. It will not cease so long as the communist régime endures.

Thus, year by year, the life of the entire country is left in the hands of chance. If by God's grace the harvest is good, every man somehow finds the means of avoiding starvation. But if the year is unfavourable, then, under the régime of communist economics, the slightest deficiency in the harvest leads to a famine which carries off victims in hundreds of thousands, if not in millions. Never will either the peasants or the land work under the socialist lash.

Certain members of the Party, even influential members (who knows whether they may not be numerous), recognize this simple truth—when they discuss it among themselves. A former soviet journalist and editor of a Moscow review, now a refugee in France, related, in the course of a lecture, the purport of a conversation which he had had with the President of the Economic Council of the Georgian Soviet Republic when they were travelling together in Georgia. They discussed at length the breeding of sheep, that one wealth of the country, which was daily decreasing, and finally, to sum up the entire question, the president, a very prominent Communist, exclaimed despairingly :

“ But what can we do, my friend, since this damned sheep will not endure socialism ! ”

Nor is the sheep alone in this peculiarity !

III

The Defeats and Problems of Industry

In the time of Lenin, the first results of “ stateized ” economics—directed in accordance with communist precepts—very soon revealed themselves as disastrous. The “ Glavki ” knew neither how to organize nor how to manage, and only succeeded in rapidly ruining and dispersing the possessions of the old régime. With the

inauguration of the New Economic Policy, although the breath of freedom, or of a very relative freedom, was much more apparent in agriculture than in nationalized trade, this latter was not slow to evidence a perceptible measure of recovery.

Stalin, on his accession to power, cut short this recovery and reinstated the entire economic system in its initial rigidity. An immediate relapse was the result. This time the remedy was sought in a heavy dose of the disease itself and there emerged the celebrated Five Year Plan of 1928.

And let us once and for all, at this juncture, avoid a mistake that is too often made, and let us understand one thing thoroughly: the *fundamental aim* of the Plan contained nothing harmful, nothing communistic, and nothing new.

What, after all, is the sum of the five fat volumes which expound the Five Year Plan? The master-idea that the centre of gravity of national economy must be shifted from agriculture to trade: once the execution of the Plan was completed, the annual yield of trade would rise from 18 to 43 thousand million roubles, while the forecast for the agricultural yield only envisaged a rise from 17 to 26 thousand millions. The mere unfolding of the project aroused respectful admiration abroad, even that of certain foreign specialists. But anyone who is in the least familiar with the economic history of Russia, can immediately grasp the fact that the process visualized by the Bolsheviki is none other than that which had been developing before the war ever since the end of the nineteenth century.

A few figures will serve to clarify this economic fact. During the three years which preceded the war, the population of the towns increased at a rate of 600,000 inhabitants per year. The production of the foundries

rose from 183 millions of pounds in 1910 to 283 millions in 1913. The making of machinery doubled between 1908 and 1913. In 1913 Russia was already able to provide herself with three-quarters of her requirements in manufactured goods, and out of the other quarter which she imported 63 per cent consisted of machines and tools, against only 31 per cent of objects for direct consumption.

These are not the figures of any concerted "plan" but of a comparatively recent reality. The Bolsheviks therefore have simply wished to impose upon their "stateized" economy the same evolution that they had wiped out ten years earlier when engaged in killing free national economy.

Yet there remains between the reality of the past and the "plans" of to-day one vitally important difference. And that is that the pre-war development was the consequence, the indication and the proof of the general increasing prosperity of the country: it was merely the result of the free interplay of economic forces, without any foreign intrusion. There was in it nothing unhealthy or artificial, and that was precisely why it was leading the country towards prosperity and well-being. The Five Year Plan, on the contrary, bore within itself a morbid afterthought: behind its economic aim it concealed political intentions both unhealthy and vicious. For on close analysis, it proved to be essentially a political enterprise destined to equip the Party and the Comintern with a view to an economic and military campaign of aggression against "the bourgeois and capitalist world."

It goes without saying that very heavy expenditure has gone to the putting on its feet of the Five Year Plan. This will be apparent if we proceed to a brief exposé of its "financial carcase."

The Plan as a whole was expected to entail 64 thousand

millions of roubles of investments of which 13 were to be furnished by the peasants, 21.5 by the State Budget, loans, etc., and 29.5 were to be fished out of the returns of "stateized" economy. Whence were these returns expected to come? They appeared to be assured by a skilful manipulation of the cost price and the selling price of the products of the State Industries. The authors of the plot declared, in fact, without attempting any explanation, that the cost prices would fall by 7 per cent each year, so that the reduction would have reached the figure of 35 per cent at the expiration of the Plan. And the selling prices, were these to rise? Not at all; a fall was promised, but only of 20 per cent, so that there would remain that 15 per cent which was to be the magical source of wealth. To what extent, then, did the reckonings of the Plan find their justification in fact? In other words, in what measure did the Bolsheviks succeed in conquering the obstacles that arose in their path?

For obstacles sprang up from all directions the more formidable in that their primary origin lay in the régime itself.

The defects of technical direction, which we have already mentioned, afford us a striking example in this connection. Let us not forget that under the régime of the Plan these defects become a hundred times more serious. It would be futile to nourish any great expectations if, the Plan once launched, no high level has been attained in the discipline of labour or high degree of precision in the entire "economic mechanism." The Bolsheviks, in any case, had recourse to foreign technicians, in whom they felt more confidence both from the standpoint of political loyalty (particularly when compared with elderly Russian engineers) and from that of competence (particularly when compared with

young engineers of soviet training). It is estimated that at least five thousand foreign specialists (chiefly Germans and Americans) were employed in the various soviet industries which were engaged in the execution of the first Five Year Plan. Nevertheless, as was only to be expected, these specialists proved powerless to alter the general state of affairs ; on the contrary, their personal activity went down before it and was frequently paralysed. Certain foreign engineers, more conscientious than others, ended by resigning their positions and returning home, feeling that the bad organization of trade prevented them from usefully applying their knowledge. Finally, during the last three years or so, the Bolsheviks, having run short of foreign currencies, have seized upon any pocket to repudiate the contracts which they have signed with foreigners, or else, contrary to the clauses in these contracts, they begin to pay salaries in soviet money, and seeing themselves thus deceived, the foreign technicians desert their posts.

The question of labour is not less thorny. The operatives, badly disciplined, poor and ignorant, always wandering from one factory to another, are utterly incapable, as are the managers, of taking advantage of the modern equipments which have been installed at the cost of the cruel privations imposed upon the people. If we add to this the dearth and the waste of raw material and the defective functioning of transport, we shall come to the conclusion that the Five Year Plan had very little chance of success.

Is it necessary to quote the official figures with regard to the Plan's execution? We propose to do so in a later chapter in which we shall attempt to form a general judgment upon the economic experience of the Soviets. For the moment our task is to ascertain to what extent we can rely upon official soviet statistics. With this

purpose, we will turn to a source whose competence at any rate cannot be contested: the statements of the masters of the Kremlin. It would be easy to collect very enlightening testimony from the speeches made by the leaders at the last Congress of the Party, in February 1934, and at the Congress of the Soviets in February 1935. But in order to discover a general appreciation which really reserves the problem, we cannot do better than turn our attention to the Party Conference of January 1932. At that conference the communist chiefs were for the first time compelled to consider the general aspects of the execution of the first Five Year Plan which had just reached the beginning of its final year. In so much as concerned the activities of 1931 (the penultimate year of the Plan), which had been expected to provide an increase of trade profits exceeding those of the previous year by 42 per cent, it was admitted that the increase had only amounted to 24.3 per cent; that is to say, slightly over one-half of the figure hoped for and prescribed.

But what was much more serious was that the reporters at the conference were obliged to confess that the balance sheet in question had been based upon very doubtful statistics, owing to the fact that a multitude of enterprises had falsified their returns, either by reckoning goods in the course of manufacture as already delivered, by including old stocks among new output, by largely exaggerating the value of their output, or finally by concealing waste and faulty produce.

This verification—the most authoritative that could be made—is corroborated by innumerable statements in the soviet press, concerning the chaos existing in various factories and trades: their tale would fill volumes. We will quote a few examples.

The repair of tractors in the spring of 1935 “ showed

inexcusable delays," declared *Pravda* (February 4th, 1935). According to districts only 30 to 60 per cent were ready on the 1st of February, and in Middle Asia this percentage of repaired tractors varied from 22 to 35. Not long ago the manager of a typewriting machine factory was prosecuted in Petrograd; this factory had in the course of one year manufactured five typewriters which had cost the State 500,000 roubles. According to *Izvestia* of December 17th, 1934, the experimental factory of the Pharmaceutical Trust had only accomplished 36 per cent of its programme of production. Finally, one of the most striking examples, and one which clearly demonstrates the true value of the triumphant announcements in the soviet press, is afforded by the case of the "Uralmache" factory, an immense "combined factory" for the construction of machinery, situated in the Ural district, and whose equipment, imported from abroad, represented the last word in technique. On July 14th, 1934, *Pravda* proclaimed the "glorious victories" of this "factory of factories." Thirteen days later we read in the local paper, *The Ural Workman*, that this same "giant of heavy industry" has been since 1928 monopolized (how?) by a group of counter-revolutionary engineers who have systematically destroyed its output and have ended by setting fire to a part of the factory.

The output, deficient as to quantity, is further handicapped by a formidable percentage of bad workmanship. Certain reports in this respect are almost incredible. About four years ago, Herr Just, a well-known German journalist who was at that time in sympathy with the Bolsheviks, described in the columns of the *Koelnische Zeitung* a journey which he had made in the U.S.S.R. He spoke at length, and in enthusiastic terms, of the marvellous ventilation installed in the great Stalingrad

foundry, concluding with the brief remark: "This foundry produces 97 per cent of imperfect work." The *Proletarian Truth* pointed out some time ago the amazing case of the fourth boot and shoe factory at Kiev, of which the entire output was useless. This prodigious enterprise cost the State 10,000 roubles per diem.

The hopelessly bad quality of production is undoubtedly the inherent scourge of soviet economy. Everywhere, in Siberia, in the Donetz, at Kiev, at Leningrad, we come upon these fearsome statistics of faulty workmanship. Moscow and its neighbour, the industrial centre of Ivanovo, do not escape. *Izvestia* (March 12th, 1934) pointed out that the most important textile factory in the U.S.S.R., nicknamed "the pride of Ivanovo," had in February 1934 recorded an average of 70 per cent of faulty output from its weaving workshops. On the last day of the month, February 28th, it completed the monthly tally in a peculiarly eloquent manner by discarding 86 per cent of its output. Here is a yet more recent example. According to *Izvestia* of September 4th, 1934, the glass factory at Ourchelsky manufactured two million bottles whose inner surface was covered with a multitude of little bubbles. As soon as any of these bottles were filled the bubbles broke under the pressure, and the liquid was mixed with fragments of glass. The "secret" of these bottles was discovered by a consumer of this interesting lemonade.

In 1935 the soviet press continues to give us constant examples of this description. So far as concerns any general estimate, competent specialists place the percentage of faulty output throughout the entire industry of the U.S.S.R. at 20 to 25 per cent. Reproaching the textile industry for the particularly lamentable quality of its production, *Pravda* (August 7th, 1935) invites it, with much common sense, to adopt, as soon as possible,

the processes used by the textile factories of England ! And this after several years of propaganda with the slogan, "We are going soon to catch up and leave behind England and America." The soviet newspaper forgets to recommend at the same time the application of salary scales used towards English workmen.

We have already mentioned the lamentable condition of transportation, and it is necessary to dwell in greater detail upon this subject. It represents one of the most characteristic "sectors" of the soviet "economic front," and moreover the subject has acquired a special importance since, for reasons of international policy, Europe has taken a keen interest in the probable future strength of the Red Army in action—an action which both from the standpoint of strategy and that of victualling must necessarily largely depend upon transportation. Here then are a few brief notes dealing with this question.

Before the war, the Russian railways, though covering a relatively small area, nevertheless provided a very dependable system of communications, and were extending rapidly. During the last decade of the nineteenth century, a great period of railroad construction, 23,000 kilometres of new lines were laid and development was continuous. During the duration of the war, alone, in two and a half years, 11,000 kilometres were either completed or constructed. In addition to this, among the 18,300 kilometres brought into use between 1918 and 1928, the vast majority represented enterprises begun and continued before the Revolution. The construction of rolling stock kept pace with this activity : on the eve of the Great War Russia was in a position to produce 400 carriages daily ; the Poutilov factory in St. Petersburg alone was turning out 200 goods trucks and 5 passenger coaches a day, as well as 30 express engines and 45 ordinary engines a month.

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The first Five Year Plan provided for the construction of 15,000 kilometres of railroad, of which only 6,600 materialized, of which, again, 2,200 were handed over for exploitation in their "provisional state." As regards rolling stock, the efforts made, though very considerable, were by no means adequate. Thus in 1931 (the penultimate year of the first Five Year Plan), the building of goods trucks amounted to only 37 per cent of the figures anticipated for that year and the Bolsheviks found themselves compelled to approach Berlin for urgent delivery of 9,000 trucks. Moreover, the quality of that which has been produced under the régime of the Plan is the subject of constant complaint.

At the last Congress of the Party (February 1934) very serious remonstrances were addressed to the railroads by Stalin himself and by the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army, Vorochilov, who saw in their condition a grave danger to soviet strategy in the event of war. Vorochilov repeated his remonstrances, even more hotly, at the Congress of the Soviets in 1935. Then, in March 1935, Stalin appointed as head of the Commissariat for railroads and communications his closest collaborator, Kaganovitch, second secretary to the Party (some have seen in this appointment evidence of his loss of the Dictator's favour). Kaganovitch, on taking over his new duties, published a "manifesto" which revealed some staggering figures: during 1934, there occurred 62,000 catastrophes and accidents; 5,000 engines and 64,000 railway carriages were destroyed or damaged, while the annual output of these latter amounted to only 19,000. During the two first months of 1935, accidents have been even more frequent. Other soviet sources tell us of the victims of these accidents: of hundreds of dead and thousands of wounded. We learn also of such cases as the following:

at one railway station during the night of November 13th, 1934, four trains had to be taken off for lack of lanterns among the railway staff.

The efforts of Kaganovitch have not given serious results. He has confessed it himself in his speech of August 1935. In the region of Orenburg alone there were 284 accidents in April 1934, 323 in May and 169 during the first fortnight of June. Scarcely 50 per cent of trains leave by the hours marked on the time-table, stated Kaganovitch ; he prefers not to mention the hours of arrival and limits himself to the following declaration : " On our railways the notion of time does not exist yet."

The fluvial transportation is even more defective than the railways, if we are to believe the soviet papers, who support their allegations by a long file of eloquent facts.

The conditions of transportation only serve to emphasize the deficiencies inherent in all " stateized " economics, which are more particularly glaring in all those fields, such as transportation, in which so much depends upon the interdependence of various branches, and which, moreover, require constant vigilance and individual initiative.

This is also the reason why the Soviets meet with much greater difficulties in the light industries than in the heavy industries.

Nor do these latter in any case proceed without infinite obstacles. Comrade Piatakov, Assistant Commissary for Heavy Industries, has himself severely criticized the labour of their factories. Speaking particularly of the Ural factories at Ekaterinburg, at a directors' meeting, he said : " Words fail me to describe the methods which are in force in the brass industry. For instance, the factory at Krasno-Ouralsk, which should be extracting 83 per cent of the metal from the

mineral actually obtains but 61 per cent." The operatives of this same factory having decided upon a "wash and brush up" before an anticipated inspection, cleared out 800 tons of filth from their workshops and buildings (see *For Industrialization*, March 15th, 1934).

In May 1935, at a sitting of the Council of Heavy Industries, this same Piatakov renewed his complaints and quoted the losses owing to faulty production which in 1934 vitiated the work of the various branches of production connected with his Commissariat: in the tractor industry the total of faulty production had amounted to 75 millions of roubles; in the great factories directly under the supervision of the Commissariat, to 49 millions, etc. etc. In the tractor industry the percentage of "throw-outs" in 1934 exceeded that of the preceding year (*For Industrialization*, May 11th, 1935).

Even better than by statistics and records is the situation summed up by the Chief Engineer of the Constructions Trust in Siberia, in a statement which he made one day when conversing with the editor of a Moscow newspaper:

"Allow me to tell you plainly: we are the parasites of the country; the staff alone of our trust has cost 10 millions in one year, and we have only built to the value of three millions. We lack the materials, specialized labour and technical experts. We build abominably badly and are constantly compelled to alter what we have just completed."

In such conditions as these, it is self-apparent that the soviet statistics concerning the working of the Five Year Plan must be regarded as purely arbitrary and practically fictitious. We can now understand the full extent of the doubts expressed upon this subject at the Party conference in January 1932. The figures are indeed based upon a series of probabilities and above all of enigmas

which do not lend themselves to the formation of any serious estimates. And this applies not only to the return from industries, to the quality of their output and to the percentage of faulty productions and wastage, but also to the monetary unit—the soviet rouble—the unit which is used in connection with the realization of the Plan, but which in itself is only fictitious and rests upon no genuine foundation.

It is also obvious that the waste in the industries puts any reduction of cost prices out of the question ; frequently, indeed, we note their ascending movement, and the net result of these conditions is that the financial carcase of the first Five Year Plan together with that of the second, which succeeded it, are decomposing visibly. Any measure of success which may have attended these plans is due to quite other circumstances and quite different proceedings, which will be dealt with in a later chapter.

IV

The Only Country without Unemployment

We have already seen, in an earlier chapter, that the operatives have recently been dispossessed of the preponderance which they had enjoyed over the peasant population with respect to the value of their vote at the soviet elections. This preponderance, although as illusive as the elections themselves, was nevertheless not without its moral importance. And yet the entire doctrine and history of the Party and of the U.S.S.R. itself, the part played by the operatives themselves in the consolidation of the régime, the fact that they form the chief forces of the Party, guarantee them, whatever may be their relations with the innermost hierarchy of that Party, a privileged situation in the “Operative’s and Peasant’s State.”

But a closer inspection of the living conditions of these "ewe lambs" of the régime may lead us to some very unforeseen conclusions.

All authorities are agreed in valuing, in 1935, the average monthly salary of an operative in the U.S.S.R. at between 150 and 170 roubles. But there are many forms of employment which only earn 70 roubles, and an ordinary male nurse receives only 55 roubles a month.

It is useless to dwell upon the extreme inadequacy of this salary after the estimate which we have already made of the net value of the soviet rouble. We will only remark that this year the position of the operative is yet more wretched than it was in the preceding years. For the increase of salaries which took place at the beginning of 1935 was not sufficient to balance the increased cost of bread; in fact, after the sale of bread was transferred from the co-operatives to the "commercial" shops, its price increased by more than 100 per cent. It is therefore not astonishing that the suppression of food-cards for bread, while sparing the families long hours of waiting in queues before the shops, has been the cause in various districts of bitter recriminations and complaints.

The end of June 1935 brings us one more interesting statement in regard to this question. The following statistics were established in the factory of Kamensky, near Moscow, where four thousand women are employed. During the first six months of the year 1934, on five normal child-births there were two miscarriages; at the same period in the year 1935 the miscarriages equalled the normal child-births. One searched for the reason and found that in 1934 "the tariffs," otherwise the fixed wages, allowed the working woman to lead more or less a "soviet-life"; the pregnant woman had thus all the advantage of the leave of absence accorded before the child-birth, as "the tariffs" continued to be

paid during the last weeks of pregnancy. But this year the "tariffs" give no possibilities for living; in order to "make ends meet" the workwoman is obliged to undertake a supplementary task which is remunerated by additional wages. Thus she often conceals her condition and works until the last hour; sometimes children were born at the factory near the machines.

Let us, moreover, quote the opinion of an impartial witness, Mr. Knickerbocker, who, during the spring of 1935, calculated that in order to ensure his scanty weekly food, the soviet workman must work seventeen hours and a half, that is to say, two and a half days, while the American workman earns his rations for a week with only four hours' daily labour.

To conclude this question of the earning of food we will give an example that is very characteristic of the atmosphere in which the soviet workman eats his meals. Here is a picture, painted by *Socialist Agriculture* in January 1935, of the restaurant of a tractor workshop: The walls of the shed in which it is established are covered with hoarfrost; the china is washed in a dirty wooden vat; the floor is covered with spittle and cigarette ends; steam and smoke sting the eyes; the bare tables are coated with a thick layer of grease and filth; the soup frequently contains hairs or pieces of plaster that have fallen from the ceiling.

Herr Just, correspondent of the *Koelnische Zeitung*, observed that at Stalingrad many of the operatives avoided their dinner in the factory restaurant and preferred to gnaw a hunch of dry bread. And yet these were special workmen attached to the tractor factory and enjoying privileged treatment.

The year 1935 marked a desertion in masses by the workmen from the factory-restaurants. According to *Izvestia* (August 24th, 1935), in such industrial centres as

Kharkoff, Tcheliabinsk and others, those restaurants have lost 40 to 45 per cent of their clients. As a result of this the state enterprise "public food-supply" registered during the first three months of this year a deficit of more than 15 millions. The workmen refuse the benefits offered to them by the "public food-supply" and prefer to prepare the food at home. Then why did they go to the restaurants before? Because they used to receive 200 grammes of bread free of cost, in addition to that which they obtained with their food-cards. Now, after the disappearance of the ration cards, the 200 grammes free of cost are suppressed, and without them the restaurants lose their only attraction. Enormous sums spent to establish the "cooking-factories" and "workmen's restaurants" were merely thrown away. These facts prove the sterility of the efforts made by the masters of the country to "communize life"; they show also the general conditions experienced by the soviet worker, for whom 200 grammes of bread is of so much importance.

As for their living quarters, in one single number of the *Working Man's Gazette* four working-men's houses are mentioned as threatening to collapse. Even more significant is the report of a meeting of the operatives of Stalingrad which is published by *For Industrialization*, March 4th, 1935. "In our houses," states a workman, "there are cracks through which one can almost pass one's head. We suffer from the cold; the drainage pipes have burst and spread infection everywhere." After a long series of complaints of this description, the president could think of nothing better to say than that the attitude of those attending the meeting led him to feel that his best course was to close the debate; the meeting thereupon came to an end.

Izvestia (March 20th, 1935) quoted the case of an

operative's home at Icheliabinsk which had been invaded by "criminals who had nothing in common with the factory, but had settled down there, while thieves arriving from other towns used it as an hotel."

The living conditions of the operatives are frequently productive of vices such as theft, drunkenness, brawls and debauches. The soviet papers complain of this fact almost daily.

Where then is that "skilled labour" whose prodigious development has been the constant subject of so much soviet propaganda abroad? At a recent meeting of the workers of the heavy industries Comrade Kossarev quoted a striking example. He stated that at Magnitogorsk, the syndicate of the building possessed a "cultural fund" of 400,000 roubles per annum; of this sum, 324,000 roubles were expended upon the salaries of "skilled workmen" of various descriptions (that is to say, upon the parasites of the Party).

It goes without saying that the workmen cannot hope to save any portion of their own salaries for the satisfaction of their mental needs. It must be borne in mind that even their meagre earnings are further diminished by compulsory reductions which amount to not less than 15 per cent of their salaries.

To begin with, insomuch as concerns the State loans, *For Industrialization* on April 15th, 1934, attempted to draw up a balance sheet of the thousands of millions thus extorted from the unhappy workers of the U.S.S.R. and primarily from the operatives. "At the moment of entering upon the realization of the First Five Year Plan," this paper informs us, "the State has issued a first industrialization loan amounting to 200 millions of roubles. The second industrialization loan (500 millions of roubles) followed it. Later came the third industrialization loan amounting to 829 millions, the loan

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'for the Five Year Plan in Four Years' which accounted for the sum of 1,025 millions, the loan 'for the third and decisive year' of 1,934 millions; that 'for the fourth and final year' of 2,709 millions, and finally the first slice of the 'loan for the Second Five Year Plan' of 3,214 millions. Our new loan, the second slice of the loan for the Second Five Year Plan which amounts to 3,500 millions of roubles, is to guarantee a seventh of the investments provided for in the Plan of immense works in 1934." To this balance sheet must be added in 1935 a new loan of three thousand five hundred millions which, like its predecessors, "is hailed with vast enthusiasm by the workers," if we are to believe the soviet press. In any case, this loan, and doubtless also the enthusiasm, made their anticipatory appearance in the U.S.S.R. budget for the present year, under the heading of: "mobilization of the people's resources."

There are obviously other compulsory payments, such as that "for Aviation and Chemistry," that to the "International Association for Assisting Revolutionaries," "for aiding those who fight for the revolution in Spain," etc. etc.

In addition to these, the workers often meet with considerable delays in the payment of their dues. *For Industrialization*, in April 1935, relates that the hands of the *sovkhozes* of the large Kouznetzk factory had been kept waiting three months for their salaries, and meanwhile were given three or five roubles from time to time.

In the autumn of 1935 the Press continued to publish facts of the same kind.

This state of affairs permits us to appreciate at their true value the sumptuous statements made by the Bolsheviks at international conferences and so often repeated in the Western communist press, to the effect

that the U.S.S.R. is the only country in the world exempt from the scourge of unemployment. The Soviets seek to use it as a subject for propaganda and to offer it as a proof of the economic prosperity of the U.S.S.R., which thus affords a striking contrast to "worm-eaten and expiring capitalist economics." In reality there is not only a complete absence of unemployment in the U.S.S.R., there is a serious scarcity of industrial labour, resulting from the fact that the populace of the rural districts, even though their poverty is cruel and their number excessive, utterly refuse to go and work in stateized factories. If unemployment is indeed non-existent in the U.S.S.R., the Government has little reason to boast of the fact.

Tormented by poverty, molested, exploited and persecuted, the peasant nevertheless retains a greater faith in the beneficent earth than in those favours with which the Bolsheviki load the factory workers. Only a small portion of "the floating population" of the rural districts makes up its mind to enlist in the soviet industries. Even then these recruits do not remain in one place but wander perpetually from one factory to another. This phenomenon, recorded everywhere under the term "fluidity of labour," is not the least of the scourges which afflict soviet industry; the output of the operatives and the discipline of the factories suffer severely from it and finally the training of skilled workmen becomes impossible.

In this connection we can quote an article by Comrade Rubinstein, published in the review *The Bolshevik* April 15th, 1934. This article moreover draws a pic-

¹ This situation is demonstrated by a statement published by *Pravda* on January 15th, 1935. According to that paper, there is in Moscow the "permanent representation" of the administration of the Oulan-Ouden locomotive factory; the "representation" spent, during the period October-December 1934, 193,000 roubles of their fund for the hiring of labour.

ture as striking as it is instructive of the ambience in which the operatives of a country governed by "the power of operatives and peasants" has to live and labour. This time the scene is once again the huge Magnitogorsk factory, which is "one of the greatest triumphs of the socialist structure." One would scarcely look elsewhere for a more joyful picture.

One of the principal scourges of the Magnitogorsk factory [Rubinstein writes] is the fluidity of the hands. Do not let us even speak of the construction departments in which, in the course of four years, the number of operatives who have had to be replaced has amounted to ten or fifteen times that which is employed at any given time. But among the exploitation hands fluidity is of equal importance. Up to the present date no actual statistics have been prepared on this subject, but in any case during the year 1933 the fluidity has not been less than 100 per cent. According to the figures given at a conference of the Party at Magnitogorsk, the twelve locomotives employed in mineral transport have, in the space of two years, changed their mechanics four hundred and sixty times. In the repair shops, during the same period, more than 200,000 workmen have been employed successively on seventy machines. In the coke shop we found the fourteenth manager in command. Examples of this nature abound.

The principal cause of fluidity lies in the tremendous delay in the construction of houses and in other matters destined to supply the daily needs of the workers. Magnitogorsk at present numbers more than 200,000 inhabitants, and yet, properly speaking, the town of Magnitogorsk is still non-existent. Only a small portion of the population live in the stone houses which form the alleged "socialist town," a title which, it was proposed at a recent conference of the Party, should not be applied to this colony for fear of compromising the very idea of a socialist town. The houses are scandalously built. The water and drains are not properly installed. Hardly have the tenants settled in but they must proceed to repairs.

The main portion of the operatives live in sheds covering an immense area and having rather the aspect of a camp than that of habitations for men who for a long time past have bound themselves to one of the most powerful and perfected of socialist enterprises. . . . In most of these hovels, bugs, dirt and refuse rule the roost.

On a level with these shocking housing conditions are the defici-

encies in the victualling of the operatives, and this defect goes far to increase the fluidity of labour. Most of the time the cooking in the restaurants is repulsive ; there are practically no clean or well-lighted places in which to eat. Communist investigation has revealed that thieves and swindlers had wormed their way into the operatives' victual department.

In the great combined workshop of Magnitogorsk literally not one day goes by without a breakdown or an accident. The brass industry of the Ural is organized in a disgraceful manner and the delays with regard to the provisions of the Plan are systematic. The factory does not utilize even a minimum part of its capacity ; it destroys its equipment in a barbarous manner.

But what crowns everything in the brass industries of the Ural district is the organization of labour, which is truly amazing, the lack of any care for the working man, the crazy imbroglio which obtains in the normalization of labour and the scale of salaries.

The extracts from the Moscow press which we have just quoted, and particularly the statements of the Soviet papers regarding the workshops of Magnitogorsk, are sufficient proof that Rubinstein's account has not become out of date.

In an attempt to combat the instability of labour and to stimulate production the Bolsheviks, about four years ago, gave up their most cherished principle, a principle which had formerly been widely advertised : the equality of salaries. It was essential for them (we have seen the same system in the *Kolkhozes*) to stimulate the zeal of the operatives by the method of concessions with regard to clothing and rations. The stratagem was disguised by the label : " socialist emulation."

In pursuance of this method the Bolsheviks raised to the rank of " star industries " certain branches of production which were of particular importance to the first and then to the second Five Year Plan. The operatives of these industries receive a higher scale of salaries. To-day, in every factory, the workmen are divided into categories whose salaries vary very considerably. With a view to increasing his earnings, every workman

intrigues to obtain the position of "emergency workman," which carries with it certain privileges. But, as a general rule, the increased output of these "emergency workmen" goes hand-in-hand with a lowering of the quality of that which they produce. A discussion on this subject occurred in May 1935, between the newspapers *For Industrialization* and *Labour*. The former urged the necessity for controlling the quality of the work of each operative by marking each piece that he produced (in the same manner as marks are accorded to the tasks of schoolchildren). Only such output as received 3, 4 or 5 marks should be paid for. The "emergency workman," if he was to retain his distinction, must produce at least half of his labour at a standard worthy of 5 marks and the remainder must not fall below 4 marks. *Labour* strenuously opposed the project evolved by *For Industrialization*, averring that it was out of the question to insult in such a manner the entire mass of "emergency workmen" by pouring cold water upon the "enthusiasm" of these loyal servants of the régime, many of whom have been as yet unable "to acquire the modern technique."

This discussion has now been put an end to by the decision of the leaders of the Party who have supported the views of *Labour*; it is true, however, that they have at the same time approved the suggestion made by *For Industrialization* with regard to the marking of output and have recommended that "special rewards" be conferred upon workmen who avoid faulty production, only, it is still necessary to grant the funds required for these "quality prizes."

Between times, an ever-increasing use is being made of the labour of women and of children, who are easier to exploit and less inclined to complain or to desert their factory.

For complaints and grumbles arise ever more insistently. At the period when the first Five Year Plan was being baited, skilful soviet propaganda contrived to arouse, among the operatives, an explosion of enthusiasm which for a certain time supplied the necessary steam for the U.S.S.R. industries. But the energy expended did not obtain its just reward in any improvement of living or labour conditions. Enthusiasm faded, giving place to disappointment. And now, instead of the very infrequent, vague and scattered allusions which could formerly be gleaned from the soviet press, we find definite and much more frequent indications which bear witness to the recrudescence of discontent among the operatives. The malcontents are denounced in the papers as disorderly ruffians, blackguards and hooligans, but this does not in any way alter the situation.

Economic science teaches us that all monopolist economy is naturally inclined to consider labour as a simple means of production and to treat it as such, and the Bolsheviks have already gone a long way in this direction. Stalin's recent statement to the effect that "we must now proceed to the policy of organized enrolment of industrial labour" foretells new measures of compulsion with regard to the operative class. Doubtless an attempt will be made to reduce it to a situation analogous to that in which exist by hundreds of thousands the real slaves of the régime. Those who, crowded in the concentration camps, also know nothing of unemployment!

v

Irregular Trade

Bolshevism, from the first moment of its advent to power, could not fail to condemn on principle, as the

most shameful and reprehensible of activities, all private trading. All the possessions of traders were declared to be the property of the State. Large shops had therefore no alternative left them but to close, and there very soon remained in the towns only such small shops as contrived to escape from the general confiscation of merchandise. Trade ceased to exist except in the markets where reversion was soon made to the old system of barter: the citizens exchanged objects of every description which they had managed to save from pillage, for the produce necessary to their existence, brought from the rural districts at the utmost risk and danger by peasants incessantly threatened by Chekist patrols.

The respite accorded by the N.P.E., which also applied to private trade, was only of short duration.

Stalin, seeking to monopolize production within the hands of the State, entrusted to it also the task of distribution. This work was handed over to a vast chain of soviet co-operatives, in which any citizen considered useful to the socialist fatherland, and therefore provided with a food-card, could obtain at moderate prices fixed by the State, foodstuffs and objects of primary necessity, in a quantity which varied according to the "category" of the purchaser; the acquisition of other articles was only limited by their not infrequent scarcity on the shelves of the co-operatives.

Later on, two other variants of stateized trade made their appearance. There appeared the "closed distributors" serving only the high officials of the Party, the State and the Army, and then the shops of the "Torgsin" (an abbreviation of the phrase "commerce with foreigners"). These latter establishments were designed exclusively for the use of foreigners and their goods were only sold for foreign currencies. Never-

theless, soviet citizens were also permitted to purchase these goods, but only in exchange for solid cash in such foreign money as they might still possess. Those who receive money from abroad can also obtain "chits" which the Torgsin accepts as a means of payment. Thus the Torgsin shops play the part of instruments of drainage, not only of the last remnants of precious metal and foreign currencies which the population may possess, but also of the foreign moneys received by soviet citizens from their relations and friends abroad.

We see that the "closed distributors" and the Torgsin shops are open only to a relatively small section of privileged persons. For years on end the mass of the population had therefore only one licit means of obtaining food: the co-operatives. Now the management of these establishments (which, it must be clearly understood, have nothing whatever in common with the "co-operatives" of "bourgeois" countries) has always been and still remains in the highest degree unsatisfactory. The communist method, which consists in breaking the spirit of individual interests, has here as elsewhere engendered a terrible indifference. Here is an example taken at hazard. One day, in Moscow, the queues at the doors of the co-operatives were greatly extended by reason of a sudden restriction in the sale of paraffin. It was nevertheless common knowledge that the reserves of paraffin in Moscow were quite adequate. In the course of the inquiry which was instituted, the "responsible workers" of the co-operation offered as a pretext an insufficiency of cans for transportation. The inquiry, however, persisting, revealed the fact of the existence of 113 large new oil-cans on the premises which had merely been forgotten. Negligence also appears daily in the distribution of goods which has become positively fantastic. Cases are recorded

where this or that co-operative, during several days in succession, offered its clients no other goods beside playing cards and herrings. Elsewhere, this or that merchandise which was in great demand, was only to be purchased together with some article which was difficult to dispose of, such as a kettle or a tobacco pouch.

But the disorder which reigns in the co-operatives, to which must be added every kind of abuse on the part of their officials, is perhaps best demonstrated by the economic results of this system of trade, results which are deplorable for the Government itself. Thus, it was expected that in 1934 considerable profits would accrue from these co-operatives. And such an expectation was logical in view of the fact that the prices now charged for their goods are by no means so modest as they were at first: *For Industrialization* has reckoned (in March 1935) that the prices of certain articles sold in the co-operatives amounted to six times the cost of their production. Nevertheless, the balance sheet of the activities of the co-operatives in 1934 showed a deficit which amounted to millions, in spite of the fact that the volume of sales exceeded expectations.

The faults of management and the abuses already mentioned added considerably to the disastrous effects of the penury of agricultural production and of articles of large consumption. And to these disadvantages is added the fact that the Soviets have tried, especially during the first Five Year Plan, to increase their exports at any price, and that consequently the co-operatives have been extremely badly provided with goods, especially those of primary necessity, foremost among which was bread. This is the reason why the whole of Russia, except the privileged pets of the Party, found itself under the régime of queues, which would sometimes begin to form up before daybreak in front of the soviet

shops. This régime continued so long as the co-operatives retained their function of selling bread upon the presentation of food-cards at prices which, although repeatedly raised, yet remained much below those obtaining in the markets. It was only after January 1st, 1935, when the bread-cards were abolished (by a decree promulgated a month earlier) and the sale of bread was removed from the co-operatives, that the country found itself to a great extent delivered from this daily trial of queues. But a formidable ransom was claimed in exchange for this relief.

It can now be understood why small trade survived in spite of everything : the citizens were literally compelled to turn to it in spite of the prohibitive prices which it charged by reason not only of the dearth of goods but also because of the endless persecutions suffered by all traders. On the other hand, the Bolsheviks could never make up their minds to put a decisive end to it while the co-operatives remained the only licit means of exchange, since the population, including the operative class, was so badly served by these co-operatives that it would inevitably have been faced by immediate starvation had it been deprived of this last resort : the maimed, moribund but indispensable remnants of private trade.¹

But the Soviet Government, compelled against its

¹ Nevertheless, the volume of this secret market must not be overestimated. In a country of universal poverty, every man becomes a trader to the extent of selling or in any case exchanging the less essential goods for those that are indispensable. And then, we may quote the interesting statement made in a soviet publication which was to the effect that in the space of six months, on one single railway line 15 millions of roubles' worth of various property had been stolen. These objects stolen by the population (according to the slogan of the old revolutionaries' "loot what has been looted") went to swell the clandestine private market.

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will to tolerate a measure of survival of private trade, conceived, at a given moment, the ingenious idea of making some profit out of the exorbitant prices which were charged by it by very reason of the reprisals which it suffered. The Communist State decided to enter into competition with these reprobate and despised traders, and it was thus that side by side with the co-operatives, those legitimate children of the régime, there appeared bastards, that received the curious title of "commercial shops," who sold without demanding food-cards from their customers, but at prices closely approaching those current in private trade. Here, for instance, are the average prices charged by them during this present year : 1 kg. of butter, 22 roubles ; 1 kg. of ham, 28 roubles ; 1 kg. of sausage, 14 to 25 roubles ; 1 kg. of sugar, 7 roubles 50 ; 1 kg. of rice, 10 roubles ; 1 kg. of rye flour, 3 roubles 40. Let us remark in parenthesis that a comparison of these prices with those current in the Torgsin gives us the level of the inflation of the soviet rouble which is practically recognized by the Bolsheviki in their own territory : the value of the rouble has fallen to 7 or 10 kopeks. We have already mentioned earlier that the parallel established between to-day's prices in the commercial shops and pre-war prices does not permit of us valuing the buying power of the present rouble at a higher figure than 4.4 kopeks.

It can easily be understood that the creation of these shops, "due to Stalin's wonderful initiative" (if we may quote his acolyte, Mikoiane), has permitted State commerce, in these new conditions, to realize substantial profits in spite of the disorder and waste inherent in the Soviet administrations.

The Soviets very quickly acquired a taste for this lucrative traffic, and on January 1st, 1935, they entrusted

to the "commercial shops" the sale of bread, which thus became free. They have explained this measure officially as being actuated by a desire for the greater convenience of the workers, a desire which it was now possible to realize owing to an abundance of wheat due to Communist organization. But it is not difficult to read the inner motive which is concealed behind these demagogic assertions. The State appropriates an enormous quantity of wheat produced by the peasant (25 million tons in 1934), paying for it at stock price, say 7 to 12 kopeks a kilo. A part of the stock is exported abroad, a part consumed by the army, the G.P.U. and the privileged favourites of the Party, while the third and by far the largest share (likely to amount in 1935 to 18 million tons) is sold in the form of bread to ordinary mortals at prices varying according to districts and the quality of the bread, but beginning at 80 kopeks and rising to 2 roubles and more a kilo. Certainly a fair profit! The selling price is fifteen times the cost price. Even taking into consideration the increase of salaries that accompanied the reform, the monopoly of the sale of bread (and it is nothing short of a monopoly) must this year provide the State with a supplementary revenue of about eight thousand millions.

The new system of selling bread has, in spite of the high level of cost, practically banished this commodity from the private markets and the *Kolkhoze* market.

We have already pointed out that the "market of the *Kolkhozes*" was called into being by the decree of the month of May 1932. It is a species of hybrid: a trade without traders but also without any direct connection with the State. The *Kolkhozes*, and even individual peasant enterprise, once the tax in kind is paid (that which is called the stocking of wheat), are free to sell their produce after making sure that the

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purchaser is not a trader. There is thus an exchange between producer and consumer under the guardianship of the State, which undertakes to eliminate the middleman. Thus a large opening is provided for administrative and Chekist interference, which is the reason why those who were in a hurry to perceive in the May decrees the baiting of a new N.E.P., were very deeply mistaken.

In practice the market of the *Kolkhozes* has become interchangeable with the forbidden private market, sometimes taking its place, and sometimes affording cover to camouflaged private initiative. From the private markets it has inherited the vexations which it has to endure from the authorities, the scarcity of merchandise and the extreme instability of prices.

Its beginnings were particularly difficult, for the decree of May 1932 came at a time when peasant economy was completely "sapped" owing to collectivization, and had been further smitten by a bad harvest. If, at that time, bread appeared in the *Kolkhoze* markets, the purchasers were the peasants, who exchanged it for the produce of their kitchen gardens, and the sellers were townsfolk, who parted with a portion of the ration which came to them via the State pillage of the rural districts.

In 1934 and in 1935, after two years of good harvests, the *Kolkhoze* trade has become slightly more prosperous while still retaining its characteristics of instability and unevenness. In 1935 its prices have come down considerably, but this unfortunately is not an indication of abundance, for the townsman, compelled to pay a much higher price for his daily bread, has had to restrict to a yet greater extent his consumption of other provisions.

There is thus in the U.S.S.R. a large choice of com-

mercial enterprises, and their results are alike deplorable for everyone save for the élite of the Party and for the Speculator-State itself.

* * * * *

As for foreign trade, its manner of evolution was totally different; indeed, it evolved in an inverse direction. The N.E.P., having stimulated interior exchanges, simultaneously caused the diminution of stocks available for export. On the other hand, when Stalin, making a *volte-face*, once more assailed private trade, he set everything going at the same time, to squeeze the rural districts and speed up the drainage of wheat and other produce suitable for exportation. This tendency only became accentuated at the time when the Five Year Plan was being baited. Financial, economic and political considerations forced upon the Bolsheviks the tactics of excessive exportation. The need of foreign currencies with which to pay for the importation of machinery prescribed by the Plan was added to that of meeting the costs of representation and propaganda abroad, and that of subsidizing the Communist parties in various foreign countries. Moreover, seeing the economic crisis about to overrun the entire world, the Bolsheviks were tempted to anticipate a strategic operation which had originally figured as merely a corollary of the Five Year Plan, which consisted of inundating the foreign markets with Soviet goods with a view to provoking or intensifying the world crisis by fomenting social troubles which would hasten the advent of the universal Revolution.

Stalin succeeded in largely increasing the volume of foreign trade; the results in 1929-30 may be thus summarized: exports = 1,002 millions of roubles, imports 1,068 millions of roubles; the year therefore ended with a negligible deficit (66 millions).

This, however, was a supreme effort.¹ The terribly impoverished country was not again able—even at the cost of atrocious sufferings—to supply produce for export in anything approaching sufficient quantities. Moreover, the general crisis in which the Bolsheviks placed their most ardent hopes turned against their own interests, by lowering the prices obtainable for soviet exports. Finally, the defective organization of their commercial offices abroad went far towards neutralizing the results of the economic aggression which they had attempted. From that standpoint it is interesting to quote the testimony of the former Soviet trade agent Dovgalevski,² nephew to the Red ambassador to Paris, who died last year. Dovgalevski's statement, which also concerns his rupture with the Soviets, clearly shows how meagre are the profits obtained by the Bolsheviks through the sale abroad of goods extorted from the Russian peasant. In laying bare the manner in which the Russian wheat was sold in 1930, Dovgalevski makes the following calculation: the "stock price" imposed upon the peasant was 1·80 roubles per pood, which is equivalent to 110 roubles per metric ton; the average cost of transport and of Russian harbour dues, amounting to 38 roubles and administrative dues to at least 40 roubles, the cost price is round about 200 roubles per ton, in soviet currency. The selling price of this ton in the foreign markets was 26 gold roubles, received

¹ Without the U.S.S.R. having succeeded in reaching, even approximately, the normal volume of pre-war foreign trade. Average for 1909-13: exports: 1,505 millions of gold roubles; imports: 1,140 millions of roubles; balance: 365 millions of roubles.

² Dovgalevski's statement appeared in the review *The Struggle*, published in Paris by the former soviet diplomat Bessedovsky, whose tragi-comic escape from the U.S.S.R. embassy in Paris was a nine days' wonder.

in foreign currencies. Nevertheless, from this must be deducted the freight, the loading and unloading at the ports and the marketing abroad, the interest of loans on bills of lading and, finally, the provision of middlemen. All these costs being duly deducted, it was possible to estimate that the net price obtained by the Soviets did not exceed 10 roubles a ton in foreign money.

Which is as much as to say, [concluded Dovgalevski, whose competence cannot be questioned] that the peasants' bread was snatched from them and hard labour and famine imposed upon 150 millions of the working population . . . and why? In order that a handful of satraps should be able to sell Russian money abroad at 5% of its nominal value.

The period of aggressive foreign exportation (which was known to the press throughout the world by the incorrect term of "soviet dumping") was therefore not of long duration. It led to a positive scandal when, in October 1931, the Soviets were themselves compelled to purchase wheat from the United States in order to meet certain contracts of sale which had been carelessly undertaken. This enlightening occurrence put an end to the fear of "soviet dumping" in the markets of the world, and was the point of departure for a rise in the price of certain raw materials.

From that time until the present moment, we have witnessed a continuous shrinkage of the volume of the U.S.S.R.'s foreign trade. Here are the figures for 1932 : exports = 704 millions of roubles, imports 574 millions of roubles. 1933 beheld a new diminution : exports 643 millions of roubles, imports 496 millions of roubles. The downward movement still continues. The figures for 1934 are as follows : exports, 419.2 millions ; imports, 232.4 millions. The first half of 1935 has beheld further shrinkage (exports, 149.24 millions ; imports, 112.06 millions) ; during the second

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half, the trade credits obtained by the Soviets in April 1935, in Germany (for a sum of 200 million marks) and in Czechoslovakia, enabled them to increase their imports.

It may thus be seen how entirely deceived are such countries as have entered into relations with the Soviets in the hopes of reaping advantage from commerce. For instance, the United States who, in 1930, sent to the U.S.S.R. goods to the value of 264 millions of roubles, have seen their exports fall in 1934 to the absurd figure of 17 millions. At any rate the United States have been able to draw logical conclusions from their experience. Not less vain have been the hopes and expectations which various industrialists and merchants, and in some cases European statesmen, have placed in the magical powers of a trade agreement with the U.S.S.R. The London *Morning Post*, in May 1935, published some very outspoken comments on this subject, founded upon the results of the first year's operation of the anglo-soviet trade agreement, pointing out that the exchange between the U.S.S.R. and the British Empire, during eleven months of the year 1934, had amounted to very meagre totals: British imports = 74 millions of roubles, British exports to the U.S.S.R. 42.7 millions, with a balance of 31.3 millions in favour of the Soviets.

Given the small volume of international Soviet trade, the allotment of the sum of 900.2 millions of roubles (paper roubles, this time) to the Commissariat for Foreign Trade, in the U.S.S.R. budget for 1935, would appear to us entirely absurd, if we did not know that employment in Soviet commercial concerns abroad is used to camouflage the activities of agents for propaganda and of spies attached to the G.P.U. and under the orders of the Comintern.

A Financial Survey

After the rapid glance which we have thrown at the foreign trade of the Soviets, it is not difficult to guess that during a succession of years and particularly during the period when the Bolsheviks were feverishly erecting, without looking to right or left, the fragile edifice of the first Five Year Plan, the balance of accounts in the U.S.S.R. must reveal a very serious deficit. The Office of Economic Researches of the Birmingham University, in its "Memorandum" dealing with the year 1931, estimated their liabilities at 340 millions of gold roubles. This figure should, properly speaking, be increased, for the Memorandum did not take into consideration certain expenses, such as the sums allotted to the work of the Comintern abroad.

How have the Bolsheviks been able to face the deficits resulting from foreign exchanges and which have been mounting up for years?

First of all they were compelled to begin exporting the gold which they had fished out of the treasury of the old régime, a fund which had been considerably depleted by the war, but which had nevertheless remained very considerable. The quantity of gold exported since the advent of the Soviets cannot have been much under 1,700 millions of roubles. The supply of gold now remaining in Moscow is very small; according to competent experts it may amount to 50 or 60 millions of roubles.

Nevertheless, the latest balance sheet of the Soviet State Bank shows a gold reserve of 858.4 millions of roubles on April 1st, 1935. How are we to explain such a contradiction?

In the first place, we must point out that the question

of gold is of very great importance to the Soviets. We know that they employ every means to obtain loans from abroad or at any rate new trade credits. It is therefore for them a matter of proving their own solvency, and they then put forward the argument of the presence of a strong reserve of gold in their State Bank, an amount totalling more than half of the reserves before the revolution (1,643 millions in 1916),¹ and at the same time they broadcast the fact that they have contrived appreciably to augment their annual production of precious metals. A certain number of articles by red publicists and diplomats, referring to this last claim, have recently appeared in the Western press. A little while ago, for instance, the *Financial News* published an article by Comrade Serebrovsky, the chief of the soviet gold industry, vaunting the prodigious progress made by the Soviets in this field. Nevertheless, Serebrovsky, in common with the other soviet writers, worked entirely upon relative figures, showing the percentage arrived at each year of increase over the preceding year and avoiding any mention of definite figures with regard to the weight of gold produced.

Definite figures have not been quoted anywhere for years past and rarely have economists been able to discover one here and there in a little circulated publication which goes back to 1928. These figures, which refer to 1926, estimate the annual production at 24,600 kg. If we accept this figure and decide also to accept the percentages of increase given by the soviet writers, we find that in 1932 the Soviets had not yet reached the

¹ However, not all the reserves fell into the hands of the Bolsheviks; quite an appreciable part found its way during the great war into the Ural, where it was taken by the army of Admiral Koltchak and finally came into the possession of the Tchecoslovakian Legions.

level of pre-war production (in 1932, 46,400 kg. = 60.3 millions of gold roubles ; in 1913, 54,000 kg. = 70 millions of roubles), but that from 1933 onward their production exceeded that of 1913 (in 1933 they obtained 65,400 kg. = 85.3 millions of gold roubles).¹

However, as against these reckonings, there are statistics regarding the export of Russian gold and these can be verified by means of foreign information, and it is precisely upon the foundation of these statistics that specialists value at 50 or 60 millions the reserve of gold held in 1935 by the Moscow State Bank. Whence then have come the figures of 858.4 millions in its balance sheet of April 1st of this year? Here is the only plausible explanation : a great part of the exported gold had not been sold at the beginning but merely deposited in foreign banks (the lion's share of it in the State Bank of Germany) as a guarantee to cover the trade credits granted to the U.S.S.R. Later, at the expiration of the credits, not being in possession of any foreign currencies (the balances of their foreign trade being adverse), they saw themselves compelled to make their payments in the gold that had already been pledged, and thus to bid it farewell. This hypothesis is the more probable in that it is common knowledge that at the end of the year 1934 the Bolsheviks were forced to cede to Germany, in anticipation, their future gold production for years to come. This because they had already ceded that of the preceding years !

In alienating the gold of its State Bank the Soviet Government probably released them from their undertakings (gold certificates) to restore to them at a future date the gold of which they had been dispossessed. Meanwhile, the Russian gold was circulating throughout

¹ This is quite possible and in no way surprising : the Russian gold mines are rich and their technique of extraction fairly simple.

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the world, for its principal holder, Germany, became unable to keep it : the gold reserve of the Reichsbank, which amounted to 2·216 millions of gold marks on January 1st, 1932, had fallen to 83 millions by November 1st, 1934. And it is this gold which is now scattered about the universe that still, upon the strength of illusory "gold certificates," figures upon the balance-sheet of the Moscow State Bank !

However, neither their successive cessions of the precious metal, nor their outrageously excessive imports have enabled the Soviets to cover the purchases made abroad at the time of the first Five Year Plan. And this is the reason why, in the course of ten years, since 1923, the date when the first credits were granted to the Bolsheviks, their foreign debt has never ceased augmenting. At the end of 1932 it stood at about 1,400 millions of gold roubles (17,000 million francs), and the provision of annual interest could not have devoured less than 300 millions. And when we think that the Soviets were boasting to the proletariat of the world that they had spared the Russian people the necessity of making payments abroad, because the old loans had been cancelled ! The annual interest on Russian loans before the revolution, which amounted to about 160 millions, was easily met by half the cash receipts from foreign trade.

What greatly facilitates the Bolsheviks obtaining foreign credits are the Government guarantees which have been accorded them by certain countries. Such was notably the case with Germany, who, in a general way, gave proof of a singular eagerness to become money-lender to the Soviets ; her share in the total of foreign credits granted to the U.S.S.R. being not less than two thirds. This inexplicable prodigality, quite apart from political reasons, is not the least cause of those financial

disorders which led Germany to refuse to fulfil her financial obligations towards the former Entente.

That which made the situation really dangerous was the fact that the debt contracted by the Soviets was not, properly speaking, a State debt, since it did not involve a long term loan. It was rather in the nature of a debt incurred by the "U.S.S.R. business house" and as such, the greater part of it was on short term. These short-term credits are to serve for the investments provided for in the Five Year Plan. We know how perilous is this allocation of short-term loans and Germany herself experienced this in a disastrous manner. Very much more precarious is the application of this method in the U.S.S.R., for the profits of Soviet trade upset all calculations and compromise every plan.

The Soviets were rushing full tilt towards bankruptcy. They realized it and at a given moment put the brake upon their importations and then almost entirely ceased to buy abroad (we have already noted the downward curve of their foreign trade). Nevertheless, if their creditors had shown themselves to be firm in the matter of Soviet payments when these fell due, the bankruptcy of the U.S.S.R. would to-day have been an accomplished fact. In 1931, in 1932 and even up to 1934, the discount on Soviet bills cost 25, and even so much as 30 per cent of their nominal value. This is indeed a rate of discount applicable to a debtor on the verge of ruin : several small speculative banks and a number of private individuals made fortunes out of this circumstance.

However, the creditors of the U.S.S.R. and foremost among these, Germany, were very lenient to their embarrassed debtor. We have seen that Germany did not neglect the opportunity to acquire the Russian gold which had been deposited with her as a guarantee ; she then obtained from the U.S.S.R. an undertaking

to cede her their gold production for several years to come, but on the other hand the Reich, in return, showed itself accommodating by granting the Soviets postponements and tolerating evasions.

Other proceedings assisted the Soviets in escaping from the noose which was tightening round their necks ; they began to peddle right and left all that remained to them of the heritage of the old régime ; museums, private collections,¹ the jewels of the murdered imperial family ; they even went so far as to tamper with white slave traffic : such is the true significance of the announcement made about two years ago by the Soviet Tourist Office which informed the public that this honourable institution was authorized by the Government to make arrangements whereby soviet citizens would be allowed to travel abroad. In other words, it thus announced the possibility of ransoming those unfortunates who were in danger from starvation or the G.P.U. A catalogue accompanied the announcement ; prices ranging as high as 1,000 gold roubles (12,000 francs).

Finally, the Torgsin raked in the money cleared from orders sent from abroad by friends and relations aroused by the wails of distress coming from the inhabitants of the soviet paradise (these amounted to not less than 50 millions of gold roubles per annum). The clearings were particularly profitable at the time of the famine in 1933 ; at that period this same Torgsin squeezed out the remnants of the precious metal to which the population was still clinging. The famished people tore their gold teeth from their jaws, and as for those who died prior to doing so, the Chekists performed the operation for them.

¹ A Paris antique dealer recently told a rich client that it is easy to purchase at a moderate price no matter what object from the Russian State museums or from former private collections.

All these expedients, together with the suppression of all foreign purchases (we have already seen that during the three final "exercises" an appreciable balance in foreign commerce was the result, a balance which rose to 150 millions of gold roubles per annum) enabled the Soviets considerably to reduce their foreign debt which at the present time cannot amount to more than 500 millions of gold roubles.

But in avoiding state bankruptcy, the Soviets have had to reduce, at home, their plans for industrial development. In consequence, the complicated and modern equipments of their factories which they have imported from abroad are now in parts out of date, and in parts worn out, by reason of the negligence and ignorance of their engineers and their workmen. We can, in fact, ascertain from their press (for example in the *Izvestia* of March 23rd, 1935) that Soviet industry is still producing types of machinery which have long ago been condemned abroad. It is also practically impossible for the Soviets, without the aid of foreign industry, to remedy the lamentable condition of their railway transportation.

We believe it to be a fact that after the signature of the Franco-Soviet pact, the U.S.S.R. making capital out of the military assistance which she is to give to France in case of need and emphasizing the interest which France must have in improving soviet communications, has lost not an instant in negotiating the conclusion of a large loan, destined to cope with the re-equipment of the Russian railways. The Bolsheviks, fascinated by the fairy vision of the cellars of the Banque de France, bursting with gold, have fairly torn themselves to pieces to flatter the French statesmen. At the same time, at the meetings of the League of Nations (formerly the butt of the grossest ridicule in the soviet press) and in diplo-

matic conversations, they do not cease to perjure themselves in vows of pacifism, thus seeking, with incredible cynicism, to hold the powerful ace of contemporary politics.

But the soviet financial ambitions are not only concerned with France. In 1934 they vainly attempted to obtain a State loan from England, from Sweden, from France, from Germany and from the United States. In the spring of 1935 they did succeed in obtaining from Germany and Czechoslovakia trade loans whose amount, however, in no way corresponded with their financial appetites.

* * * * *

Their home finance? A difficult subject to investigate, and for a very good reason! Their monetary unit has a peculiar characteristic: a rouble is not always a rouble!

In their relations abroad the rouble of which we have spoken, the gold rouble, is merely a book-keeping term: it is the conventional expression in Russian money of foreign exchanges or of the value of merchandise calculated in foreign money.

But as for the rouble used in exchanges within the country, that is merely an unqualified fiction. In this case everything depends upon who receives and who pays the said rouble, and of the conditions in which they do so. We have the immense variation in its value as a means of purchase according to whether it is spent in the commercial shops or the co-operatives, and the same thing occurs in the other categories of exchange: the rouble paid by the State to the peasant for the "stock" cereals which it buys at an imposed rate has nothing in common with the rouble paid for these same cereals in the "*Kolkhoze* market."

Even among the squads of "stateized" trade the buying power of the rouble is variable, since the tariffs

fixed for the purchase of raw materials by the factories differ one from another according to the branch of industry involved. There are therefore in circulation a "metallurgical rouble," a "building rouble," etc.¹ To add up these different roubles whose buying power is subject to infinite fluctuations would be a mathematical error quite as inadmissible as adding up metres and kilograms.

This is why no really serious study of the State Budget of the U.S.S.R. can be made, and we shall therefore only glance briefly at the Soviet budget for 1935—a glance however which, however superficial, may nevertheless prove instructive. The exterior aspect of the budget is very imposing: revenue 65,900,551,000 roubles; expenses: 65,400,551,000 roubles; excess of revenue: 500,000,000 roubles. But these enormous figures which suggest a marked advance upon those of preceding years are actually only indications of monstrous inflation.

For the rest, the balance sheet of the Moscow State Bank clearly shows the crumbling of the Soviet monetary system which the Party is vainly trying to conceal. The Five Year Plan had fixed the annual issue at 250 millions. Actually, the quantity of notes in circulation which amounted to 1,667 millions on January 1st, 1928, had increased to 7,479 millions by April 1st, 1935 (according to official figures). If we are to believe the estimates of specialists who value the reserve of gold and foreign currencies as representing 100 millions at

¹ Let us remark that this instability of the rouble makes it very difficult to understand the economic phenomena related by the Moscow press. The soviet papers, for instance, announce triumphantly: "Our great factory for the construction of machinery (Makeevka) no longer costs the state anything; it has reached the stage when it can function without asking for subsidies!" Well and good. But the coal mines are compelled to supply it at so low a rate that their deficit is thereby increased!

most, we find a rate of covering of notes of 1·5 per cent in place of the statutory 25 per cent or the licit 12·5 per cent.¹

To what degree has the inflation of the soviet rouble attained? We have already reckoned, when indicating the differences in the prices received by the State itself for the same goods in the "commercial shops" (in soviet money) and in the Torgsin (foreign currencies), that the inflation practically recognized by the Soviets rises to a proportion of 1 in 10. Our reckoning is confirmed by the fact that there is in Paris no lack of private counting-houses which undertake to send money to soviet citizens, charging the senders at a rate of one French franc for one rouble (as we know, the official rate of the rouble is 12 francs). These intermediaries certainly do not work at a loss! But there is also the unofficial quotation of the rouble recognized by certain bankers who negotiate operations with soviet currencies, they reckon the rouble as equalling 22·5 centimes, in French money, which brings the rate of inflation of soviet money to about 1 in 50.

¹ The paper currency of the U.S.S.R. being divided into two categories: Bank notes (3,978 millions on April 1st, 1935) with the legal covering of 25 per cent, and treasury notes (3,501 millions on the same date). These treasury notes were put into circulation as early as 1924 under the pretext of a scarcity of small currencies. The quantity of treasury notes should not exceed that of bank-notes, but no special covering being exacted for the former the general licit covering is by this fact reduced to 12½ per cent. The amount of monetary circulation in the U.S.S.R. would not be excessive, indeed it would be insufficient, in a national economy open to normal exchanges. But in circumstances where such exchanges are artificially stifled and sterilized this quantity of paper money seems enormous. Indeed, after the suppression of the food-cards, the money circulation became more active. As a result, we see lower prices in the "state commercial shops" and on *kolkhoze*-market. However, these prices remain without any connection with the incomes of the population.

In any case, the columns of billions in the soviet budget are chiefly, so to speak, a financial diversion. Thus, the chief part of the revenue (52,025,700,000 roubles) is drawn from the tax upon the business profits of the State enterprises. Of the sum of 52 thousand millions, 22 thousand millions concern industrial and commercial enterprises. But these same enterprises are working at a loss and, according to the estimates of this same budget, receive subsidies whose total, together with the new investments, exceeds 27 thousand millions of roubles. It therefore results that the treasury pays to itself its imaginary revenue.

On the other hand there is one part of the tax upon business profits which is by no means imaginary, and that is the portion referred to as "business profits of the committee for the realization of agricultural production," which amounts to 24 thousand millions (in the expenditure columns 7 thousand millions figure as allotted to "agriculture"). Alongside of this respectable return, appears the revenue of the Alcohols Trust (6 thousand millions). These constitute the spinal column of the budget, a fact which once again goes to confirm our statement: the Communist State with its ruinous industry is subsisting as best it may at the expense of its rural economy, and even then it only hangs on by imposing crushing taxation upon those articles of consumption which are most essential to the life of the population.

VII

The "Russian Experiment"

The 1st of January 1933 saw the birth of the second Five Year Plan, following upon the heels of the first which had just come to an end.

What, we may ask, did that first Plan do for the country? What does the second Plan promise? And have such promises any chance of fulfilment? To reply to these questions would be to draw up a balance sheet of all that we have already said with regard to soviet economics. It would also involve the formulation of a general judgment upon the economic aspects of what is known as the "Russian Experiment."

Let it be said at once: in spite of all our mistrust with regard to Soviet statistics (and in this respect we only follow the example of the Communists themselves), it would appear to us incontestable that at the end of the first Five Year Plan industrial production had considerably increased. The official returns do not always tally, but nevertheless, we can gauge roughly that the production of the last year of the Plan was equivalent to a sum of 35 thousand millions of roubles (43 thousand millions had been the sum decreed by the Plan) as against 18 thousand millions at the point of departure.

It is true that in the interval the value of the rouble as a unit of calculation had diminished. It is also true that the efforts made by factories and by entire branches of industry to approach the figures of output decreed by the Plan had contributed yet further to lower the quality of production and to increase the percentage of faulty output: certain economists have estimated the average value of soviet merchandise as about half that of similar European products of other countries.

And yet, all these reservations do not invalidate our earlier statement: the volume of industrial output has perceptibly increased. Certain figures referring to the production of such materials as can be weighed confirm this fact: thus in 1932 the production of the foundries rose to 6.2 millions of tons (372 millions of poods).

There are some who regard this figure as representing a brilliant "triumph of the régime." We are not of their way of thinking.

We have already made passing mention of the fact that in 1910 the production of the Russian foundries amounted to 183 millions of poods and that three years later, in 1913, it rose to 283 millions. And now, twenty years later, as the outcome of the famous Five Year Plan, for which every conceivable sacrifice has been asked of the country, we find a new increase of less than 100 millions. Does anyone really believe that if Russia had continued her normal development this increase would have been hailed as a prodigious "triumph"? There is no doubt at all that it would have been considered altogether inadequate. May 1935 beheld the solemn inauguration of the Moscow "metro" (11 kilometres), of which the construction had taken three years. In order to complete the task, the entire population of the capital had been compelled to work upon it, sacrificing for this purpose their holidays and half-holidays. Now the project of the Moscow "metro" had been formed before the war, and, but for the Revolution, its construction would have been completed long ago.

And then, there also arises another question of primary importance: in how far has this or that production contributed to the well-being of the country? Complicated factories with costly equipments have been installed with the aid of foreign specialists and thanks to machinery imported on credit, and finally, thanks to arduous and poorly paid labour, thrust upon the native workmen. But then arises the question of the worst evil: the practical use of these constructions is hampered at every turn by all the defects of the communist system. In this connection the celebrated Dnieprostoi

supplies us with an eloquent example. *For Industrialization* (March 5th, 1934) informs us that the capacity of the power station amounts to 390,000 kw., while consumption is under 100,000 kw. The fact is that the factories to be served are still being built ; moreover, those who are the heaviest consumers of electricity will be the last to be completed, although their existence is a necessity to the functioning of those which will be ready earlier and which must, in the meantime, remain inactive.

This is as much as to say that of these splendid buildings, the majority represent nothing but a scandalous wastage of materials of labour and of money.

Whence then has come this money, from the issues of paper currency ?

We have already briefly demonstrated that the financial system of the Plan, based upon the expected decrease of cost prices, proved to be utopian. In most branches the cost prices, on the contrary, showed an increase.

How then did the Government contrive to tackle the necessities for investments which the Plan involved ?

The system employed was merely that of commandeering labour capacities and the last resources of the population, and with this end in view, use was made yet again of a wily combination of measures of encouragement and compulsion and of a decisive spirit allied to a rare tenacity. At the beginning the enthusiasm of a part of the workers, a childish enthusiasm perhaps, but fruitful, which had been aroused by the "campaigns" on behalf of the Plan, helped to drag along the heavy chariot of the Five Year enterprise. Then came in the widest sense of the terms a succession of familiar expedients : "shock" brigades, socialist emulation, exploitation of the labour of women and children,

compulsory subscriptions to State loans, the speculative sale in the "commercial shops" of the produce extorted from the peasants.

As regards agriculture, a few words will suffice to sum up the results of the Plan: extension of the cultivated area but decrease of harvest owing to the vicious action of collectivization.

Here then, finally, is a summary balance sheet of the Plan: relative success as regards the production of the heavy industries: coal, metals and war material. Insolvency of the light industries, manufacturing produce for direct consumption. The erecting of certain large constructions whose economic effect in no wise tallies with their technical importance, nor with the expectations set forth in the Plan itself. As against these; further impoverishment of the country of which the famine of 1933 was the terrible corollary.

* * * * *

And now, let us examine the promises made by the second Five Year Plan and their chances of fulfilment.

It is interesting to note, in the first place, that the second Plan has not been accompanied by the noisy publicity that ushered in its predecessor. In this fact one can hardly fail to perceive an explicit avowal of the failure of the first plan.

The fact is that the initial details of the second Five Year Plan, as announced at the conference of the Party in January 1932, were founded upon the presumed successes of the first Plan. But just at that moment it became apparent that these foundations were purely imaginary. It then became a question of provisionally scrapping the second Plan; it was thrust back for reconsideration and the labour plan for 1933 was proceeded with independently. The second Five Year Plan only reappeared, in a considerably curtailed

form, in February 1934, before the Congress of the Party which made yet further amendments in the form of moderation.¹

The fundamental objective of the second Five Year Plan is to continue the efforts of the first, to industrialize the country. The industrial returns are to be increased by 1937 to the sum of 92·7 thousand millions of roubles. But there is one essential difference between this Plan and its predecessor : this time it is the light industries which are privileged : while the production of the heavy industries, in the course of the Plan must increase by 114 per cent, the return of light industries must augment by 134 per cent, supplying the working people with a profusion of those articles of general consumption which they so urgently require.

At the same time, the rate of net salaries is to rise, by the end of the Plan, in a proportion of 1 : 2·1, a result which is to be achieved partly by the increase of income of the working families and partly by the lowered cost of articles of general consumption.

What are we to think of these previsions and dispositions ?

To begin with, the limits fixed for industrial production at the termination of the Plan will never even be approached. In both agricultural and industrial technique there is a "law of saturation." Every time that an additional factor of technique is brought into action by man upon the forces of nature, the returns received show a progressive decrease. This is equally

¹ Example : the initial variant forecast for 1937 a production of 22 millions of tons by the foundries ; the project submitted to the Congress set it at 18 millions, and the figure finally adopted was 16 millions. (Production in 1934, 10·4 millions.) In any case, for 1937 the first project prescribed the extraction of 250 millions of tons of coal : the Congress contented itself with a figure of 152 millions (production of 1934, 92 millions).

true of the cultivation of land, of the work of a machine and of national economy as a whole. Such, moreover, is the fact that is emphasized by the official statistics of the first Plan. According to these, investments of 3.7 thousand millions of roubles resulted in 1930 in an increase of production of 30.9 per cent. In 1931, investments of 5.8 thousand millions of roubles brought an increase of 23.4 per cent. The following year, investments of 10 thousand millions of roubles yielded an increase of 13.6 per cent, while in 1933, investments of 13.9 thousand millions of roubles corresponded to an increase of 8.8 per cent.

These were the figures for the earlier part of the Plan, and they surely suggest a bad outlook for its completion.

The Soviet statistics for 1934 certainly indicate an increase of production of 18.3 per cent (according to Molotov) upon those of the preceding year. But this increase, on the Bolsheviks' own showing, results from the entry into the field of a series of factories whose completion had been held up.

And then, even if we accept these official statements, the production of 1934, thus augmented, totals 53.9 thousand millions of roubles, whereas the second Five Year Plan provided for the figure of 92.7 thousand millions in 1937. It will be seen that the chance of reaching this figure is hopeless.

The figures published by the Soviets in August assure us that during the first half of this year the production plan of the heavy industries for 1935 was exceeded and that of the light industries approximately fulfilled. We have no means of checking those statistics, but we cannot forget how trustworthy they always were. We do not forget also that the initial conception of the plan for 1935 underwent considerable modification. Besides, we

remark that certain figures given by the Soviets show the deficiency of certain very essential branches. It is so, for instance, concerning the oil so important for foreign trade as well as from a military point of view. Already in 1934 the oil production revealed a deficit of 17 per cent in comparison with the forecast of the annual plan (25.5 millions of tons instead of 30.5 millions). During the first half of 1935 the "Azov Oil" alone showed a deficit of 1.316 thousand tons. The wells of Bakou registered at the same time 950 accidents and damages. It is quite comprehensible that the Bolsheviki had during a certain time increased the production by applying savage methods of extraction, but they are quite incapable of administering this delicate industry for a long spell. Concerning automobiles, the *Izvestia* wrote sadly at the end of August 1935: "One could produce 630,000 a year," but for the moment "one" possesses only 183,000 in all. This number is the same as that showing the fifteen days' production of automobiles in the United States. And it is especially in this domain that the interior propaganda boasts of having surpassed America!

But what is the most serious aspect—and therein lies the capital point—is that soviet industry is not contriving to carry out the fundamental objective of the second Five Year Plan; that is to say, the shifting of the centre of gravity by giving preponderance to the production of the light industries. For that matter, this criticism was already confirmed by the industrial plan adopted for the year 1934: this provided for an increase of production of 21.7 per cent for the heavy industries and of 15.8 per cent for the light industries. The plan of 1935 shows the same disproportion, which hinders the fundamental objective of the second Five Year Plan in the whole.

These figures are significant, seeing that they bear witness to the utopian character of the promises made to the workers of speeding up the manufacture of products of large consumption.

The official records evaluate at 11 per cent, the increase of production in the light industries in 1934 (instead of the 15.8 per cent hoped for), but certain competent economists, founding their opinion upon a vast number of soviet reports, estimate that this increase has not really exceeded 5 per cent. We will not stress this point. Let us only say that there is no lack of first-hand testimony in the soviet press to convince us that the dearth of products of prime necessity still persists in Russia. We read, for instance, in *Moscow Evening* (September 25th, 1934), that, "According to the lowest calculations, Moscow requires for this autumn 200,000 square metres of window glass," but in the Mossnab shops (Moscow supplies) the sellers merely remark: "We have no window glass and do not know when we shall have any. . . ." Complaints of the same nature continue in 1935. Thus *Izvestia* of September 11th, 1935, relates the adventures of the director of a tractor's depôt in White Russia who was in search of an ordinary needle. He could not find any in the nearest co-operative stores nor in that of the chief town of the district, and he was about to send for it to Minsk, capital of White Russia, when it was happily discovered in the "commercial shop" of the region. Alas, the needles were sold in packages of 250, which was too expensive for the director! It was necessary to appeal to the highest authorities of the district, who gave permission to sell just one hundred needles!

It is equally certain that the second Five Year Plan will be no more successful than its predecessor in accomplishing the decrease in cost prices in soviet industry.

Already the figures in 1933 made this apparent: they denote, it is true, a slight fall in cost prices (varying from 1.5 to 2 per cent), but this decrease is offset by an increase in the cost of building. The year 1934 did not bring any improvement. In 1935 the augmentation of salaries, as a consequence of the suppression of food-cards, provoked a rapid rise in cost prices. It grew in the heavy industries, for the first three months of 1935, to 4.7 per cent more in comparison with the last year. The situation of the light industries is not better as regards this point of view.

Two serious consequences arise from this state of affairs.

To begin with, it confirms our view as to the Soviet's inability to raise the level of living among its workers.

The second consequence is as follows: The financing of the second Plan by means of the hoped-for drop in cost prices, thus reveals itself to be as imaginary as it proved during the first Five Year Plan. It has therefore been necessary to have recourse to other sources, the same as those that had already been tapped during the previous experiment, with the exception, however, of foreign credits, which have been lacking, or almost lacking, up to the present date. Compensation has been sought in the lucrative monopoly on bread.

And nevertheless this compensation proves insufficient: the losses of the industry are enormous. In 1934, for example, according to the *For Industrialization* (beginning of September 1935), the metallurgical factories alone cost the Treasury one billion roubles. This year the rise of the cost prices increased the deficit still more. It is quite natural: by killing individual interests, by annulling the action of economic factors, the State deprived itself of the means of rationally organizing industrial production. In U.S.S.R. it is

not the industry that serves the national economy, it is, on the contrary, the national economy which is forced to keep up the parasitical industry. And when this vampire swells to the glory of Five Year Plan there comes a moment when even the enormous speculation with the bread monopoly does not suffice to fill up the hole.

What is there to be done, then? The Commission of Heavy Industries finds a simple solution: from June 1935 it has been trying to put pressure on the directors of the factories by forcing them to "renounce benevolently the State subsidies." In this way personal interest bears its part, but in a political and not an economic sense: the directors are obliged to obey so as not to be dismissed or even punished as "scamp workers." They cover themselves as much as they can; they play on the variation of the rouble (we have seen these proceedings before, in connection with finances) and throw the deficit from one to another like a football in that game; they refuse to deliver to the clients merchandise especially disadvantageous to themselves; they lower the quality of production; they use artifices of book-keeping. The disorder only increases, and we shall speedily see, without any doubt, the fatal results of this new "victory" of the Soviet industry. . . .

In so far as concerns agriculture the second Plan is very modest in its aims. It wishes to increase the area under cultivation to 140 millions of hectares in 1937, while the first Plan had already proposed to reach the figure of 141.3 millions of hectares in 1933. But the years 1933 and 1934, far from conforming to expectations, showed a perceptible retrogression. The cultivated area in 1933 and in 1934 respectively was 129.7 and 129.8 millions of hectares as against 133.4 in 1932. The same moderation applies to breeding:

the state of the *cheptel* foreseen for 1937 is inferior to that of 1928. And here again a considerable regression is observable in 1933 and 1934 all along the line (for example, in horses : 15.2 million head on January 1st, 1935, as against 19.6 million in 1932, according to the review *The Bolshevik*, 1935, No. 1).

There now remains only one last consideration : the social aspect of rural economy. The second Plan has definitely determined to put an end to "capitalist survivals" in the rural districts, that is to say, to those individual peasant economics which at the present day involve rather more than 8 per cent of the cultivated area. In other words, they intend to complete the work of collectivization.

This is a task which offers no serious difficulty to a government well provided with every means of compulsion : but will it decide to put this project into execution ?

The most recent decrees affecting the peasants would appear to furnish us with an affirmative reply. In June 1934, in addition to the taxes in kind, a fairly heavy tax in money was levelled upon individual peasant savings. A few months later, in September, they were burdened with another heavy tax, labelled "extraordinary" or "sporadic." Yet another is foreseen for 1935. Many economists see in these taxes purely political measures which aim at compelling the peasants to accept more easily permanent and total collectivization.

Would it not be simpler and more logical to regard these successive taxes merely as a fiscal measure destined to assist the financing of the second Plan ? There is irony and a cruel paradox in the thought that the "capitalist survivals," so perpetually denounced and persecuted, should be asked to play the part of the goose

that lays the golden eggs. Better still, as we have mentioned in our chapter on agriculture, the Soviets, for financial reasons, are already making concessions to the individualist instincts of the collectivized peasant.

Nor is this all ; we have already seen that not only do the Bolsheviki tolerate the "capitalist survivals," but they imitate the worst abuses known to the capitalist régime. Thus the Communist State appears before us as a combined robber and speculator, who mercilessly pillages its citizens in order later to sell its loot at fantastic prices to its victims !

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We will leave our readers to form their own conclusions as to the lessons which Western countries may learn from the example offered them by soviet stateized economy. But we believe that it argues a lack of common sense to observe communist action indefinitely in a perpetual expectation of marvellous revelations. The "Russian Experiment" is an accomplished fact, and it is time we drew from it our own conclusions.

CHAPTER V

BOLSHEVISM A WORLD DANGER

AT the time when bolshevism was coming into power in Russia, and when it was stretching, cautiously in the first instance, its tentacles in the direction of other countries, how few were the statesmen, or the princes of the Church, or any indeed but a few military leaders, who realized, or even suspected, the formidable dimensions that would be assumed by the evil of which Lenin was then the chief artisan. Nay, more, the true essence of the doctrine was not perceived, nor the real countenances of these men who had suddenly made their appearance upon the stage of history.

At a period when the struggle between the peoples at war was entering its last and decisive phase, it was difficult, indeed, almost impossible to perceive, beyond the terrible perils of the moment, the spectre of a new menace, and to attempt its immediate destruction.

Nevertheless, when weapons were laid aside and the world gradually began to return to the ways of peace, public opinion in Europe and in America did not show itself capable of an intelligent diagnosis, nor of applying prompt and energetic treatment. The reasons for this were legion.

An unconquerable lassitude, the sequel to exhausting exertions, played its part, after the war, in paralysing all combative impulses, whatever might be their objective. In addition to this the exhalations of blood which had

only just been dispersed had obscured the discernment and blunted the moral sensibilities of all peoples.

And to this general state of mentality were gradually added, in various social layers, various illusions and tendencies alike favourable to the Bolsheviki.

Why is it that spiritual refinement so frequently brings with it a modification of the moral outlook and a distaste for ancient truths which appear dull, out of date and harmful? It is for this reason that a large portion of the educated world hailed in the advent of bolshevism the dawn of "a new era," the promise of rejuvenation for a decrepit civilization. This thesis having become fashionable, a portion of the aristocracy and of the wealthy of the world adopted it in their turn, with yet more shortsightedness and ostentation.

The middle classes, morally healthier, were only very superficially affected by the influences of such ideas; found themselves unable to feel much emotion or alarm with regard to events occurring at so great a distance and whose nature they were, for a long time, unable to grasp.

Finally, the numerous elements of the proletariat and the various categories of malcontents fell easily under the spell of a skilfully organized system of propaganda which was abundantly subsidized by the Soviets. They expressed themselves either by proclaiming their sympathies with communism or by openly joining one of the Communist Parties which sprang up in every direction.

To sum up the situation, no movement of any real energy arose in the public opinion of the world, among the leaders of international politics, which suggested that a definite moral attitude should be adopted by European countries with regard to the Bolsheviki.

It therefore resulted that the line of conduct adopted by the various governments was exclusively inspired by

political and economic considerations, wise or the reverse, all motives of a moral order being generally excluded.

In the case of Germany the question was very promptly settled. All her efforts were directed toward helping the Bolsheviks, in whom she beheld a new ally against old Russia, her enemy of 1914. After facilitating the return of Lenin, by allowing him to cross German territory, and after signing the peace of Brest-Litovsk, the Reich despatched to Moscow Count Mirbach, who advised the bolshevik leaders. Then came the treaties of Rapallo and of Berlin and the close collaboration of Germany with the U.S.S.R. at all international conferences. The tremendous economic difficulties of the Reich did not prevent it from generously supplying the Bolsheviks with financial support.

Mr. Lloyd George's Government also beheld with a certain pleasure the weakening of Russia. In this respect it followed the example of that Venetian Republic which formerly replied to those who reproached it for trading with Tamerlane: "We are Venetians before we are Christians!" The leader of the British Government formulated the well-known variant: "One can trade even with cannibals."

Nor was the application of this maxim confined to England. Fascist Italy, for example, which, in a persevering search for economic extension, hastened to renew close relations with the Soviets. The Bolsheviks, greedy to seize upon any means of facilitating their penetration into the West, hailed with enthusiasm this essentially perverse friendship.¹

¹ It goes without saying that in the communist vocabulary the term "fascist" is equivalent to an insult. Learned ideologues of the Party have furnished the following definition of the term for official purposes: "The fascist is a small bourgeois in a state of mania." The Red journalists liked to allude to the League of Nations, when wishing to annihilate it, as a "fascist institution."

Other countries, among which was France, who had brought more reserve and circumspection to their welcome of the new Russian régime, did not however regard it as feasible to shut out the Bolsheviks with watertight compartments once the U.S.S.R. had been admitted within the orbit of international life. Considerations of internal policy also played a part, sometimes of a decisive nature, and this or that country would often renew relations with the Soviets immediately after an electoral change which had placed the helm of state in the hands of those with "left-hand" tendencies (for example, the 1924 elections in France and the immediate telegraphic recognition of the Soviets by M. Herriot's Government). In the end, only a few small countries refused, and up to the present still refuse to establish official relations with the Bolsheviks, even though most of them have permitted the establishment in their territory of soviet commercial offices.

It is thus that the Bolsheviks have contrived to found, throughout the world, their embassies, their commercial concerns, their banks and their anonymous societies. They have been invited to international conferences, received in ministers' private studies; they have visited sovereigns in their palaces; they have been acclaimed in advanced artistic circles, flattered in social salons, and kowtowed to in the sanctums of bankers and financiers. These same ministers, bankers, members of parliament, artists and diplomats, sometimes constrained by professional obligations, sometimes, and more often, influenced by morbid curiosity, came to the Red embassies and honoured with their presence the anniversaries of the communist revolution in Russia, that glorious first stage of the world revolution, to whose glory they drank French champagne and ate Russian caviar to the sound of the victorious strains of the *Internationale*!

All of which is as much as to say that the Bolsheviks

were given every facility for establishing here, there and everywhere the solid foundations of their subversive action, openly conducted to some extent, but by far the greater part camouflaged and directed with superb skill and magnificent effrontery.

Under the high patronage of Moscow, a patronage by no means platonic, Communist Parties sprang up everywhere, and in certain countries acquired a truly malefic influence. This is easy enough to understand : in the very heart of each State a seed of unrest germinates that is fundamentally hostile to the interests of society and that enlists in the service of the world revolution. Like a social cancer the system of the Comintern, of which every Communist is an active link, infects the organism of Western States. It instals military and economic espionage on behalf of the " Socialist fatherland of all workers " ; it breaks down discipline in the army (let us remember certain cases of grave disobedience in several French regiments and in the British Navy) ; it feeds the spirit of revolt among the workmen and the unemployed (for instance, the " Red days " of May 1st and August 1st and numerous strikes in which the hand of the Comintern was officially recognized) ; it unfolds an active anti-religious propaganda (the attempt to create an international union of atheists with its headquarters in Western Europe) ; it seeks to influence childhood by means of communist teachers (many disquieting incidents have been recorded in the French press) ; it manages to control the public services (the writer of this book has received letters sent from Prague and Belgrade and delivered in Paris with the postmark " Moscow " : administrative scruple or insolent humour of the Cheka ?) ; it worms its way into ministries and municipalities and makes use of parliamentary tribunes for its propaganda.

Nor is this all. Even outside the direct action of the Comintern and the Communist Parties, the penetration of the Bolsheviks into the West has had grave repercussions upon middle-class society. It gave birth to a corruption all the more dangerous in that it remained for a long time unsuspected by public opinion.

Is it not corruption when the industrials of various countries, in search of soviet orders, enter into bitter and dishonest competition by means of heavy bribes offered to the commercial agents of the U.S.S.R. ? The result of this deplorable competition has been that of all the forecasts involved in the first Five Year Plan the only one to be realized was that concerning foreign credits to be obtained by the U.S.S.R.

Is it not corruption when business men entering into connivance with the Bolsheviks and making use of the shady methods of which we know, seek to throw out the delicate gear of Western economic life ? And these people, borrowing the effrontery of the Bolsheviks, go so far as to demand the title of champions of the public weal who are "struggling against the rapine of high finance."

Briefly, the Western countries have opened wide their fates to the moral intervention of the Bolsheviks, an intervention which, in the view of the leaders of the Party, was to play the part of artillery preceding a bayonet charge. Nor must we forget, that from the standpoint of positive right, the régime of modern States found itself, in its very essence, in a condition of weakness before communist aggression. Contemporary legislation having been inspired by liberal ideas, it was impossible for the public powers to combat communism (apart from its cruder manifestations) without going back upon those very principles which it was bound to defend.¹ Private

¹ And we now see the European States, one by one, by a logically historical reaction, renouncing the luxury of a liberal régime in

initiative, moral action and the sanctions freely exercised by society, not in virtue of the law but only within its own bounds, remained alone in their struggle against universal and criminal indifference.

Things remained in this condition for a long time ; for several years no moral buttress was erected against bolshevik penetration, and there was every justification for the most gloomy apprehensions with regard to the future of the Western States should the march of events lead to a supreme trial of the social armature of Europe.

But contact with the U.S.S.R. and efforts towards an economic and spiritual collaboration were bound in the long run to bear fruit.¹

We beheld the pitiful collapse, in Paris and London, of the negotiations with a view to settling the question of the long-standing Russian debts (do not let us forget the fate of the Mouzie commission, inaugurated after the recognition of the Soviets by Monsieur Herriot in 1924). We saw the *débâcle* of the numerous trade concessions obtained by the U.S.S.R. for whom the European business world had conceived such a *schwermererei* : scandals, collapse and liquidation at a loss. It began to be apparent that the U.S.S.R. was a questionable debtor.

order better to retain its essentials. Such is the case in the modern dictatorships—however different they may be—such as Italy, Hungary, Poland and Germany—the four countries which had been most exposed to the perils of communism. Other States, with less daring, have been moving in the same direction, especially the small countries adjoining the U.S.S.R.

¹ The least useful contributions to this end were the studies, impressions and reports published in great numbers by foreigners who had visited the U.S.S.R. The majority of these travellers set out with a ready-made prejudice in favour of the Bolsheviki. With splendid assurance allied to total incompetence they fell into the traps laid by the soviet tourist authorities. Very much more valuable are the works of former servants of the régime, such as Panîť Istrati, Laporte, Solomon, Bessedovsky, Bajanov, Agabékov, etc.

On the other hand, efforts at a moral *rapprochement* all too clearly demonstrated to what extent all liberty of thought had been stifled in the U.S.S.R. together with all freedom of creative inspiration (let us remember the experiences of Professor Mathiez and the French historians). People began to realize the nature of the cruel chains in which the country was held by the Party of which the Soviet Government and even the Comintern itself were only the humble servants. They began to perceive the pernicious activities pursued with such energy by communism in the colonies, in the protectorates and in the vast territories of Asia and South America which provide such important markets for European and American exports.¹ Their eyes were also opened to the moral ravages operated by Bolshevik propaganda in Western society. And then came a flood of introspective emotion with regard to the deluge of bloodshed by the Cheka ; there arose horror at the tortures endured by hundreds of thousands of prisoners detained in "concentration camps," and at the sufferings of the entire Russian people, oppressed and downtrodden. Finally public opinion revolted at the recrudescence of anti-religious persecutions since 1929.

We may record this date (the end of 1929 and the beginning of 1930) as that which witnessed the veering of Western views with regard to communism, a veering which moral conscience, economic interests and world evolution had combined to bring about.

And soon the Catholic Church, in the encyclical of its Head, issued a vigorous reproof to communism in its capacity as a power of militant atheism and as a source of social disorders.

Groups and associations were formed everywhere which

¹ See the works, in French, of the senator, Gustave Gauterot, and especially his book *Le Monde Communiste*.

assumed the task of fighting against communism in its different manifestations.¹ The best organs of the press throughout the entire world, especially in Britain and in France, soon displayed a perfect understanding of the nefarious activities of the U.S.S.R. and the Comintern. A part of the Western proletariat which had at first allowed itself to be misled by bolshevik lies, returned to its old views and abandoned communism, having become convinced of the sterility of its noisy demagogy ; this movement in the right direction would probably have been considerably extended but for the counter-movement of the general crisis and the privations and poverty accompanying it.

However, high international policy refused to conform to the evolution which had taken place in public opinion. "The wine is drawn and must be drunk," says an ancient maxim which can aptly be applied to the field of international politics, in which it is often inconvenient to alter a predetermined course, even when it has been proved undesirable. From the moment that the Soviets had been allowed to take their place in the community of the powers, the post of vice-president of the Disarmament Conference had to be reserved for the leader of the Red diplomacy, and from that post to a seat on the Council of the League of Nations, there was but a short step to take.²

Yes, as we have just said, even if the course has been

¹ Until then, the entente against the Third International, directed by Theodore Aubert of Geneva, was alone in its courageous struggle against the general current.

² In the diplomatic field Litvinoff has long-standing and verifiable references. A few years before the war he was employed in Paris on the delicate mission of passing a considerable number of Russian bank-notes which were the proceeds of an armed raid, under the direction of Stalin, upon a monetary transport in the streets of Tiflis.

proved undesirable. But the trouble is that the great captains of present-day international politics have not as yet realized its undesirability, or rather, what is perhaps even worse, have only half realized it and have determined to act as though they lacked all understanding.

Blinded by their fear of Hitlerized Germany, and of a Germany which, incidentally, has utterly repudiated her former friendship with the Soviets, the leaders of international diplomacy have found nothing better to do than to prop up their noble aspirations towards peace by an entente with the headquarters of the world revolution. They have thus set their feet upon the perilous road which Germany herself was the first to tread.

For Germany had been the first to attempt to support her task of national regeneration by collaboration with Moscow, the force of international destruction.

In a curious speech, made it would seem about two years ago, Dr. Brüning, formerly chancellor of the Reich, emphasized, with pathetic eloquence, the fact that it was impossible to build a sound and substantial policy upon a foundation of other people's misfortunes. It is not for us to refute the ex-chancellor's transparent allusion. But Brüning's innocent unconsciousness is astonishing: he appears not to perceive that Germany, even before the end of the war, had flung herself headlong into a friendly alliance with the headquarters of the Third International, thus founding her whole foreign policy upon the accomplished downfall of Russia and the eventual downfall of the entire world.

Is it not an imitation of her bad example to attempt to counter the Hitlerian peril and the danger of a Germano-Soviet coalition (which has been abandoned by Germany herself) by drawing the U.S.S.R. into an opposing "combination"? And yet this is precisely

the idea which actuates the policy of the French Foreign Office in its most recent phase as inaugurated by M. Herriot.

Is it necessary to dilate here upon the arguments advanced by the champions of this policy? At the time of the admission of the U.S.S.R. to the Society of Nations in September 1934, the thesis of the collaboration with the Soviets was elaborately developed by M. Barthou in his reply to the eloquent attack made by M. Motta, delegate of the Swiss Republic, against the Soviets, before the Geneva Commission. The speech made by the late French minister is doubtless still universally remembered. The considerations which he put forward were analysed and brilliantly refuted in a series of articles from the pens of a number of eminent publicists.

We are not proposing to discuss every aspect of this problem. The most striking refutation of M. Barthou's thesis was given by *L'Humanité*.

M. Barthou, declared the organ of the French Communists, hastened to put forward the baroque idea, a hundred times disproved by facts, according to which the participation of the Soviets in a great international organism would compel the U.S.S.R. to modify the vigour of its doctrine, etc. Let us say quite plainly that such sops offered to the champions of anti-Sovietism are entirely out of place in so much as they imply a manoeuvre or prepare a threat. It must be clearly emphasized that the U.S.S.R. will defeat the manoeuvre and ignore the threat (*L'Humanité*, September 18th, 1934.)

The Soviets themselves, while parading the pacifist toga which they have been able to assume, thanks in the first place to the assistance of Germany and in the second to the patronage of France, never cease to decry this stolen raiment. On January 16th, 1934, M. Paul Boncour, then minister for Foreign Affairs, observed from the tribune of the Senate: "If Russia continues to organize her revolutions at home, she has nevertheless

become fairly conservative abroad" (*Journal Officiel*, January 17th, 1934). *Izvestia* was not long in replying to this remark by printing in large type in their issue of January 21st the following statement by Stalin: "With Lenin's standard we conquered in the struggle for the October Revolution. . . . With the same standard we shall be victors in the proletarian revolution throughout the universe."

The soviet review *International Correspondence*, when publishing in its issue of February 10th, 1934, the report of the recent Congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., gives this moving picture:

One after another the representatives of our communist brethren (in China, Japan, Germany, Spain, Poland and England) enter the tribune of the Congress. Each and all emphasize the considerable part played in the world's communist movement by the *Governing Party of the Communist International, the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. and the Chief of World Communism, Stalin.*

Among the declarations of that kind which resounded during the last Congress of the Third International in August 1935, let us choose a passage in the speech of Manouilsky, who was until recently the "manager" of the Comintern (since the Congress, Dimitrov, more energetic and skilled in "revolutionary technics," has taken his place):

Under the leadership of Lenin's Central Committee, with Stalin at the head, our Party serves, and will serve, proletarian internationalism until the end; it strengthens and will strengthen the defence of the Soviets' country. The workers of all the countries are not disarmed to-day when confronted with the enemies of their class. In their struggle for deliverance they look with hope to the government of proletarian dictatorship, to the country that conquered socialism, to the sound foundation of peace and liberty of nations. This great conquest is the result of Stalin's policy: to be true to the end to proletarian internationalism.

Our party, our people, and our country, educated by Lenin and Stalin, are true to-day and will be true to the ideals of proletarian internationalism, whatever their trials, until the last sigh, the last

effort and the last drop of blood. (Stormy applause, cries of "Hurrah," all stand up.) This is why the oppressed and exploited comrades of all parts of the earth see in our country, which conquered socialism, their native country; in our Party and our working class the vanguard of the world proletariat; in our Stalin the great, wise, beloved chief of all working humanity. (Stormy applause.)

Long live U.S.S.R., home of all the workers of the world. Long live our Stalin. (Cheers of "Hurrah," "Banzai," etc., were heard. The delegates sang in different languages the "International".)

The same ideas do not cease to be mooted in the communist press everywhere. In the middle of May, 1935, after the signature of the Franco-Soviet pact, after the visits to Moscow of Mr. Eden and of M. Laval, the official president of the Soviet Union, Kalinine, in a speech addressed to Red parachutists, once again emphasized that the fundamental aim and mission of the U.S.S.R. army was to ensure the triumph of communism throughout the entire world.

Evidence of this nature could be endlessly quoted, but we will give only one further example, the recent statement made by Maxim Gorky: "To the mysticism indulged in by the capitalists, history, which is fulfilling the stern truths of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, has opposed the fact of the 'Common Front' in France. . . ."

The Common Front, uniting the action of French Communists and Socialists under the high patronage of the Comintern, scored its first electoral victory on the very day that beheld M. Laval's arrival in Moscow, as a sequel to the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet Pact of May 2nd, 1935. Indeed, at the French municipal elections in May of this year, among all the political parties, the Communist Party has been the only one to achieve considerable gains, and the "Red belt" of Paris, formed by the labouring suburbs, has deepened its ominous tint.

The experience of the "Common Front" having

produced in a short time such encouraging results in France, Moscow decided to apply the same tactics on a world-wide scale. These new tactics were solemnly proclaimed at the VIIth Congress of the Comintern. The task of the day consisted in securing the collaboration of the British trade unions. No efforts would be spared to obtain a success.

The resolutions of the Congress (*Pravda*, August 29th, 1935) outline the plan of action. At first, "creation of a Common Front for the working class, which is a decisive stage in the working men's preparations for the great battles marking the second cycle of the proletarian revolutions." Along with this understanding on the social plane, must be built up on the political plane the consolidation of the "Common Front" among communists and socialists. This step Dimitroff explains as follows in his speech: "It is necessary to take one's stand in every country on its essential problems, keeping in mind the economic, political and social conditions which exist in the U.S.A., England, France, etc." The "small revolutionary bourgeoisie" must be attracted into the orbit of the "Common Front," and it is then that the "Popular Front," combining all these elements, will assert itself. On the same occasion the following resolution of the Congress was passed:—"The anti-imperialistic popular Front" must be formed in the colonial countries, so as to organize a struggle for independence with the purpose of "throwing out the imperialist oppressors."

Meanwhile, in their contacts with Western statesmen, the Bolsheviks have abandoned their former pose of haughty arrogance. But they are not ashamed to use threats for the purpose of blackmail. Thus, in the middle of March 1935, the *Izvestia*, annoyed and exasperated by the reserved attitude of the English govern-

ment towards the Franco-soviet pact, declared in its editorial : " England should understand that her proper interests require the maintenance of peace and the refusal to encourage Germany. In a contrary case England *must be ready to take part in a world war.*"

Is it not dangerous to use a Power that one knows to be a common enemy in order to support all kinds of " private combinations " ? Such a proceeding annuls all efforts to found international relationships on the principles of morality and sincerity. And from that moment all the pilgrimages to Geneva, Lausanne and Paris, in search of lost confidence, were doomed to fail. International confidence cannot be restored without the moral isolation of the Bolshevik government. It is also the necessary condition of avoidance of a fatal conflagration. The Bolsheviks are perfectly aware of this fact. For years past their press has not ceased to vociferate against " the aggression of the capitalist world which is being prepared under the ægis of fascist France " ; nowadays they avoid the mention of France and speak only of the " danger of international Fascism," which does not in any way alter the case. And the Soviets are perfectly right in their fear of a good understanding between the European countries, for, setting aside all question of imaginary " aggression," the moral isolation of the Bolsheviks would be the effectual means of hastening the end of the communist régime in Russia. The entire world would benefit as much as the Russian people. It would recover its economic equilibrium and rid itself of a social and political gangrene.

Unfortunately—as we have already seen—the realization of a European entente is powerfully hampered by the very fact that the Soviets have acquired a great influence in international life. This is one of the vicious circles which hold the contemporary world in their terrible grip.

CHAPTER VI
WHAT IS THE CHARACTER OF
BOLSHEVISM IN RUSSIA TO-DAY?

HOW is it possible that a régime that has plunged the people into blood and poverty, that has thrown the country back towards the era of barbarism, has been able to endure for so many years and appears at the present day to be more firmly established than ever?

Such is the question that foreigners put to themselves and to others (sometimes to the Russians themselves) where they wish to follow and understand, in a spirit of impartiality, the tormented destinies of Eastern Europe.

And their reflections would appear inevitably to lead them to one of the following alternatives :

Doubtless all that we have been told with regard to the horrors of bolshevism has been vastly exaggerated. Figures and examples have been quoted? But the Soviets also quote figures and examples, and how is one to know which alternative more nearly approaches to the truth? It is a strong régime, that is all, and many countries would be the gainers in having one as strong. If we admit, for purposes of argument, that the adversaries of bolshevism are in the right, that their documents and their assertions are to be accepted as reliable : well, then, this would only prove that the Russian people are so primitive that they have no need of freedom ; their amazing patience and the indolent apathy of the slow mentality lead them to accept a régime which we in the West would not tolerate for a single

day. If they do accept such a régime it must only be because it suits them! In which case, why worry? For after all, does not every people get the Government it deserves? It only remains to observe and remember: such is the course dictated by the principles of a sound and helpful policy, the only possible course in the circumstances.

It appears to us indispensable in concluding our study to examine more closely the problem offered by such judgments, which are widespread among the élite of the West.

* * * *

First of all, a word regarding the documentation used by the Soviets in their propaganda both at home and abroad. We have already had occasion to reproduce much instructive testimony from the soviet press in this connection; we need only recall the counterfeit letters supposed to have been despatched to Russia by imaginary French teachers. But we have also, which is even more interesting, the indignation of *Izvestia* which fulminates against the publications of the soviet "Tourist Bureau" and particularly against the Peterhof pamphlet, which, of course, is published for the use of foreign travellers. In it we learn that the "Dutch Cottage" of Peter the Great was built by one of the Tzaritzas specially for her amorous adventures, that the arrival in Peterhof of the Statue of Neptune from Germany caused peasant risings, that the Tzaritza Elizabeth was the mistress of "the groom, Byron," and that at the period of that same Tzaritza there were in Russia 150 millions of serfs, and so on, *ad lib.* "At every succeeding page, the writers scale the stairway of lies," *Izvestia* remarks (April 12th, 1935). And the newspaper concludes: "Never have we seen such ignorance combined with such shameless and revolting lies."

We entirely share the opinion of the honourable Moscow organ, only, it is but too apparent that it is not the lies in themselves that outrage its Red heart, but their inopportune exaggeration ! They, of course, realize that among foreign tourists there must be some who are not so completely cretinous as to digest such a conglomeration of fiction ; and just suppose, which God forbid, that some " bourgeois " journalist should take up the question. No, useless and clumsy lies only serve to compromise the most admirable measures.

* * * * *

We will now deal with the second of the alternatives already mentioned. This one presupposes the possibility of the " peaceable co-existence in the world of two systems, the capitalist and the communist." Such is the thesis frequently put forward in the international forum by Red diplomacy and constantly repeated by Moscow's Western partisans. This thesis is disproved by everything that we have set down in our preceding chapter, and also by our study of the Lenino-Marxist doctrine and of the foreign propaganda of the Soviets. Indeed, universalism is an integral quality of communism, which is unable to renounce it without committing suicide. All the foreign arrangements of the U.S.S.R., beginning with the provisional treaty concluded with Germany on May 6th, 1921, and continuing with the recognition of the Soviets by the United States of America, involve an obligation to put an end to their propaganda, but that propaganda and the activities of the G.P.U. have continued and still continue. Quite recently, on the occasion of M. Laval's visit to Moscow in May 1935, Stalin made his famous statement approving the measures of national defence adopted by France. But a few days later, the French Communist Party, acting in concert with Moscow if not by its direct

command, gave, by means of a large poster which was a résumé of articles in *L'Humanité*, the following interpretation of the words uttered by the "chosen guide of the world's workers": "In order to meet a threatening danger, the Soviet Union, whose permanent interests lie in preserving peace, is justified in acting in concert with those powers who have a momentary interest in maintaining it." And further on comes a phrase which throws light upon the whole manœuvre: "All for peace; such is the watchword of the Communists who know that the danger of war will only permanently be exorcized when the cause of the workers is everywhere triumphant and when we behold the establishment of the French Republic of the Soviets."

Do not these words sufficiently indicate the real nature of that combination in which resides the whole power of international communism; that combination in which a rigid, inflexible doctrine aiming at world domination, makes use of infinitely supple tactics which admit of every compromise, shrinks from no deceit and admits of no moral scruple?

We will not insist further and can turn to the problem which is our present thesis: the acceptance of communism by the Russian people. Why they have accepted it and how they live under it at the present day?

* * * * *

The fall of the Tzarist Empire, like the collapse of the French monarchy, was much in the nature of a suicide, or let us say, in order to avoid exaggeration, both cases resembled involuntary suicides. Just as, at the end of the eighteenth century, the princes of France's Royal House were conspiring with the revolutionaries, so, a hundred and twenty-five years later, the members of the Russian reigning family were in sympathy with the adversaries of the imperial government, and, on the day

following the *coup d'état*, one of the Grand Dukes, the same who has since in emigration proclaimed himself Tzar, appeared at the Tavritchesky Palace adorned by a red riband, at the head of the sailors of the guard, to salute the revolutionary government.

Well and good ! Only, it must be remembered that at that moment the Revolution had only just made its first appearance. The atmosphere which then reigned and which we have attempted to describe at the beginning of this volume might well explain and even justify all deviations of sentiment and any aberration of ideas. But later, when the State Power had become the appanage of the extremists, when the scourge of bolshevism fell with its entire weight upon the country, when communism, sowing death and famine, unveiled its terrible countenance, how did it befall that there was no violent and salutary reaction throughout the entire population ? We have indeed seen that among the causes which brought about the downfall of the Russian *Vendée* the first place must be accorded to the smallness of the kernel of the vanguard which was animated by that impulse which can only be generated by a genuine spirit of self-sacrifice. This kernel was buried in the general inertia and indifference and sometimes in the hostility of the masses. We shall try to throw light upon the most essential features of this phenomenon.

* * * * *

First of all we must take into consideration a demographic fact which must not be underestimated : as a consequence of the enormous casualties among officers, especially among the junior officers, upon the fronts during the Great War, Russia found herself face to face with revolution just at a moment when she was almost bereft of that element of cultured youth which prior to becoming the political spokesman of the country, plays

as it were the part of its emotional spokesman. This element, while physically and morally the best adapted for the struggle, proved inadequate to the size of the field of action assigned to it and its courage could not compensate its numerical weakness.

The defeat of the White Armies served further to accentuate the spiritual inanition of the country, by means of renewed losses in the various engagements and also owing to the emigration of a great portion of the anti-bolshevik troops. The Cheka undertook to complete the operation in directing its action more particularly against patriotic youth; in their case all rights were ignored, and many women as well as girls of fourteen and fifteen years of age, accused of counter-revolution, perished along with their brothers. Finally, as we already know, any elements who aroused the suspicions of the Soviets were sent off to imprisonment or to the concentration camps.

Thus, the most active part of the cultured younger generation having been removed from the scene of action, that field became the property of the popular masses, of the peasants and the operatives whose voices carried the day. Those voices hailed the régime that called itself the "peasant and operative power."

We have studied the deceitful manœuvre by which the Bolsheviks gained the sympathies of the rural population: the slogan "Peace and the Land," to which the peasants vowed their loyalty, was as far removed from the doctrine of communism as from the intentions of its leaders. As for the operatives, they had for a long period been subjected to secret propaganda, competently organized by the Bolshevik Party and hastened to enlist under Lenin's banner. They were, substantially, the only social class which, together with the majority of the intellectual and semi-intellectual Jewish youth, was

inspired by a bitter and already long-standing hatred of the old régime, and it was precisely these two categories of militant supporters who supplied the new powers with their secondary leaders, those groups of "subaltern officers" and "non-commissioned officers" who play so important a part throughout the army, in every administration, and also throughout any kind of Revolution. The operatives, many of whom were already in uniform, also furnished the Red Guard, which constituted itself a secure armed force in the hands of Lenin and which was often required to act as the "life and soul" of the semi-bolshevized troops at the front.

Moreover, whatever may be the sinister power of its skilful demagogy, it is difficult to believe that bolshevism could have triumphed solely by means of an appeal to the lowest instincts of covetousness, hatred and revenge.

No, it is incontestable that at the dawn of the Revolution, many, if not all of the leaders of the régime, were animated by an ideal, and that ideal, in the eyes of the masses, was pregnant with the most alluring promises. There was certainly no question of the marxist doctrine, then as always incomprehensible and alien to the masses; what was involved was the question—let us remember Professor Labry's article—of a possibility offered, in the future, to the humblest and most insignificant individual of obtaining "a freedom of his entire being, an increase of all his powers." What radiant perspectives opened out before the enchanted workman, the entranced peasant! "Even a cook may govern the State!" and a thousand similar posters, combined with continual speeches and feverish appeals, literally hypnotized the crowd. We have seen that among the demands agreed upon at the soldiers' meetings there appeared invariably the "revealing of the terms of all secret diplomatic treaties and conventions." But not merely

diplomatic treaties were in question. The man in the street was going to understand all the mysteries of the universe ! The operatives pillaged the homes of the " bourgeois," but the better elements among them did so in the name of an ideal, and it was with a really pathetic enthusiasm that, between times, they studied Baudelaire's and Rimbaud's poetry under the direction of revolutionary poets such as Brussov. The pauper of yesterday felt himself to be a new Adam extending his hand to grasp the fruit of science. And although this gesture was forbidden by God, our human spirit (perhaps because ours is a fallen humanity) is never able entirely to condemn it. And has not this same daring inspired the greatest epochs and the happiest, such as the period of the Renaissance ?

The humble people saw themselves delivered at one stroke from the rule of the popes, of the overlords and of the administrative authorities. They felt themselves with pride, called upon to build up a life of happiness and freedom by redressing former social injustices and establishing a brotherhood of workers throughout the entire world under the benevolent and wise direction of the bolshevik leaders, those champions of the cause of those who had but yesterday been poor and oppressed. The extent of these aspirations is only comparable to the depth of the abyss of disappointment which engulfed the hopes that had been aroused by the dawn of bolshevism.

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To attempt to expose the causes of the revulsion of ideas which took place among the masses would only be repeating what has been said in a number of preceding chapters which have already been read. Let us state the situation in a few words.

Instead of assuring to the individual " an increase of

all his powers" bolshevism imprisoned, within the carapace of its doctrine, all individual faith and all freedom of thought. Innumerable human lives were destroyed by the terrible poverty which ensued in place of the promised general prosperity. *The Buffalo Evening News* (end of February 1935) estimated that the Soviet government had, since 1917, annihilated 5 million "class enemies" such as "bourgeois," tradesmen, landed proprietors, officials, officers, etc., and in addition to these, 17 millions of *Koulak* peasants. The more circumspect American journalist, Knickerbocker, who does not refuse to acknowledge the "conquests achieved by the Soviets," nevertheless estimates their "price" at not less than 10 millions of lives, without counting the population of the prisons and concentration camps.

And now, let us attempt to draw up a summary balance-sheet of those exterior manifestations which allow us to perceive, among the different strata of the population, the indications of the great psychological transformation which is taking place under the bolshevik uniform, imposed upon Russia by its present masters.

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Our first centre of interest is the peasant. He it was who in the ultimate issue had settled the fate of the Empire, together with that of the anti-bolshevik armies. And with him still lies, in our view, the pronouncing of the decisive and irrevocable judgment.

Lenin's first attack upon the rural districts ended, as we know, in failure. The Government's retreat is known under the name of the N.E.P. (New Economic Policy). And it was only after the baiting of the first Five Year Plan that Stalin launched against the *moujik* an offensive on a grandiose scale, seeking to inculcate in the rural districts, by means of collectivization, the aims of communal economy.

One very important factor is overlooked by all those who deduce, from the existence of the communist power during eighteen years, the stability of the régime : for the large proportion of the rural population the Revolution only began in 1930.

What then was the peasant's reaction to it ?

Already, at the outset of civil war in 1918-20, there arose in the vast Russian plains and among the rare mountains, called into being by the first reverberations of trouble, numbers of groups of armed peasants who were known collectively in current nomenclature as "The Green Movement." A detailed study of this movement, which yet remains to be made, would be a valuable contribution to sociological science. Infinitely varied and variable were the political tendencies of these "Green" detachments, who sometimes made common cause with the "Reds" and sometimes adhered to the "Whites," sometimes, and indeed more often, betraying first one and then the other. In any case, and that is what now concerns us, the "Green" movements as a whole had served to emphasize the incompatible difference between the limp bolshevism of the peasant and authentic communism.

As for the ulterior evolution of the contacts between the directors of the régime and the peasant, we have already given a brief sketch of its vicissitudes ; they have led to a bitter struggle which is renewed every year in connection with the harvest, and we are sometimes astonished to realize, through the pages of the soviet press itself, the full extent of this struggle. At the beginning of the present year, for instance, on the occasion of the Regional Congress of the Ukraine Soviets, *Pravda*, while stating emphatically that "the past four years have been, for the glorious Ukraine a succession of brilliant victories," goes on to describe the nature of

the said victories : " the class of exploiting Koulak villagers has been beaten and wiped out." The conquest, however, has cost the Party dear. " Thousands of Bolsheviks," continues the newspaper, " tens of thousands of the best sons of our country have sacrificed their lives in this great and bitter campaign." But was it really a victory? " Tens of years will go by," *Pravda* goes on to say, " but the people of the Ukraine will never forget this heroic epoch ; never will their hatred of the oppressors be assuaged ! "

And the Moscow paper is not mistaken. Only, it is necessary to wipe off the blatant make-up of its demagoguery in order to see at a glance who are the true oppressors for whom popular hatred is so tenacious. Moreover, *Pravda* adds incidentally that : " The remnants of the once powerful enemy have now taken cover in holes and corners from which they seek to continue their counter-revolutionary activities. . . ."

Yes ; they continue their activities ! The presidents of the *Kolkhozes* are killed, so are the " brigadiers " and the " activists." The " pioneers " are thrashed, their Red ties torn from their necks and the " operative correspondents " and " responsible workers " are murdered. Every day beholds new incidents, and the brief but eloquent reports which one reads daily in the soviet papers assume the aspect of war communiqués. For is it not in point of fact a civil war which the peasants wage indefatigably against communism and its servants ?

* * * * *

Nor is the peasant the only one in the breach.

Let us begin with the less active " sectors."

For the Government the least dangerous are those groups which it regards as its inflexible enemies : former officials, landed proprietors, tradesmen and priests ; intellectuals who have been either unable or unwilling

to adapt themselves to the régime. These consist almost entirely of aged people who have been crushed by imprisonment and by ghastly poverty. We may observe, by the way, that this class includes a certain number of people, especially of the former liberal and socialist intelligentsia who were, at the start, perfectly willing to collaborate with the Bolsheviks ; the psychological evolution which they have undergone has found a very suggestive expression in the book by Mme. T. Tchernavina, *Escaped from the G.P.U.*, which has been translated into English. All these groups form a part of the mass of citizens who have been assailed in their political rights (which is to say that they have not voted for the Soviets) and their total number, as estimated by Molotov at the Congress of the Soviets in February 1935, amounts to more than two millions. To these must be added the population of the prisons and of the concentration camps which total at least another two millions, and all those who, having recovered their liberty and the right to vote, have none the less retained a memory of what they have endured.

The intellectuals of soviet manufacture, writers, officials, professors and doctors, keep up a continuous stream of asseveration of their impeccable loyalism. How can they do otherwise ? Is it not possible, however, that the great majority of them is influenced by that prudent maxim which was voiced by a participant in a recent meeting of students—members of the Party at Kiev : “ One is free to think as one pleases, but the art of living consists nowadays in knowing to whom and at what moment one’s thoughts should be expressed.” It is among the soviet intellectuals that the authorities are continually discovering the so-called “ wreckers ” ; for instance, taking the case of teachers, one single number of *Pravda* (February 27th, 1935)

mentioned suspect elements among the personnel teaching in the schools at Kazan, Nijni Novgorod, Ekaterinodar, Tambov, Kiev, Orenburg, Tcheboksarsk, Orel, Louga and Moscow.

But the mental condition of the operatives is a much more disquieting factor. For these the psychological path has been fairly long. Although they very soon discovered the defects of the régime and although to many of them the cruelties of bolshevism were repugnant, they nevertheless for many years considered the soviet power as their own, were proud of it and faithful to it. The promises held out by the first Five Year Plan aroused in them an echo of enthusiasm. But while imposing upon them a labour almost beyond their strength, the Government gave them nothing in return : all their hopes were unfulfilled, and it was the Plan itself which brought about the decisive change in the psychology of the operatives.

Nor must it be forgotten that from the start of the Revolution a great number of the former operatives entered the Administrations of the State and the Party, becoming officials. Many operatives also were detailed to the army as a means of assuring its fidelity. It therefore became necessary to call upon the rural districts in order to complete the personnel of the factories ; later on, the policy of industrialization having necessitated a great extension of labour, the peasant element in the factories acquired a permanent preponderance which greatly facilitated anti-communist evolution in the operative mentality.

This new mentality already finds its expression in that "fluidity" of labour of which we have already made mention in detail and in the very frequent absences from work. These two phenomena appear to be definitely on the increase. During the month of April 1935,

in the basin of the Donetz, 23,000 operatives deserted their work; while as for the absences without any plausible reason, they accounted, in the anthracite mines of the basin and during that same month, for 26 per cent of the totality of the working hours (*For Industrialization of May 17th, 1935*). Letters written from Russia and by people who have returned from industrial centres tell us of factory strikes. The soviet press does not mention them but it does draw attention to cases of indiscipline and to "counter-revolutionary activities" among those groups of operatives whom it stigmatizes as we know by the name of "hooligans." These "hooligans" have multiplied surprisingly, just lately. *The Red Flag*, published at Vladivostok, even recommends the creation of armed detachments, specially employed to combat "the hooligans of the Far East whose activities are assuming an aspect of banditism."

One thing is certain: in these days the proletariat of the factories can no longer be regarded as the pillars of the régime, and the directors of the Party were well advised when they mulcted them of their electoral privileges; in doing so they had in any case nothing to lose.

The Army? We are lacking in definite information which would enable us to make a perfectly reliable pronouncement upon its morale. We know that the Government flatters the soldiers in every conceivable way and that, materially speaking, the army represents a substantially privileged caste. But we know on the other hand that the majority of the officers and soldiers are peasants, attached to the rural districts by indissoluble ties and that, since the increase of the active army in 1934, the peasant element must be yet more to the fore among the troops. In the event of war, with mobilization it is inevitable that this element should acquire entire supremacy.

And then, we know from several sources, of cases of anti-communist plots in the army. A few of the participants in these abortive conspiracies have succeeded in escaping abroad, and on contacting with these individuals, who are almost always of purely peasant origins, one is struck, and indeed almost shocked, by the intensity of their implacable hatred for the directors of the régime.

Finally, there is the man in the street. There is that vague and indefinite mass of beings of indefinable social origin which none the less may always be regarded as an infallible barometer of a country's mentality.

There is much evidence, soviet and non-soviet, which proves to us that the man in the street is definitely hostile to the régime. A very significant little episode is related by a former Soviet official who has lately escaped from the U.S.S.R. He tells us that one day he asked an *izvostchik*, the man in the street *par excellence* :

“Tell me, comrade ; how much do you charge for going to the station ?”

The *izvostchik* stared at him with concentrated contempt and replied :

“You can look in the kennels for your comrades ; you won't find any here.”

Then he whipped up his nag and moved off from the impertinent client. “What I should have said,” explained the teller of the tale, “was ‘master’ or ‘my uncle’ or at the very least ‘citizen.’”

Let us add that in various social strata and in diverse places, in the Ukraine, in the Caucasus, in Turkestan and elsewhere, manifestations of the anti-communist spirit are frequently coloured and actuated by the nationalist tendencies of the different peoples and tribes enclosed within the frontiers of the U.S.S.R.

But perhaps soviet youth, that new generation which has never known the old régime and which has been educated by the communists, affords them a reliable support? Perhaps a few more years of waiting will be rewarded by the disappearance of all surviving resentments?

By no means! We have already pointed out elsewhere the power and multiplicity of tendencies hostile to the régime which may be observed among the new generation. Here is the opinion on the subject of the chief of the Young Communists, Kossarev:

Anti-soviet influences leak into our schools by every chink. Lately these influences have become progressively more definite and more active. The enemy, with a deceitful smile, creeps on tiptoe into the soviet schools in order to deal us the most bitter of blows, in order to strike at our reliefs, at our future squadrons (*Izvestia of the Central Committee of Young Communists*, 1935, No. 8); and daily events abundantly confirm Kossarev's conclusions.

Thus, during the school year 1934-1935, 157 scholars were expelled from the Commercial Institute of Novosibirsk, and "counter-revolution" frequently makes its appearance among the reasons for dismissal (*The Truth of the Comsomol*, May 8th, 1935). Let it be further noted that 157 students represent 40 per cent of the total number of the Institute's pupils. Yes, indeed, the "reliefs" are compromised, or let us rather say that communism will not have any "reliefs" in Russia. We shall not seek to give the fact any explanation beyond that furnished us by a Moscow Publicist in that same *The Truth of the Comsomol* (No. 34, 1935):

The vice of a bloodthirsty education, administered by means of a revolver, lies in the following fact: that the ideas it engenders, like a boomerang, come back to those who launched them. Children educated to hate their brothers begin first of all by hating their teachers.

The accuracy of this statement is not diminished by the fact that the publicist in question was speaking of "Fascist Germany."

And so, there remains as a sound and invulnerable prop to the régime, only the Communist Party, that "vanguard of the proletariat," that invincible cohort so blindly faithful to the masters of the Kremlin?

* * * * *

Alas, the Party is itself already upon the road to decomposition.

Undoubtedly a Party sound as a block of granite, soldered by impeccable discipline, composed of faithful spirits, devoted to the cause of the proletariat, exempt from human weaknesses, concentrated upon their duty and worshipping their chief—such a Party has never had any existence save in the imagination of soviet poets. At the very beginning of bolshevism a "short history" of the revolution represented Lenin as holding a very sceptical attitude in this respect: "Among the members of the Party," the Red prophet is supposed to have remarked, "there are sixty per cent of imbeciles and thirty per cent of thieves . . ." And again: "Of true communists there are only three in Russia: Lenin, Oulianov and myself. . . ." Did he really say anything of the kind? It is not impossible, but he can only have spoken in a mood of paternal bantering. In any case, there was at that time, in the bosom of the Party, an immense impulse, a perfect confidence in his doctrine and in his future, a spirit of sacrifice which cannot be denied.

The struggle which arose upon the soviet Olympus after the death of Lenin, and which ended in Stalin's victory, in no way modified the communist dogma: it was a "dynastic" quarrel, a conflict of personal ambitions, and Stalin's ultimate triumph was to a great

extent the result of the sympathies which he had contrived to win from the Leninist old guard, sitting in the Central Commission of Control of the Party, in the communist senate, with the duty of watching over the purity of the doctrine and the sagacity of its application.

So long as Stalin's autocracy was not definitely established he endured the famous "Party discussions" which were particularly violent in 1925-6. Here again there was no question of anyone's attacking the Lenin-Marxist theory or even of throwing any doubt upon its soundness: the discussions aimed at the methods whereby it might be practically realized. One might even suggest that this conflict of opinions bore witness to the dynamism of the Party, to its vital energy.

What then was the subject of controversy? The "opposition," led by Zinoviev and Kamenev, preached a resolute and immediate "socialist edification," demanding the industrialization of the country and the socialization of the rural districts. Stalin, thoughtful and moderate, contested the possibility of "permanently building socialism within one single country" and considered it indispensable to "synchronize the rhythm of industrialization with the material possibilities" of the U.S.S.R. Such was the substance of the debates at the 14th Congress of the Party in December 1925.

What was the dénouement? Stalin established his authority; Zinoviev, Kamenev and their friends, smiting their breasts, repented of their errors, after which the dictator proceeded to apply the exact programme which had been devised by his adversaries. Why did he do it? Probably because he got tired of waiting for the triumph of the Comintern beyond the frontiers of the U.S.S.R.

Thus, from 1928 onward, he embarked upon ruth-

less industrialization and from 1930 onward upon the collectivization of the rural districts.

Of this policy we have been able to observe the results. But—the Communists have also seen them!

Within the heart of the Party, externally united and loyal, there arose an immense wave of exasperation and hostility against the dictator. Already, in 1930, at the 16th Congress of the Party, which was attended by only prominent Communists, after a speech by one of the secretaries of the Central Committee, among the "written questions" sent up anonymously by members of the assembly, Kaganovitch read out notes addressed to the Central Committee in the following terms: "Shall we soon be able to hang the lot of you?" "When are you going to stop torturing the peasants?" "Are you going on betraying the working class?" "The country can only be saved by destroying the head of the Party . . ."

A profound discontent arose even among the Leninist "old guard," in the heart of that Central Commission of Control which had so substantially assisted the ascension of Stalin. The dictator got rid of them by appointing them, one after another, to posts in the soviet administration and finally, at the 17th Communist congress in 1934 he reformed the Commission of Control and considerably curtailed its authority. This year Stalin is still discharging the members of the "Old Guard," witness the degradation in summer 1935 of Enoukidzé and Ossinsky, who were formerly among the best collaborators of Lenin.

Not less deep was the disappointment of the ordinary militants. Of this we saw an example when dealing with the "political sections" in the rural districts. But the entire mass of soldiery was compelled to recognize in the course of daily life, the crying absurdity of the

Stalinian "general aim." The reaction of youth was, as always, particularly violent. Then began the epoch of wholesale and successive "weedings" of the Party.

And thus the Party entered the period of its decline. Enormous cracks appeared in its structure. Fed by the sentiments which we have already described, conflicts arose which presented aspects various in themselves but all equally perilous for the Stalin dictatorship; between the leninist "old guard" and the section at present in power; between the mass of the soldiery and its chiefs; between the young generation and those elders who were engaged upon the operation of the "general trend" of the moment.

Undoubtedly there exists a category of Stalin's enemies who consider him to be a bad Communist and who reproach him with having deserted the genuine principles of marxist-leninism. Such is the thesis that continues to support the exiled Trotsky. But these are in a negligible minority. A thousand indications go to prove to us that the real state of affairs represents the crumbling of the communist idea among the main body of the Party, and we shall endeavour to demonstrate later on that Stalin is as well aware of it as we are ourselves.

Stalin's enemies began at first by attempting to unseat him by means of what is called "the machinery of the Party," in other words by forming a majority against him in the Central Committee. The most serious attempt goes back to 1930; it was the work of Syrtzov, who was then president of the Council of the People's Commissars of the R.S.F.S.R. (which, we know, occupies two-thirds of the territory of the U.S.S.R.).

We can gauge Syrtzov's ideas by the following statements: "Every day the factories announce an improvement in production; the reports of brigades and

workshops speak of prodigious successes, and as a result we have nothing to show. . . ." "In the *Kolkhozes* everything is regulated by the alms thrown to the peasant, which only serve to degrade him. . . ." "The present system abolishes the peasant's personal interest and economic success; that is why our *Kolkhozian* will swallow all he possesses at a gulp." And the report which he received upon the progress of socialist edification led him to append the following note: "One perceives among us a general decline of energy, amounting almost to prostration and to a total absence of creative initiative." These appreciations of the methods of communist economy, which, as we may see, are not very different from our own, were carefully ignored by the leading press, but they may be found, printed word for word, in a special limited publication entitled *The Socialist Reconstruction of Agriculture* (1930, No. 11).

Syrtzov's attempt to overthrow Stalin by means of the vote at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Party ended in failure. Betrayed by one of his friends, Syrtzov was deported to Liberia with his entire "group." The same failure befell another anti-Stalin plot which was also the work of a group of Soviet dignitaries (Eismond, Tolmatcher, Lominadzé, etc.). Later efforts in the same direction were equally fruitless. One of the unsuccessful conspiracies led to the suicide of Skrypnik, who had been one of Lenin's intimate friends and one of the founders of the Bolshevik Party.

These incidents did not however arrest the trend of feeling and only added to the virulence of the subterranean impulse.

This impulse exploded violently on December 1st, 1934, in the revolver shot which killed Kirov, satrap

of Leningrad and high official of the dictatorship, who occupied the third seat in the communist hierarchy after Stalin and Kaganovitch.

* * * * *

The attempt upon Kirov inflicted a severe reverse upon the dictator, his "entourage" and his friends: "No one among the Chekists slept that night," wrote an official of the soviet prisons of the White Sea (*The Red Carelie*, 1934, No. 283).

The consternation of the directors of the Party found complete expression in the official communications that followed the attempt. It was at first stated to be the work of "White terrorists" from abroad who had quite recently entered U.S.S.R. territory. However, Stalin very soon realized that this version would deceive nobody. He then threw the responsibility of the assassination upon his old enemies, Zinoviev and Kamenev. Why did he do so? Merely because, with the exception of the dictators themselves, there were no names so heartily detested in Russia as were those of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky, those marxist purists who, even prior to Stalin, had preached the ideas which now inspire the "general aims" of the Party.

It is extremely interesting to observe the manner in which the country reacted to the official interpretation of the attempt. Quite suddenly, in various places, on posters—those newspapers of the street—and even at the exhibition devoted to the "ways of revolution" (at Ekaterinoslav), portraits of Zinoviev and of Kamenev made their appearance! At several meetings held in honour of Kirov, orators quoted passages drawn from the writings of Zinoviev, attributing them to Stalin and Lenin and listening with great amusement to the applause of their misinformed audience. And when,

at the demagogic conference at Kazan, in January of this year, the president suggested as a means of livening the debate that a student should make a "provocative report" defending Zinoviev and Kamenev, not a soul could be found among the 800 present who wished to raise his voice against the enemies of the dictator!

The personal views of Zinoviev and Kamenev had certainly nothing to do with the singular halo which suddenly surrounded their names. For a great number of the members of the Party, it was merely a subtle means of expressing their rancour and hatred towards the dictator and his intimate acolytes.

For the rest, the character of the reprisals which followed the occurrence of December 1st make it superabundantly evident that it was not for Stalin merely a question of crushing Zinoviev's partisans or of punishing the authors of the outrage. The task was infinitely more vast. The summary executions, the mass arrests, the deportations of tens of thousands of persons, the extension of the powers of the G.P.U., the new zeal displayed in the "weeding of the Party"; all these measures were aimed solely at the discovery and extermination of all real or supposed enemies of Stalin and his "general aim." Indeed, among the motives for the cruel reprisals which are at this very moment smiting thousands of plain citizens as well as members of the Party, appear such accusations as: grave indiscipline; lies with regard to the "general aim"; "self-victualling (theft)"; "neglect of political vigilance"; sale of false identity papers to class enemies escaped from concentration camps; "rotten liberalism"; propagation of counter-revolutionary rumours. It may easily be seen that the labels of "trozkists" and "zinovievists" so often attached to the victims is purely a convention.

During the year 1934 alone, the Party expelled from 15 to 20 per cent of its members, if we are to believe the account of the Havas Agency (telegram of January 14th, 1935); Trotsky, for his part, quotes the same figures in his *Bulletin* (February 1935). At the beginning of 1934, the members of the Party were estimated at 3,200,000. Thus the dictator turned down at least 500,000 of his forces.¹ This year the weeding is going forward with redoubled energy.

As for the Young Communists, it suffices to recall all that we have already said with regard to the mental state of the students who are nearly all adherents of the Party. And now Karl Radek, one of Moscow's foremost publicists, addresses an ardent appeal to the militants "not to underestimate for a single moment the importance of the spread of disaffection among the Young Communists" (*Izvestia*, January 21st, 1935). And he proposes that action be taken against the disaffection "by unceasing efforts to show that no generation has ever been confronted with such possibilities and such duties as those which history has prepared for our youth. . . ." It was one of the chiefs of the Comsomol who undertook to make an anticipatory rejoinder to Radek's words, words which were, indeed, utterly senseless in their emphasis! On December 14th, 1934, the secretary of the district committee

¹ Probably much more. Here for instance are the figures given by *Pravda* on December 13th, 1934, with regard to the "weeding" achieved by the Chekist Roisenman, in the Tchernigov district. They refer to 14,505 members and candidates of the Party. Among the members of the Party 27.9 per cent were expelled, 11.3 per cent reduced to the status of candidates and 1.3 per cent to the category of "sympathizers" (total diminution: 40.5 per cent); among the candidates, 31.8 per cent were simply struck off and 21.1 per cent placed in the category of "sympathizers" (total diminution: 52.9 per cent).

of the Comsomol of the North, Krassovsky, compared the Young Communist to a coursed hare that has reached the brink of a precipice with every available alternative road closed (*The Truth in the North*, December 16th, 1934). "We have lost our Army," he declared. And indeed, what remains of the six millions of the "Leninist-Comsomol" of which the press was speaking in 1932? A year later, the papers quoted the figure of five millions. Since then there have been no precise figures. It is not thought opportune to give those which would be accurate, and false ones would not deceive anybody!

The structure of the Party is disintegrating day by day.

* * * * *

The masters of the Kremlin are reaping the logical consequences of the evolution of the anti-Stalinian movement which was demonstrated in the heart of the Party by the death of Kirov.

Up to the present the leaders of Russian Communism always bore in mind the experience of the French revolutionaries who ended by murdering one another. There was careful discrimination between "counter-revolution" threatening communism from outside sources and "deviations" arising within the Party itself, whatever might be their violence. It was strictly forbidden to shed the blood of colleagues: Trotsky was banished; other important "oppositionists" were sent to Siberia or kept in prison and the possibility of "repentance" was always open to them.

The conspiracy of the Young Communists who murdered Kirov upset all calculations. The recent executions included the death of "certain very prominent Communists" in whom Stalin scented a personal danger. Zinoviev and Kamenev, although their

lives were spared, were condemned "for counter-revolutionary actions."

And it was with good reason that the editor of *Izvestia*, Boukharine, wrote of the Leningrad murder :

What has the Party to do with this act of treachery? Nothing. The circle is closed. All limits have been overstepped. We are face to face with a new political phenomenon. A new body has emerged from the ruins of the Party, in an atmosphere of counter-revolution and shameless effrontery and upon a foundation of the bitter resistance of the class enemy, an enemy who has not so far been completely destroyed. And this new political body exhibits a lively tinge of fascist banditry . . . (*Izvestia*, December 22nd, 1934).

Boukharine has found an excellent simile. Yes. The "traitors" who have emerged from the Party and who are daily increasing in number, form an important link in the chain of those anti-communist forces which are beginning to stifle the powers that be.

The statements in the soviet press unintentionally underline the unity of action of the various "counter-revolutionary" groups. They speak of "the anti-communist abscess" formed in the Crimea by the Russians, the native Tartars and the German and Bulgarian colonists; they mention the existence of a "coalition of nationalists and trozkists" in the Ukraine (*Pravda*, January 14th, 1935); they inveigh against "the stinking carrion of the trozkists,"¹ of the former princes, "counts and police, of all that canaille which makes common cause, seeking to undermine the walls of our State" (*Pravda*, March 25th, 1935).

It is Boukharine himself who, in the article which we have already quoted, is careful to expose the programme

¹ Do not let us forget the conventional character of this term. The soviet press has gone so far as to attribute to "trozkist" propaganda the recrudescence of anti-semitic sentiment which is making itself apparent in Odessa.

of action of the anti-communist forces. Boukharine evokes the memory of Charlotte Corday and recalls the explanation given of her act by "that cowardly counter-revolutionary lady."

I have killed a criminal [she declared], Marat has ruined France and lighted the fires of civil war throughout the country . . . he has sinned against the sovereignty of the People by imprisoning the deputies of the Convention. . . .

This is the reasoning of the traitors of the proletariat, of the fascist terrorists [concludes the Moscow publicist]. They stir up all our deficiencies and do not lay them to the account of the class-enemy, that Konlak who destroys, opposes and burns, who depraves the peasants . . . but they blame the leaders of the Party. . . . It is not the fault of the Konlak, they say, but of the Central Committee of the Communist Party ; the crime is not that of counter-revolution but that of the Party itself. . . .

In other words : the powers that be have ruined the country ; Stalin has usurped dictatorial power and must be overthrown !

Boukharine's formula is perfectly correct.

It is precisely the extension of the anti-communist movement, embracing every stratum of the population, including members of the Party itself, which has created in Russia a situation of an entirely new character.

How are the masters of Moscow attempting to protect the moribund communist idea and their own authority ?

We are familiar with the means at their disposal : the terror of their G.P.U. and the demagogy of their propaganda.

Their boasted contempt of human life undoubtedly gives them a power which only Satan can have conferred. If their determination had ever flinched, there is little doubt that the communist power would have been swept away between 1930 and 1932. They were compelled to utilize their experience of the time of "bloodthirsty Tzarism" : if the Imperial Government

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had ever manifested a tenth part of their cruelty, the great majority of the present masters would not now be alive. In this connection it is interesting to run through the Memoirs of Lenin's widow, Kroupskaia. She tells us of a police officer who, having surprised some young revolutionaries plotting in a cellar, wrote their names in his note-book, with a smile, and sent them about their business like a schoolmaster dismissing mischievous pupils. And she describes Lenin's life in exile in Siberia, where the allowance paid him by the Government enabled him to live comfortably in a cottage with his wife, his mother-in-law and even a little servant, reading, writing and making enchanting excursions of which Kroupskaia has retained an enthusiastic recollection ! Stalin himself escaped from Siberia five times !

We have seen that the dictator has not lost his determination to continue the terror. And yet, the numerous plots which are hatched, the circumstances of Kirov's death and the flood of veiled anti-Stalinian manifestations which followed it, all denote that a change is in the wind. The practice of denunciation, formerly universal, is beginning to weaken, the joints of the G.P.U. are creaking. Why ? Because an immense difference lies between the janissaries of an idea and the watchdogs of a tyrant. And so, while it was a question, in the name of a still vital idea, of crushing the resistance of the peasant, who was defending his personal property, the janissaries charged enthusiastically. But nowadays, when the tyrant, personifying a moribund idea, finds himself face to face with a new one that is arising, the watchdogs tremble with their tails between their legs.

* * * * *

But there is one infinitely strange point. The anti-communist idea which we will not hesitate to call the

patriotic idea, that idea which took shape in spite of communism and which is aimed against the communist leaders, it is the régime itself which now permits of its extension and consolidation while struggling to maim it and turn it to personal uses. Such is the latest twist of the Stalinian "general aim," such is the artifice to which communist propaganda is resorting after exhausting all its customary methods.

The extension of the anti-communist movement and the mustering of its forces became apparent just at the moment when the Red dictatorship found itself exposed to a new danger from abroad—who can tell whether such danger be real or imaginary—the menace from East and West, from Japan and from the Hitlerian Reich. We have much evidence of this fact, especially in those articles which criticize the methods of work adopted by the Young Communists. Thus *The Truth of the Comsomol* (1934, No. 287), putting its finger upon the lack of activity among the Young Communist groups, says unequivocally: "This deficiency is revealed as particularly harmful because it disaffects and enfeebles the young generation; it effaces the essential element in our people: the qualities of the fighter." Moreover, we constantly find in all the Moscow newspapers articles inspired by the ill-concealed fear of a war directed against the U.S.S.R.

Unable to depend upon the old slogans or upon communist enthusiasm, Stalin was compelled to have resort to sentiments condemned by the dogma of the Party, and it was thus that the day arrived when all the soviet papers combined to hoist a new flag, defence of the homeland. The same theme rang through every speech, being especially apparent in those addressed to the army.

Thus the leaders of the Party found themselves in-

volved in a paradoxical position such as usually arises in periods of transition, and one of which we have studied the analogy when dealing with the downfall of the imperial régime.

But every paradox of this nature opens the road to others, yet more dangerous.

The notion thus evoked of a native land demanded an explanation. It became necessary in this connection to re-establish the teaching of Russian history, which, even as interpreted according to the views of marxism, must necessarily awaken the nationalist spirit, and Stalin was reduced to make use of it in his campaign for industrialization and for the collectivization of the rural districts. In a series of speeches, and notably in that addressed in early May 1935 to the officers of the Red Army, he announced that his watchword, "technique decides everything," had been dictated by the interests of the country. The time had now come, he went on to say, when the utmost care must be given to the living being and when a new principle must be pre-eminent: "Everything lies with the personal element. . . ."

* * * * *

Some observers have hastened to discover in this new zigzag of the Stalinian "general aim" an indication of the radical "evolution" of communism.

But is there in fact any such evolution?

First of all it must be noted that the dictator's recent speeches upon the "groups of workers," those "historical speeches of our great Stalin" as they are invariably called by the Moscow press, contain no new matter of any description. It will perhaps be remembered that when dealing with the conditions of the operatives we quoted at great length the utterances of a certain Comrade Rubinstein who, just over a year ago, condemned

the "contempt of the working man." Even Lenin invited his collaborators to be careful of every *useful* man, even if he did not belong to the Party.

And then, Stalin's speeches are merely speeches.

He has been forced to recognize, against his will, that all the "triumphs of socialist edification" and all the "bolshevik rhythms" have led the country into a blind alley. But what can he offer the "personal element"? He is powerless to bestow any material well-being and he cannot bring himself to allow the liberty of thought or of its expression. The greatest benefit which can fall to the share of this "personal element" lies in the sitting hen of marxism, carefully watched by the master, so that her egg may in due time produce a chicken suitable to the needs of the moment. Stalin has at last realized that no constructive labour can be achieved with the aid of stupefied slaves, and quite recently the directors of the Party have discussed the creation of a superior Institute of Law. But what legal culture can take root in a country where one of its foremost "legal" lights, the Procurer General Vychinsky, has quite recently produced a work entirely devoted to the development of Lenin's idea that "Dictatorship, it must be clearly understood, once and for all, signifies an unlimited power which relies upon force and not upon the law."¹

A new refrain recurs in the more recent statements of the soviet press with regard to the education of children. We learn from *The Truth of the Comsomol* (June 1935), and in the ensuing months from the principal newspapers of Moscow, that it is the bourgeois family that is "rotten," while the communist family is perfectly capable of playing a valuable social part. How can we

¹ This is why, in our study, we have not dealt with legislation in the U.S.S.R.

fail to see in this yet another confession of communist incapacity?

And this idea of a native land? We are given to understand that what is meant is a *soviet-mother-country* destined to "elevate those who cannot see beyond a frontier but who are nevertheless ready to defend the Red dictatorship" (*Pravda*, March 19th, 1935), that dictatorship which, as has been stated in that same *Pravda* in the middle of May, 1935, "is the only authentic and broad-minded democracy"! Permission is given, and indeed an invitation, to love—and consequently to defend—this "soviet-mother-country" which is "created by Stalin" (Yes, such is the assertion), and of which he remains a "living Buddha."

As for "concessions" in the economic field, these are not apparent, except in the toleration of the "individual lots" of the members of the *Kolkhozes*. In this respect Stalin partially applies in 1935 the idea evolved five years earlier by Syrtzov, before his exile to Siberia, just as in 1930 he made use of the programme drawn up in 1926 by Zinoviev prior to his sentence. In any case, there is not at present the smallest indication of any even relatively important economic concession and no grounds for anticipating any modification to be compared with Lenin's N.E.P.

* * * * *

Can we therefore regard present conditions as evolutionary? Certainly there is an evolution of tactics. But the doctrine remains the same as well as the essence of the communist power and its fundamental aims. In this domain we do not see any changes. We are merely beholding a display of political acrobatics which seek to adapt themselves, with a view to domination, to the genuine evolution which is taking place in the country among its people, not excepting the communist groups

which have lost their faith. Stalin, in his attempt to deceive history, is suggestive of a hardened sinner seeking to cheat the devil who has come to claim his forfeited soul.

Contrary winds prevent the communist ship from holding her course. She tacks without making any way and having lost her bearings will not find them again.

And Stalin himself has so little belief in the ultimate success of these zigzags that he has judged it indispensable to look for foreign support by means of a sudden violent affection for France ; it being borne in mind, of course, that he is equally disposed to love any other country that will accept his advances ! We are once more brought back to the source of that dubious concoction, soviet pacifism.

For Stalin it is a case of holding on at any price. He probably pins his hopes to the marxist maxim which avers that "man's conscience is governed by the reality of things." Possibly he is of opinion that the country is going through a period of "antithesis" and that the salutary "synthesis" will soon make itself apparent.

Does not the virtue of hope astonish God himself, as Charles Péguy has so aptly remarked ?

* * * * *

And yet, it will be said, if communism was able to acquire control by overcoming obstacles, even before it attempted to thrust itself into daily life by means of industrialization and collectivization, why should it now be incapable of retaining its influence while retreating to its old positions and renouncing its severities ?

The reply is that rivers have never been known to run back towards their mountain sources. Formerly, the lure of promises was a powerful weapon. To-day all

supplies of bait appear to be as completely exhausted on the one side as is credulity on the other !

* * * * *

This gearing of contradictions is hastening the halting régime to its final fall. Communist education has to be revived by an appeal to the family. Collectivist economy is supported by recourse to ultra-capitalist speculation. The *Kolkhozes* require to be consolidated by the introduction of an element of individual interests. In order to prop up an equalitarian "society without classes" recourse has been had to the most crying inequality, by means of the knout and of starvation, the lure of rewards and scandalous tampering with salaries. The attempt to crush religion and substitute the triumph of the materialist doctrine is accompanied by constant demands for proofs of blind faith. The Communist International is to be protected by patriotic sentiment. Finally the bourgeois world is called upon to defend the very hearth and home of the universal revolution.

And behold—as the supreme contradiction—the national instinct blossoming in the hot-house of internationalism. Possibly the true Russian Nation is being forged in a solidarity of those various social and ethnical elements which have in the past remained strangers to one another. The social instinct itself which was formerly diluted into such a general sociability that the Englishman's "my home is my castle" appeared to most Russians as an absurdity, is undergoing a radical transformation : the social faculty which was so often in the past expended to the detriment of a real consciousness of citizenship is now, as a consequence of the isolation imposed upon the individual, veering towards a sound patriotism.

What is the future that is being prepared in that vast laboratory ? The tendencies and aspirations which teem

in it are obviously manifold and often vague. It is not easy to isolate their essence. The formula of a national dictatorship seems to float in the air, but of a dictatorship that would be combined with local autonomy, possibly upon a basis of freely elected Soviets. These, however, are problems which can only afford matter for individual speculations outside the scope of this documentary study. It is impossible to foretell the dates of decisive events. One thing is certain; the forces in ebullition are all leading towards that first stage which is National Revolution, and the present régime will never be able to master these new forces, or to adapt itself to them, even should it decide upon a genuine evolution. The Red dictatorship has lost its way and will never recover the thread of Ariadne which would guide it out of the labyrinth. Trotsky was right when, in his *Bulletin* (February 1935, No. 42), he declared that only by a world revolution could communism be saved. Indeed, the Congress of the Comintern decided in August 1935 to hasten the attack on the Western World by leaning on the allies who were before haughtily repudiated.

The "realistic" policy which is in vogue at the present day should surely take carefully into account those *realities* which are weighty with consequences for the entire world. This would very certainly have been done by that very ancient policy which was always inspired by the principle "to govern is to foresee."

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